



# Future Generations Newsletter August 2023



## Foreword



*1 - Derek Walker, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales*

It was a pleasure to participate at the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol in Boduan earlier this month and to work in partnership with several organisations to host five events.

The Eisteddfod is a fantastic showcase of our culture and language in Wales. Our events at the Eisteddfod covered a range of topics, including the impact of tourism on certain communities and the importance of creating jobs in all parts of Wales so that young people do not need to leave their communities to find work.

The action needed to address the climate and nature emergencies was an important topic of conversation at the Eisteddfod.

Wales has had a number of 'world firsts' related to climate change and there are so many examples of good practice across the country including:

- Ynni Cymru, being established to expand community-owned renewable energy generation
- Welsh Government committing to divesting all public body pensions funds from fossil fuels by 2030
- Sterimelt, a new technology that repurposes single use medical waste, is being used in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board's St Woolos Hospital in Newport
- A moratorium on roads across Wales, with new roads only being built if they meet new climate criteria
- Wales is third in the world for recycling and we were the only UK nation to improve recycling rates during COVID
- Câr-y-Môr in St Davids being the first commercial seaweed and shellfish farm in Wales which uses no fertiliser, pesticides, or freshwater and aims to restore the coastline and provide sustainable jobs

- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service is trialling the use of treated and cleaned wastewater as a response to droughts, a first in the UK



But, while Wales is leading the way in many ways, we know we need to do more. We need more urgent action for our water, soil and air to maintain healthy life on earth and sustain our ecosystems. Our economy, public health, natural environment and communities cannot work in isolation from each other, which is what we have seen for far too long.

Despite being ingrained in Welsh DNA, our culture and language are often forgotten when we consider how to tackle the urgent crises around us and support our well-being. But under the Well-being of Future Generations Act, cultural well-being is equally as important as our environmental, economic and social well-being. We must make the most of that and public bodies should take advantage of the importance of culture in their plans to tackle these crises.

Investing in our culture and language is an incredibly important part of preventing some of the most serious challenges such as loneliness, obesity and ill-health. For examples, the NHS Confederation highlighted in 2020 how during the COVID-19 pandemic, many organisations and freelancers continued to entertain and provide necessary services to aid patient recovery and experiences.







In our case study [‘Arts and Culture in well-being’](#) we highlighted a few examples of how language and culture have supported well-being:

- The Arts Council of Wales’ cARTrefu programme (in partnership with AGE Cymru and the Baring Foundation) which supports Artists in Residence within care homes in Wales.
- The National Library of Wales’ Living Memory Project (in partnership with Hywel Dda Health Board) connected the Library’s graphic and audio-visual collections to older people living with dementia and has now been expanded into a national scheme.
- The collaborative ‘Lost in the Art’ project led by Denbighshire Council, Arts Council of Wales and Bangor University used visual arts to address issues that can affect people with dementia and enabled an intergenerational approach with school pupils becoming Dementia Friends and joining sessions. The project has since rolled out to Wrexham, Flintshire and Conwy in collaboration with social services, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, GPs and the Alzheimer’s Society.

Culture is a powerful mechanism for helping to tackle and solve a number of issues; we cannot forget it.

We'll be sharing an article in next month's newsletter on an exciting research project with Cardiff Metropolitan University on the impact of climate change on our culture and Welsh language.

## Our work supporting public bodies

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*When the organisations that come under the Well-being of Future Generations Act came forward and overwhelmingly called for more support in making the aspirations of the legislation a reality, we listened, and we acted.*

*Here's an overview of how we've been working and supporting public bodies over the last few years.*

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### **Senedd Committee Findings**

In late 2020, a [Committee of Senedd Members](#) asked professionals and people across Wales how the implementation of the WFG Act was going so far. People from across the private, voluntary and public sectors responded; as well as young people, community groups and organisations like ours, providing evidence on what was going well and what needed to be improved.

When the [Senedd Committee reported](#) their findings and recommendations in March 2021, their conclusion was that we *all* needed to do more to improve public services and the well-being of people living in Wales now and in the future.

