



Future Generations Newsletter June 2022



Foreword

The clock is ticking, the time is now!

It was welcome news that Wales has met its 2020 climate targets however, we certainly can't afford to be complacent given that we aren't on track for 2050.

The Welsh Government announced this month that emissions reduced by 40% in 2020, exceeding the target of a 27% reduction in 1990.

Wales is also likely to have met its first carbon budget (2016-2020), which set a legal target of achieving an average reduction of 23% on 1990. The latest data confirms we are likely to have outperformed our carbon budget achieving an average reduction of 28%.

This is heartening to hear and is testimony to how so many individuals, businesses, agencies and groups have worked hard to put climate change on their agenda. However, there is still much to do, both on a local and a global level.

Currently we are not on track to meet net zero by 2050 by a significant margin.

And equally concerning is that if we're not careful do more to understand unintended consequences, we risk making inequalities worse.



My report, [Inequality in a Future Wales](#), examined the impact of future trends like climate change on equality, and highlighted a number of alarming issues:

- The poorest and most marginalised populations are least responsible for climate change yet are most likely to be exposed to its negative effects and have the least resources to respond, cope and recover.
- 245,000 properties in Wales are at risk of flooding. People in our poorest communities, many of those who've been hit hardest by COVID-19, are least able to afford insurance and the cost of putting things right after floods.
- With flooding occurring more and more often, we need a plan to ensure the financial burden doesn't fall on those least able to pay, and an agreed Wales-wide approach to ensuring public services can respond in the right way.
- To tackle the climate crisis in the timeframe needed, we must reinvent policies to address the disadvantages to those who are most vulnerable. This includes ensuring that upskilling for new, future green jobs is targeted at those furthest from the job market, including women and People of Colour.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act says that by law, the way we get to net zero has to improve well-being as a whole, for everyone.

This is why I have asked public bodies to maximise their contribution to the well-being goal A More Equal Wales to address the overlooked link between climate change and inequality. And future planning must involve the people who are likely to be affected most, through citizen assemblies for instance.

Public bodies and decision-makers must act now to stop those affected by the devastating effects of climate change being disadvantaged for generations.

The clock is ticking, the time is now!

You can read the full **Inequality in a Future Wales** report, in Welsh, [here](#), and English, [here](#).



Movement for Change

This month my team spoke to **Babs Lewis, Senior Manager Wales for Nesta – People Powered Results (PPR)**, about WCVA's Community-led Transformation Programme.

"What does it take to build and sustain the resilient, vibrant, cohesive communities envisaged in Wales' Well-being of Future Generations Act?"

This was the question the Wales Council for Voluntary Action's (WCVA) [Community-led Transformation Programme](#), which was launched in June 2021 was designed to explore with support from three community-led teams.

Last year, WCVA and voluntary sector leaders worked with [People Powered Results](#) - an enterprise pioneering new approaches to achieving change and innovation - to explore how voluntary organisations and statutory services can work with communities to develop the capacity they need to help build the fairer, greener, healthier future envisaged in the Act.

Wales has a history of community action, a tradition that's been thrown into sharp relief recently with the floods then the global pandemic.

Three teams spent six months reflecting on what would help collaborative, community-led action thrive. Each had a unique perspective:

- [Credulity in Powys](#) worked with carers to co-design innovative care
- **Llanrhian in Pembrokeshire** aimed to connect diverse communities through practical action
- **Cwmbwrla in Swansea** met local needs by organising events and activities

Vital was the need for trusting relationships with partners in the statutory and voluntary sector. They recognised a real need for community voices to be heard for collaboration to be effective.



“If we can empower communities to take more control of their lives things will change. Listening has made us realise the potential we all have..” they said.

Groups can respond to local priorities with local capacity, bridging the gap between what’s needed and what the voluntary and statutory sectors can provide. But these groups face fundamental challenges in how some systems, including funders and statutory services, manage community-led action.

These loose affiliations of community-minded people are often required to adapt their collaborative approaches to restrictive systems and processes that feel burdensome. Some groups adapt to funding, governance and operational requirements, but many don't have the time, resources or desire to conform, and fail.

Also identified as a barrier was the lack of support, time and resources for reflection on activities and for future planning.



They felt less restricted funding that enables community-led groups to explore their potential was essential, along with support to:

- Develop trusted, long-term relationships, based on listening, as a foundation for collaboration
- Co-design funding relationships that create capacity in communities to work on local priorities in partnership with other sectors
- Build collaborative networks to share experiences and work together on a vision for the future

Community-led action has the capacity to create resilience, address inequality and to support the healthier, vibrant and cohesive communities envisaged in the Act, and therefore needs to be supported.

