

**18 March 2010**  
**For immediate release**

## **Awards to celebrate the Spirit of Innovation in the Valleys**

***Entries now open for businesses to showcase their innovation and business excellence***

Businesses, including social enterprises in the Heads of the Valleys are being invited to enter awards which showcase and celebrate business innovation in the region.

In its fourth year, the Heads of the Valleys Innovation Awards acknowledge the very best in business innovation and enterprise, and highlight the true commercial and business talent the region has to offer.

Organised by the Heads of the Valleys Innovation Programme (HOVIP) this year's ceremony and related business exhibition, will take place at Bryn Meadows Golf, Hotel & Spa on June 24<sup>th</sup> where Arthur Davies, the co-founder of Penderyn Whisky will be guest speaker, with BBC Wales' presenter, Jason Mohamed competing.

There are four categories, which are the Most Innovative Sole Trader, Most Innovative Business with less than 20 employees, Most Innovative Business with more than 20 employees, and Most Innovative Social Enterprise. Each winner will receive a cash prize and a trophy. All entrants will automatically become members of the Turning Heads Club, HOVIP's exclusive business club.

The Awards are open to any business within the Heads of the Valleys region and any business in the boroughs of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, RCT, Merthyr Tydfil and Torfaen that can demonstrate a significant impact on or a link to the Heads of the Valleys.

Phil Burkhard, programme manager for HOVIP said: "The Awards honour the most innovative businesses in the region who can demonstrate how creativity and innovation has made an impact on their business, workforce, customers, communities or the environment.

"We have seen evidence that businesses are truly embracing innovation and using it to make organisations a success and as a result raising their business profile in the region and globally."

***More follows...***

# PRESS RELEASE



Last year's winner of the Most Innovative Sole Trader Award was Merthyr based Shabby Chic Antiques, who recycle antiques with a French shabby chic look and sells them in the UK as well as the US, China and Japan.

Shabby Chic Antiques owner, Theresa Locke said: "Since winning the award last year I have opened a new shop in Merthyr and have had many new opportunities to showcase my business, such as featuring on TV's '60 Minute Makeover' and 'DIY SOS', and I've even been featured in Vogue!"

The 2010 event is sponsored by the University of Wales Global Academy and the Award sponsors are BT, HSBC, Capital Law, South Wales Chamber of Commerce and FS4B.

Richard Turner, of the University of Wales Global Academy said: "We are again delighted to be the main sponsor for the HOVIP Awards. Both HOVIP and our flagship initiative, the Prince of Wales Innovation Scholarships aim to help businesses in the region to increase their innovation capacity.

"I encourage any business in the Heads of the Valleys that has innovated their products, services or processes to enter these increasingly significant awards."

It is free and easy to enter the Awards, just by visiting [www.hovip.org.uk](http://www.hovip.org.uk) and the closing date for entries is 12 noon on Friday 14 May 2010. Likewise, visitors can register on-line to attend the combined Awards and Marketplace event to celebrate success, be inspired, do business and make new contacts.

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