



Future Generations Newsletter January
2023



Foreword

Today, 31st January 2023, is my final day as the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

I have spent the last seven years of my life as the 'guardian of the unborn', armed with the world-leading Well-being of Future Generations Act and working to persuade Wales, and the World, to move away from the status quo and towards a new way of life.

While sometimes it has been frustrating, with decisions made despite the perils and emergencies clearly evident just ahead of us, I am sure that Wales is a nation of Changemakers.

Wales is full of people who are fighting for a better future and are part of a movement for change helping to create a nation that is healthier, more equal, environmentally-resilient, globally responsible, prosperous, with cohesive communities and vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

So, in the last month of my term as Commissioner, I wanted to recognise some of those who are working hard to realise the ambitions of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.



On 24th January, I published my **Future Generations Changemaker 100** – a list of 100 people and organisations from across Wales who are acting today for a better tomorrow. The list includes teachers, medics, public services providers, communities and businesses, leaders and young people in schools, local authorities, poets and more.

This is just a fraction of the hundreds and thousands of people who are implementing the Act, creating change and inspiring us.

To launch the Future Generations Changemaker 100 and share my final reflections from the last seven years, I held an event in Wales' Millennium Centre which included creative performances, talks from

'human libraries', reflections from Wales' First Minister and more – the event brought hundreds of Welsh Changemakers together face-to-face and online to connect and share learnings.

I may be the first of many statutory Future Generations Commissioners, but this Act has, and always will, belong to the people. The role of the Commissioner is to help the lessons of the Act flourish, guide us to make brave decisions for our futures, and help Wales be moulded by our communities.

Changemakers, I thank you. I take inspiration from you, and I hope you take inspiration from others across Wales.

I'm excited for the future that Wales will build. I have a feeling that we're only getting started.

Once a guardian of future generations, always a guardian of future generations.



Impact of the Act and My Reflections

In the final months of my term as Commissioner, I've been working to highlight some of the impact of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and celebrate those who are working towards a brighter future.

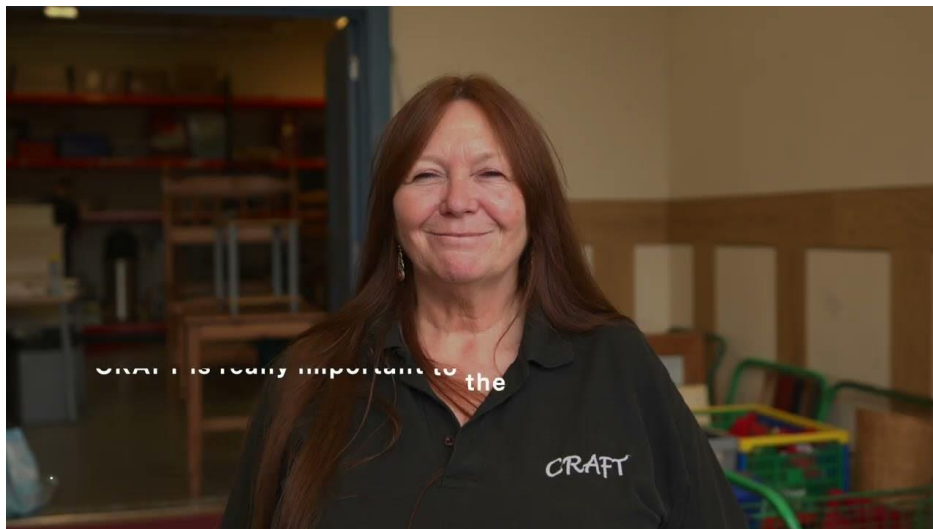
The Act has influenced Welsh Government and others to demonstrate how they're taking account of future generations, leading to big changes in our transport, planning, education and health systems.



I am proud of the 'big win' moments we have seen here in Wales including:

- The U-turn of the M4 Relief Road which prevented a 13-mile stretch of motorway being built through environmentally sensitive wetlands – utilising the Act, Welsh Government changed their initial road building decision and prioritised our communities and environment.
- Welsh Government's latest transport strategy is showing how they're taking a long-term lens to how we travel. With an emphasis on active travel and improved public transport instead of building new roads, we're building a transport system which is fit for the future. World-leading, Wales is third in the world for recycling.
- With increasing concerns over the cost-of-living crisis, Wales is committed to putting people above profit and Welsh Government's plans for a publicly owned energy company is a testament to this. Helping us transition to green energy, the energy company will reduce our reliance on global markets and put money back into the pockets of Welsh people.
- A new purpose-driven curriculum which is designed to create well-rounded, innovative and creative citizens and includes mental health education and eco-literacy – all the while moving away from traditional exams and moving towards learning for learning's sake.
- Wales is also going further to protect the health of our planet and environment with their new waste strategy, Beyond Recycling which is prioritising a circular economy and helping us become a zero waste, net zero carbon Wales that uses its fair share of resources.





And these are just some of the big Government policy changes. There are thousands of small but mighty decisions and actions being taken every day by people, communities and organisations across Wales who are implementing the Act and acting today for a better tomorrow.

