

Prime Minister 4



Y WYDDFA GYMREIG  
GWYDYR HOUSE  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER  
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)  
01-233 6106 (Llinell Union)

WELSH OFFICE  
GWYDYR HOUSE  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER  
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switchboard)  
01-233 6106 (Direct Line)

Oddi wrth Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

From The Secretary of State for Wales

12 November 1986

CONFIDENTIAL

*Nicholas*

*MS*

You will know that when the locations of the 1988 and 1990 Garden Festivals were announced in November 1984, an undertaking was given that the 1992 Festival would be held at a Welsh site to be chosen nearer the time.

I received nine bids by the closing date of September 1985 and subsequently appointed a Working Party and, more latterly, Exhibition Consultants Ltd to advise me in my selection of the site. The Working Party included Lord Aberconway who had a direct involvement in the Liverpool and Stoke Festivals and Mr Jeffrey Bernhard the then Chairman of the JCLI.

At the end of the day the choice was not an easy one but, on balance, I have decided in favour of the proposals jointly put forward by Blaenau Gwent Borough Council and Gwent County Council for a site at Victoria Heights, Ebbw Vale. The site is the location of a former steelworks complex and is almost totally derelict, but the valley site presents a uniquely dramatic setting for a Festival which I see as offering a major contribution to my broader strategy for revitalising the South Wales Valleys in addition to the direct benefits on Ebbw Vale.

I shall be making my decision known to the promoters on the morning of 19 November followed by a written response in the House that afternoon. I would ask you to treat this information on my decision with particular confidentiality until 10.30 am on that day since experience has demonstrated that any early warning - even that a decision is due - could seriously damage the effectiveness of my announcement.

/ Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, Malcolm Rifkind and David Young.

*John Evans*  
*Nicholas*

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment  
Department of the Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 3EB

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