

WALES MEDIA INTERVIEW THE MASTER

A group wants to give £40,000 to young people in Wales - but not enough people know about it



Agnes Xavier-Phillips is Master of the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales

A Welsh charity with historic roots going back to medieval times is trying to give £40,000 to young people from Wales. It has an impressive title and track record,

but those who might benefit may not have heard of the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales.

The “company” or “livery” as it is known is a registered charity and professional association which wants to “nurture Welsh talent”. It has quietly given individuals £750,000 in the last three decades.

But it doesn't always have enough applications for its £40,000 annual awards because not enough young people know the company is there. That's something the new Livery Master Agnes Xavier-Phillips wants to change.

Agnes, a former City lawyer who trained in Wales after a career in senior nursing, says members raise money specifically to help young people develop their talents. People who could apply may not know about the awards and she wants to let

them know, especially with money so tight for so many.

In recent years awards have been given to help young people with **dyslexia** and to travel across Wales and the world for their personal, professional or academic development. Funds are given for arts, science, technology and learning as well as to allow young people to develop their careers.

There are specific awards for academic and vocational studies. Although the livery is a tradition steeped in history going back centuries and with an element of pageantry - members wear robes at functions - it is very much part of the 21st century and focused on young people, Agnes said “I want to raise the profile and awareness so people get to know about us. We concentrate on the young because they are the future of Wales.

The sole purpose of the livery is to help and nurture Welsh talent in science and the arts. We are dedicated to helping the young people of Wales.

“If we want to make Wales a better place we have to start with the young so we give £40,000 of awards every year. But sometimes we struggle with getting enough applications.”

A livery company is a type of guild or professional association that originated in medieval times in London. As part of their membership members raise money for good works.

In the early 1990s representatives of 22 London livery companies met in **Cardiff** and resurrected a long-standing tradition with the formation of the Welsh Livery Guild. The first meeting was at **City Hall** in Cardiff and in 2013 the guild was granted a royal charter to

become the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales, the only one outside the London Livery Companies to be granted the honorific of “Worshipful”.

But unlike other livery companies the WLCoW says it’s concerned with “the whole spectrum of human endeavour” rather than being associated with one particular craft, trade or profession. One of its aims is “the promotion of education, arts, science and technology in Wales” through its awards.

Last year’s award winners included Shannon Hawkins from Coleg y Cymoedd who struggled with literacy due to undiagnosed dyslexia. Money from the livery meant Shannon could buy equipment to help her write and also dictate applications. She has since completed an access course and got a place at university to study midwifery.

Phoebe Williams got a £1,000 award to go to France to report on the effect of climate change on the vineyard industry and visit newer vineyards here. Newtown College apprentice Mustafa Wetti won the WLCoW Apprenticeship Award and young [Swansea](#) University researchers have received awards to help their work, among others.

Awards have also been made to schools across Wales and the University Royal Naval Unit Wales. Among other pots of money are community awards made to young people who have made a recognisable contribution to their community or demonstrated excellence in their achievements in Wales.

There is one caveat to applying - all applicants should have Welsh credentials by birth, education, residence, or work location. Agnes, who said she is "probably the only solicitor who's

delivered 60 babies", after her previous career as a midwife, has no children herself, but said she's always worked to nurture young talent.

Agnes, who lives in [Caerphilly](#) with her husband and is a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Gwent, said she knows how tough it can be for young people to make their way and wants the livery to help. To find out more about the livery awards see [here](#).



Agnes Xavier-Phillips JP DL
Master 2024-2025
Worshipful Company of Wales

