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# Food and Drink Wales Industry Board: update from Valerie Creusailor (August 2024)

An update from new board member Valerie Creusailor.

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## Valerie Creusailor joins food and drink Wales industry board

Valerie Creusailor is the founder of the award-winning Goch & Co Ltd.

The company is driven by passion, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Goch & Co Ltd specialises in condiments, seasonings, and vegan snacks. With a mission to create products that evoke deep emotions and connections.

Valerie says:

“ Goch & Co Ltd is more than just a company; it is a family united by a shared vision. The team, comprising diverse talents and perspectives, constantly pushes boundaries and explores new horizons. ”

Valerie emphasises the importance of listening to customers and creating experiences surpassing expectations.

“ Goch & Co Ltd, alongside its sister company VUKA, prioritises quality and ethical production practices. VUKA specialises in artisanal cereals and vegan snacks, emphasizing health and plant-powered foods. Goch & Co’s commitment to authenticity and innovation has made it a staple for those seeking distinctive and flavourful culinary additions.

“ We are dedicated to making a positive difference in the world, whether it’s through our products or our philanthropic initiatives. ”

Valerie has held pivotal roles in various organisations. Collaborating with dedicated teams to deliver impactful project outcomes, performance reviews and consultancy services. Her experience spans across the private sector, local

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government, police, and NHS sectors. Valerie's commitment to effective corporate governance has consistently led to achieving strategic and performance-focused objectives.

“ I am thrilled to join the Food and Drink Wales Industry Board,” said Valerie. “I look forward to contributing to the continued growth and innovation within the Welsh food and drink sector. ”

Valerie has a history of engaging in innovation, sustainability. Also the continuous improvement of management environments. She has successfully:

- led service structure reviews
- refined management reporting systems
- enhanced risk management frameworks.

Her contributions have significantly influenced operational and strategic planning for public sector trusts and quality commission organisations. These have led to substantial savings and robust returns on investments.

Valerie has expertise in designing assurance frameworks, efficiency reviews, and cost improvement plans. She has enhanced contract management and governance for food and drink businesses. Her implementation of operational systems has elevated operational efficiency, navigating the complexities of strategic business development.

Valerie is a passionate about mentoring and contributing to diversity and equality initiatives. This reflects a holistic and inclusive food and drink culture across Wales. Her profound understanding of the Welsh public sector and regulatory frameworks equips her to deliver evidence-based, impactful contributions to the board.

Valerie is committed to upholding the values of Welshness. She is dedicated to equality of opportunity, and collaborative leadership. These elements are crucial

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to elevating the national and global impact of Welsh-based food and drink businesses.

“ I am excited about the prospect of shaping impactful projects, fostering relationships, and driving positive change within the Welsh food and drink sector,” Valerie added. “I am wholeheartedly embracing the responsibility of delivering outcomes that contribute to excellence. ”

The founding of Goch & Co Ltd is deeply rooted in Valerie’s personal connection to Africa and its diverse culinary traditions. She grew up surrounded by the incredible richness of African flavours, inspiring her to bring these unique tastes to a wider audience. The distinctiveness of Goch & Co’s products is derived from carefully curated flavours and spices. Each paying homage to the vibrant tapestry of African culinary heritage.

Like any business, Goch & Co encountered its fair share of challenges. Particularly during inception and growth. Introducing African-inspired condiments to a diverse market in Wales presented a notable hurdle. Valerie and her team overcame this by focusing on strategic marketing, education, and creating an immersive experience for customers. This helped them embrace and appreciate the authenticity of the products.

Valerie’s appointment to the board aligns perfectly with her passion and professional journey. Her extensive experience and dedication make her a valuable asset to the Board. Valerie is committed to using her skills to:

- foster growth
- drive innovation
- enhance the performance of the food and drink landscape in Wales and beyond.

Valerie’s vision for the sector includes fostering a culture of innovation,

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sustainability and inclusivity. By collaborating with other Board members, she aims to create a supportive environment where businesses can thrive. Her focus will be on strategic initiatives that promote the unique qualities of Welsh food and drink, both nationally and internationally.

Valerie believes in the power of collaborative leadership. She is excited about the opportunity to work with other members of the board. By pooling their expertise and resources, she hopes to drive significant advancements in the industry. Her approach will be inclusive, ensuring that all voices are heard. Also that diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making processes.

The most recent meeting of the board took place in north Wales at the end of July. Members undertook a mapping exercise of their experience in different disciplines. For example, operational, finance, technical.

This exercise also extended to an analysis of the different sub sectors within the food and drink sector. This illustrated the breadth of experience base within this refreshed board. Discussions also focused on the communication routes into and out of the board.

One of the key elements discussed within the board meeting was the need to engage with food manufacturers in a structured approach to identify barriers and opportunities for the sector. As a result the board are seeking 50 companies who would be willing to complete a questionnaire. This will benchmark key factors affecting the industry and monitor evaluation of the health of the sector.

This will allow the board to understand issues facing the industry and present Welsh Government with meaningful data. The data will be repeatable but anonymous and which will facilitate discussions at board level. Finally board members will be attending the inaugural food and drink Wales Blas Cymru /Taste Wales Conference in Llandudno on October 24. They will be delighted to meet partners from the food and drink sector at the event.

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