These guardians of future generations are challenging our old way of doing things - the teachers, local leaders, school children, and activists who put the Act into action every day. The creation of the Act tackled the initial structural challenge, but the Welsh people have ignited the cultural transformation.

These are just a small handful of the people included in my Future Generations Changemaker 100 which in itself is a drop in the ocean when considering those who are working for a better future.



1 - Ali Abdi



2 - Chris Blake



3 - Criccieth Town Council



4 - Samantha Egelstaff

- Down the road from my office, a proud community champion and activist, **Ali Abdi**, is empowering people to become active citizens and leaders and encouraging groups of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people to engage with political leaders and Welsh Government.
- Working in partnership with the communities in Brecon and the Rhondda valleys, **Chris Blake** (Founding Director of Green Valleys and catalyst for Project Skyline) is helping us change how we connect local people to their landscape all the while, providing jobs, training and health benefits.
- With their new ambitious Community Plan in tow and inspired by a 90-year old poem, the **Criccieth Town Council** has encouraged community cohesion, supported local traders, sustained morale through and beyond the covid-19 pandemic, and improved well-being through a variety of community activities.
- In the wake of Storm Ciara in 2020, **Samantha Egelstaff** co-founded the Llanrwst Flood Action Group which is working collaboratively to protect the community from future flooding and raising awareness of its effects.



5 - Amanda Davies



6 - Zoey Allen



7 - Wil Stewart



8 - Taylor Edmonds



9 - Marten Lewis

- **Amanda Davies** from Swansea Bay University Health Board developed the Bed Poverty Relief Scheme and supplied thousands of surplus Covid-19 emergency beds to homes experiencing bed poverty, a children's hospital and refugee camps in Moldova for Ukrainian people fleeing the war.

- “On a mission to educate”, **Zoey Allen**, a trans woman from Cardiff, is working hard to increase the visibility of trans and queer people and is fighting for equal and better health care, equal access to facilities and “to be treated like a human being”.
- With the Act as a guide, Warden at Breakwater Country Park in Holyhead, **Wil Stewart** is working with GPs and the local health board to offer walks as a form of natural therapy and improve people’s health and well-being. Proud of the Act and how it’s sanctioning well-being across Wales, Wil has seen significant positive changes in people’s well-being from walking.
- Using words to incite meaningful change, our Poet in Residence for 2021-2022, **Taylor Edmonds**, is working with communities across Wales to humanise difficult topics and protect future generations.
- An example of how businesses are seeing the benefits of using the Act in their processes, **Marten Lewis** at Bluestone National Park Resort is transforming the former dairy farm into a luxury, nature-based resort which prioritises decarbonisation, biodiversity and the inclusion of local providers and suppliers.

You can [view the full Future Generations Changemaker 100 list](#) on my website.

There's more to be done, and for reasons such as COVID-19, the effects of the Ukraine conflict and the cost-of-living crisis, we have a steeper mountain to climb to achieve a better future for our children and grandchildren.

But as I complete my term, I am confident that, increasingly, Wales has well-being running through its veins and that the next Commissioner, Derek Walker, will have an ever-growing network of Changemakers to lean on and learn from.

Future Generations Changemaker 100 Launch

The launch of the Future Generations Changemaker 100 on 24th January was an opportunity to bring people together to share learning, make new connections and be inspired.

190 registered to attend the event face-to-face in Cardiff, and a further 100 for the online live stream.

All presenters (and some of the suppliers) were drawn from the Future Generations Changemaker 100 list.

Graeme Farrow, Creative Director of Wales Millennium Centre provided the welcome and introduced **Radnor Primary School’s** choir, who sang incredible renditions of *Yma of Hyd* and *We Need to Build a Better Future*.

MC-ing the day were my Lead Changemaker, **Jacob Ellis** and Future Generations Leadership Academy Graduate, **Jia Wei Lee**.

Inspired by Copenhagen’s Human Library concept which hosts personal conversations designed to challenge prejudice and the status quo, we asked a variety of Changemakers from different sectors, regions and backgrounds to speak about their work and experiences in 10 ‘human library workshops’.



1. **Amanda Davies**, Swansea Bay University Health Board
2. **Dr Stacey Harris** and **Yasmina Hamdaoui**, Ysbyty Gwynedd
3. **Dafydd Gruffydd**, Menter Mon
4. **Indo Zwingina**, Community organiser
5. **Natalie Hodgkinson**, Boss & Brew Academy
6. **Louis Mertens**, Transport for Wales and **Judith Musker-Turner**, the Arts Council of Wales (and Future Generations Leadership Academy Alumni)
7. **Marten Lewis**, Bluestone National Park Resort
8. What the Well-being of Future Generations Act means to young people with **The Democracy Box Co-creators Kat, Emily, Fidelia and Amber** and facilitated by **Yvonne Murphy of Omidaze Productions**
9. **Meleri Davies**, Partneriaeth Ogwen
10. **Ffion Mitchell**, Marine Conservation Society (Future Generations Leadership Academy alumnae)





We encouraged attendees to write the name of their own Changemakers, those who inspire them and hang it on our **Future Generations Chair** to keep growing the network. Created as a symbol of voices not present but who should have a seat at the table, the Future Generations Chair was part of COP26 in Glasgow and will be moved to the Welsh Government's Cabinet Office at Cathays Park as a reminder to decision-makers to keep future generations in mind.

