

Axe throwing entrepreneur expands with new Swansea venue

An axe throwing leisure venue entrepreneur has opened his second site in South Wales in Swansea with plans for a stress busting plate smashing room.

Matthew Griffin, 24, opened his first Lumberjack Axe Throwing venue in Cardiff in 2019. Now, supported by a £35,000 micro loan from the Development Bank of Wales, he has invested in a Lumberjack site on Dilwyn Street in the centre of Swansea.

As well as providing axe throwing – an increasingly popular indoor sport – his latest venue will also see the addition of Wales' first permanent 'rage room', which will give customers the chance to work out their stresses by smashing up crockery and other items. Mr Griffin plans to open the rage room later this year. The young entrepreneur spotted the gap in the market for an axe throwing venue in Cardiff and took the opportunity to open his first site, while continuing to work as a self-employed carpenter and working towards his university degree.

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At the Cardiff venue, which was the first urban axe throwing centre in Wales, guests have the chance to test their physical and co-ordination skills and compete against one another by throwing axes at targets – under the supervision of trained members of staff.

After opening in mid-2019 and successfully navigating the business through the difficulties posed by the pandemic by working at the field hospital set up at the Principality Stadium he set his sights on expanding Lumberjack in late 2021

and discovered a suitable site in Swansea. The micro loan from the development bank allowed him to keep the business stable during renovation work for the new site, which has also been supported by a Swansea City Council property enhancement grant.

Mr Griffin said: "I was self-financing the Cardiff venue and it took all my personal savings at the time to get it off the ground. The loan from the development bank has assisted massively in ensuring the Swansea construction doesn't have too much of an impact on the cashflow of the company as a whole.

"As you can imagine, running a company while trying to construct a premises twice the size of the one bringing in the revenue can significant drop capital reserves, risking the whole company and making the project almost impossible after the years of economic uncertainties that we have had."

Mr Griffin plans to host tournaments for the sport his latest Swansea venue, as well as continuing existing relationships with hospitality partner Smoke Haus.

Donna Strohmeier, a micro loans investment executive at the development bank, said: "We're very pleased to have worked with Matthew in helping him to secure new premises in Swansea, allowing him to expand his existing business and bring this exciting new sport to a whole new customer base.

"It's great to see the Swansea site completed, and we wish Matthew the very best as he brings Lumberjack Axe Throwing to a new city."

Bethan Cousens, new investments director at the development Bank, said: "We're keen to work with promising young entrepreneurs like Matthew, who might not think they have a strong base from which to look for investment.

"We can help check their suitability for any investment, and

guide them through every step of the way, giving them the chance to make their business dreams a reality.”

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