You can find out more on the [WCVA website](#) and on the [PPR website](#).

Innovative approach from Swansea Law Clinic driven by principles of the WFG Act

Professor Richard Owen spoke to us about the thinking behind the pioneering legal clinic.

The [Swansea Law Clinic](#), which is part of the Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law at Swansea University, provides free legal advice and assistance to members of the public, and is attempting to do this by drawing on principles from the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Clinic's approach is to see the community as its client or in other words to not only serve the needs of clients but also larger, more collectively orientated goals. This is a challenge for existing legal professional ethics, which require that you act in the best interests of your individual client. If you are acting for a community, how can you identify a community interest when interests within a community may conflict?

Already lawyers are starting to innovate in response to this. For example, the charity [ClientEarth](#) is an environmental public interest law firm. Instead of acting for individuals, it sees the earth as its client.

At the community level, if an advice agency is embedded within a community, and sees it as its client, it can identify common problems and address them. In doing so, it is more likely to address not only the presenting problems but also their underlying causes.

The Clinic strives to provide a wraparound service recognising the importance of legal and non-legal remedies. This means working more closely with other agencies – whether educational or medical – than is traditional for legal advice agencies.

This collaborative approach is one of the “ways of working” under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The Clinic will shortly be launching a referral app for the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot local authority areas, which is funded by Coordinated Community Support. This will make it easier for advice agencies to refer cases between themselves.

The referral app will expand the normal networks within which advice services normally operate. Several schools have registered their interest in the app. If a school has concerns, for example, that a young carer is not getting all the support they need and it is affecting their studies, they will be able to refer the case to an advice agency. Follow-up work can then be done to ensure the young carer gets a carer's assessment.

Similarly, a medical practice which feels that stress related illness in a patient has an underlying cause in discrimination or workplace harassment could refer the patient to an advice agency.

In using technology to draw medical, educational and advice services closer together there is the opportunity to improve health, educational and equality outcomes. By tackling the root causes as well as the symptoms of problems, there is a better chance of preventing long-term problems from occurring.

For more information visit <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/law/lawclinic/>

Spotlight on a Public Body: Cardiff Council's Sunflower Club

This month saw both Loneliness Awareness Week (13 - 17 June) *and* World Well-being Week (27 June - 1 July) take place.

[The Marmalade Trust](#) annually commemorates Loneliness Awareness Week to raise awareness of loneliness and encourage people to talk about it.

World Well-being Week is the "brainchild" of [WellBeing World in Jersey](#) and celebrates the many aspects of well-being, from meaningful work to financial security, physical, mental and emotional health, social resilience, community cohesion and care for the environment.

In Wales many public bodies have initiatives to address loneliness and improve well-being, this month we take a look at one in more detail – [Cardiff Council's Sunflower Club](#).





Jane Clemence, one of Cardiff Council’s dedicated community inclusion officers, explains how the Sunflower Club originated.

“We got together through the [Cardiff Council Hubs - Rumney Partnership Hub](#) network across Cardiff before the pandemic,” said Jane, whose work as part of the Well-being Support Service includes organising activities to bring the elderly and isolated together.

“I used to run various sessions at the Rumney Partnership Hub in Llanstephan Road and at other hubs in Llanrumney, St Mellons and Llanedeyrn to keep people active and to get them out of their homes and to socialise,” she said.

“Many people were on their own, having lost their wives or husbands, and when they came to us it was a chance for them to meet others in a nice, friendly environment.”

Then, in the Spring of 2020, the first lockdown robbed them of this social lifeline.



“About a week before, I had an operation on my knee and I was housebound too,” said Jane, “so we had to think about how to keep people together – virtually, if not physically.”

“I worked with Joanne Davies, one of my colleagues at the council’s Independent Living Services team, who was as determined as I was.”

Our solution at first was to use the power of WhatsApp to keep everyone in touch with each other but when the Llanrumney Hall Trust donated 100 tablet computers to the Hub, and the council offered IT support, Jane started to run virtual exercise sessions which people could log in to.

“In 2021, as part of the [Spring Well-being Festival](#), we decided to give some sunflower seeds to all attendees,” said Jane.

“We encouraged everyone to plant them at home and every Thursday, via Teams, we’d compare them, measure their height and see how everyone was doing... this went on for seven months.”