Kicking-off the afternoon, **Taylor Edmonds**, my Poet in Residence 2021-22, performed *Emerging from Winter* – an incredible poem which she co-created with the Llanrwst Flood Action group and was originally performed by Ysgol Bro Gwydir, a primary school in Llanrwst.

[We batten down hatches in November](#)

[for the drag of winter. In our flood plain town](#)

[there are things we've had to accept:](#)

[we'll be dragged from our beds](#)

[at 3AM to fill sandbags ...](#)





We also had a presentation from **Paul Gilhooley**, from the Scottish Government on how they are taking forward their own future generations' approaches and how policies and legislation inspired by long-term thinking are growing worldwide.

Keen to involve future leaders, alumni from my **Leadership Academy** were keynote listeners for the day and were invited to join a discussion moderated by **Bleddyn Harries** on their reflections for the day and going forward.

We were also lucky enough to receive a speech from **Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister for Wales** on the legacy of the Act and its impact so far including how decisions made today are taken through the lens of the well-being goals and how they will affect our future generations.

"One thing... Wales [is] really working collaboratively already... living and breathing the Act and thinking cross-sectorally about future generations."





Coming to a close, I shared my final reflections and thanks, and introduced **Derek Walker**, the next Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

To finish off the day, **Blank Face**, The Democracy Box co-creator, performed his song *Where Will We Be*, which is inspired by the Act and questions “where will we be in 50 years?”.

I’d like to say a big thank-you to the 300 people who joined, and particularly to those who contributed (above) for making the event very special.

Where will we be in fifty years?

Will there be justice?

Will there be peace?

[Where Will We Be](#)





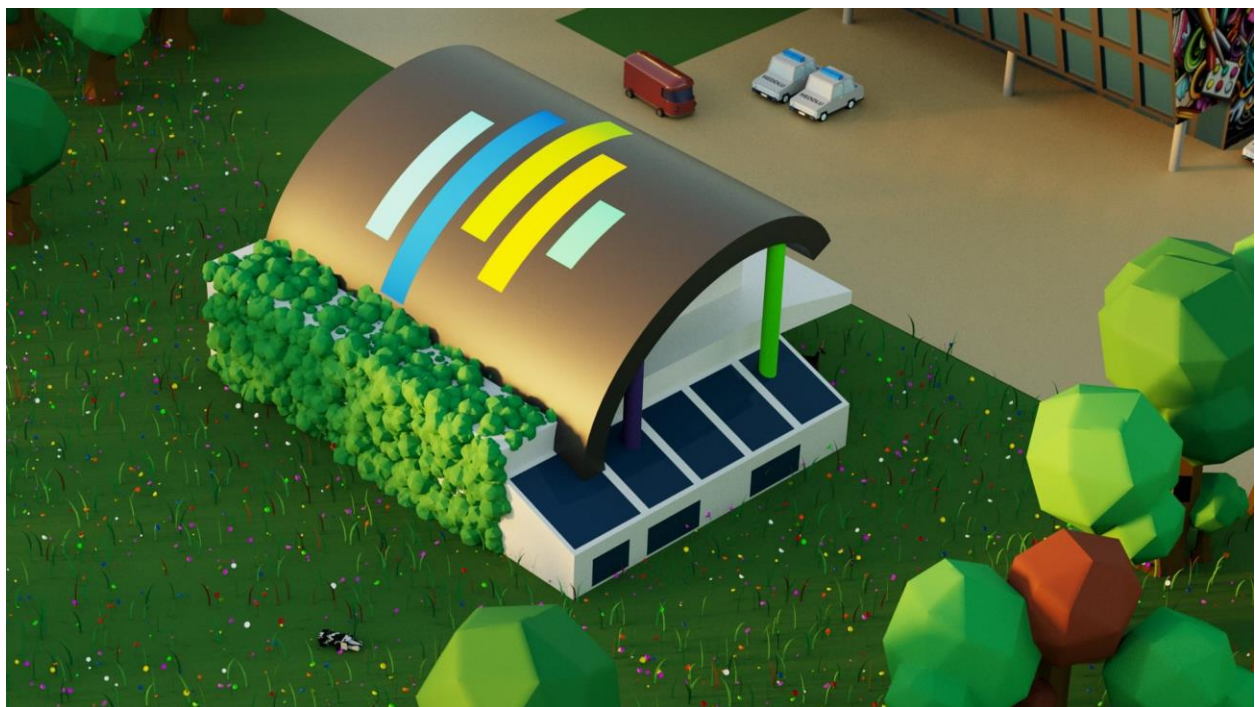
The future

As I've mentioned, today 31st January is my final day as Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

Derek Walker will begin his term as Commissioner on 1st March 2023.

Keep in touch with the team at the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales by emailing contactus@futuregenerations.wales.

As I move on to continue working on the future generations agenda in a different way, I'd also love to stay in touch so please don't hesitate to get in touch through social media - @sophiehowe on Twitter and LinkedIn.



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:

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