With the easing of restrictions, the group – now known as the Sunflower Club – slowly re-emerged and, with the help of council funding, a grant from the Living Levels Partnership, plus £7,000 worth of plants and equipment from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) as part of its Nature on Your Doorstep programme, they convened at Rumney to put the gardening skills they'd learned in lockdown into practice.

“Rumney was the only Hub with a decent outdoor space – it was perfect for the Sunflower Club,” said Jane.

“First of all, we transformed a little patio area and made it a nice place to have tea. There were six or eight at first, as people were still a bit wary of going out, but numbers grew and people started coming from all over Cardiff to join us, having heard about it from their friends.

With the RSPB's help, we created raised beds, a greenhouse, shelving and a water butt and they gave us a huge amount of plants and seeds to help with our projects.



In the second lockdown we were able to meet outdoors so that didn't stop us and now our numbers are up to about 16 regulars. Most are elderly and live on their own, but some come from a local centre for people with learning disabilities, along with their support workers."

"And we don't just look after the garden here," said Jane. "We have regular health sessions and people come and play games, do arts and crafts or just sit and have a giggle."

Most of the Sunflower Club are in no doubt that without the dedication of Jane and her colleagues their lives would be immeasurably worse. *"I lost my wife in June last year,"* said Colin Fleming, 77, a former postman from Llanedeyrn.





“My grief was almost unbearable, but I started coming here six months ago and it has given me a reason to get up in the morning.

I do Tai Chi, ‘Meet up Mondays’ in Llanrumney, curling and on Tuesdays Jane leads a walk around parks and other lovely areas of the city. Without her and this club, I really don’t think I’d still be here.”

And it has transformed Jane, too. At 55, with more than 35 years at the council under her belt and with her husband already retired, she was contemplating giving up work herself before the pandemic.

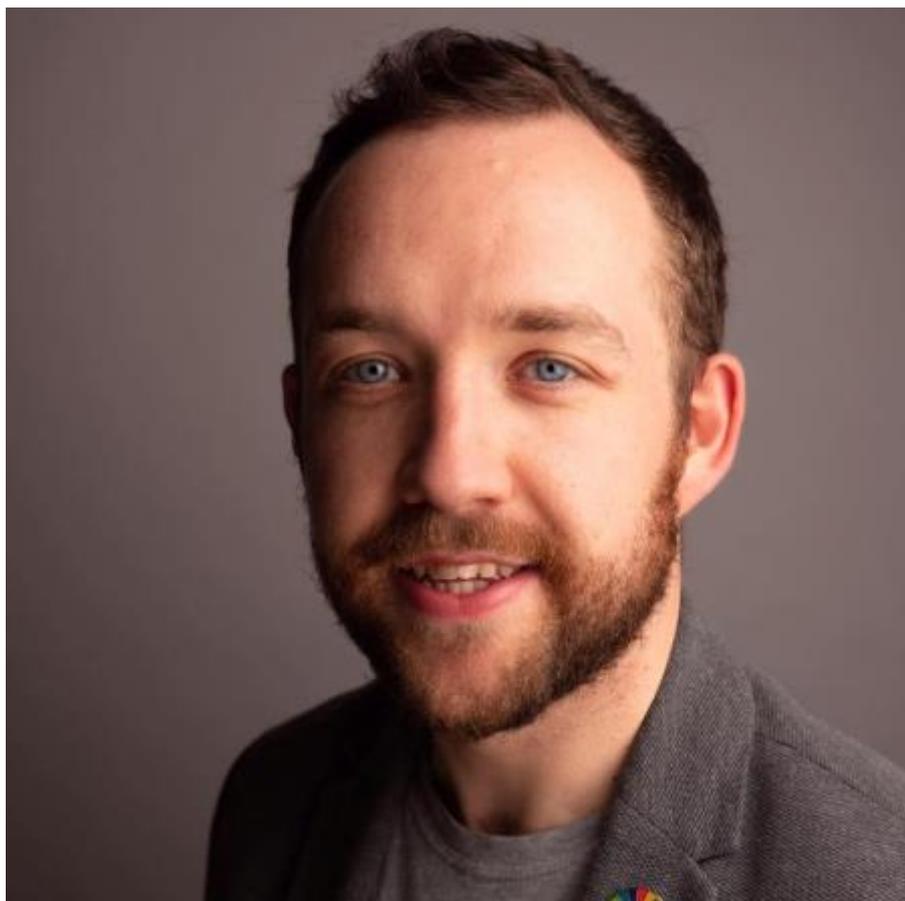
“All this has absolutely changed me for the better,” she said. “It’s been quite humbling to see the journey that all these people have been on and how we’ve been a part of it. It’s made me fall in love with my job all over again and I can’t wait to get to work.”



Meet the Team

Each month we will be publishing a Q&A with a member of my team who will share their insights into their time with my Office.

This month it's Jacob Ellis, Change Maker Lead.



When did you start with the office?

I joined the office as a Public Affairs Advisor in 2018.

In the shadow of a newly elected American President and the EU referendum, I left my journalistic days behind me. It was all change!

This newish Well-being of Future Generations Act intrigued me. In fact, only a few days before the application deadline for the new role I had the opportunity to interview Sophie for a news story we were running on climate change.

Little did I know, I would be working for her a few months later! I've held a range of roles within the office and I'm now a Lead Change Maker!

What are your current priorities?

In addition to the responsibilities as a member of the Senior Management Team, I'm involved in a wide range of areas across our workplan – from public affairs, international to Welsh Government policy interventions.

I'm currently leading the Commissioner's Section 20 Review into how the Welsh Government are implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act within its machinery of government. You can find more information about the scope of the review [here](#). A Section 20 Review is a mechanism to provide the Commissioner with insight on how public bodies are applying the legislation.

At the end of a review, the Commissioner can make recommendations on how the public body should apply the Act in the future. This work was launched in January 2022 and will end in November 2022.

Watch this space!

What changes have you noticed over the years?

Like many, the pandemic introduced new ways of working and new priority areas to explore. I'm pleased and grateful that we've managed to continue our sense of community and influence across the public sector and beyond during this unprecedented time.

Notwithstanding that, this has been a difficult period for us all, we have much to be proud of as an office about our response.

Other changes include an office move, and the many faces who have come and gone. A big shout out to Abby, Rebecca, Helen V, Clare Johnson, Cathy, Eurgain, Eleri and to the many secondments and placements we've had over the years!

Perhaps the biggest change is an external one! We can see the legislation is doing great work and making a difference. There is a growing movement of communities, voluntary organisations, academics, public bodies, businesses, farmers, feminists, engineers, journalists and creatives – coming together to make Wales better!



What has been your proudest moment?

There are two proud moments that stand out to me!

Since joining the office, I have sought to raise awareness of the Well-being of Future Generations Act globally. This has included supporting Sophie as chair of the Network of Institutions for Future Generations, curating a side event at COP26, convening international organisations and speaking at global events.

However, my proudest moment came in December 2021 when the United Nations announced it wished to establish a [UN Special Envoy for Future Generations](#), a Summit of the Future in 2023 and a Declaration on Future Generations. The work had paid off!

The briefing papers to UN officials, our presence at the UN High-Level Political Forums, the meetings with UN Special Envoy on Youth and senior officials had all led to this ground-breaking moment!

Wales was truly leading the way!

My second proudest moment is establishing the [Future Generations Leadership Academy](#).

Now in its second year and led by my colleagues Jonathan Tench and Najma Hashi in collaboration with [UpRising](#), the Academy was born from a conversation to support young leaders in Wales with the tools and skills for the future.

In 2019 I established the Academy with partners across Wales – and a fantastic first cohort of 20 young leaders! It is exciting and reassuring to know that there is appetite and eagerness among our young people to advance the Act throughout Wales’ public, private and voluntary sectors.



What has been your biggest piece of learning in your time with the office?

That we’re on a journey – but like a marathon there are times that we need to move faster and other times that require us to take a breather, slow time and reflect. It’s very easy to lose yourself in the moment, in the extreme challenges and threats ahead.

We know we have to do more, but pace, quality and reflection are words that we forget.

Perhaps, this is why I've valued the importance of our young leaders – those who will need to continue to champion the change necessary.

Taking the time to empower others, to upskill them and to find the time to raise awareness of the Act among communities is a necessary component of the Act's future and longevity!

What is your foremost hope as the work of the office continues into the future?

That we never get complacent, never lose our imagination, take time to reflect on every negative and that we celebrate every small and big win!

What advice would you give to new team members?

Take the time to fully absorb the role you have and the impact you can achieve.

You have the permission to explore, to play and to fail.

This is a fun, rewarding and influential workplace. Pace yourself.

Croeso!

One word that sums up your time at the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales:

Unchartered

Contact Us

Want to catch up on previous issues of the newsletter? You can find them on our website [here](#).

For more information get in contact here:

futuregenerations.wales/ / futuregenerations2020.wales

contactus@futuregenerations.wales

@futuregencymru