Acting on the evidence they received from organisations grappling to overcome short-term pressures and challenges, the Committee concluded that, while the level of funding the Future Generations Commissioner has to provide organisations with specific, practical

# Delivering for Future Generations: The story so far

March 2021



[www.senedd.wales](http://www.senedd.wales)

## [2 - Delivering for future generations: the story so far](#)

support around the Act is insufficient, the Commissioner needed make the most of what they had and focus their attention on building constructive and consistent relationships with organisations across Wales.

The Senedd Committee emphasised the expertise and attention of the Commissioner and their team makes a difference to those working in Local Government, Health, Fire and Rescue Authorities, National Parks and national organisations like Natural Resources Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru as they seek to change their organisational culture and policies to focus on future generations' well-being.

### **What we did**

Our team have always supported organisations that come under the Act through providing advice, training, signposting and convening people. But due to a limited budget, we often prioritised our small team’s attention towards Welsh Government as they play an important leadership role in setting laws, policies and guidance to the other public sector bodies and believed that change at the top will trickle down.

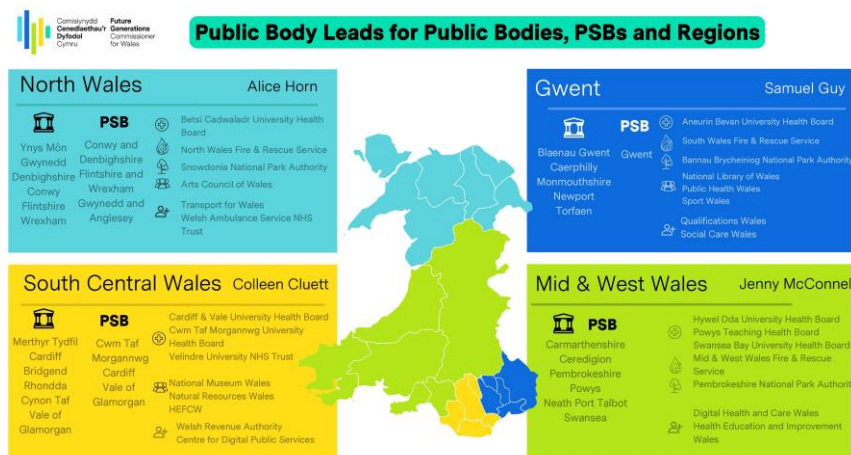
So, in 2021, listening to the evidence provided to the Senedd Committee, we allocated members of our team to be lead contacts for each of the public bodies covered by the Act.

Our team of contact leads spent a busy six months following the Senedd Committee report building relationships with key members of staff in public bodies across Wales to assess their progress against the Act and understand what advice and support they really wanted from us.

The findings echoed those of the Committee – they wanted a mix of strategic level input and operational support – from challenging at leadership level, to communicating the cultural change of the Act to front-line staff. Overwhelmingly, public bodies wanted more support; and they wanted support that was **individualised, tailored and independent**.

Two years on, we have continued with this way of working - four members of our office work as Public Body Lead Contacts and are the go-to people for Local Authorities, national bodies and Public Services Boards:

- Colleen Cluett – South Central Wales
- Sam Guy – Gwent
- Alice Horn – North Wales
- Jenny McConnell – Mid and West Wales



In the two financial years since establishing lead contacts, we’ve received 231 requests for support from public bodies – an increase of 44.6% compared to the previous two years!

Representatives of public bodies have given positive feedback on the constructive relationships they have now built with the Commissioner and our team, saying:



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"I really welcome this way of working together. It is great to have a consistent and frequent point of contact."

*Denbighshire Council*

"It's made the world of difference."

*National Library of Wales*

"We welcome the consistency this approach will bring."

*Ceredigion Council*

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Understanding the challenges and pressures on staff in public bodies helps the Commissioner and our team best direct our limited time and energy – whether that's in representing their concerns to Ministers and Government officials, spending time



3 - Colleen with Dr Tom Porter (Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and Cardiff Council) at a Healthy Travel Charter meeting



with public body teams to help them practically apply sustainable development, or introducing people to each other with common goals or problems.

As a result, we have built up the way we provide advice, assistance and support in a variety of ways. We publish [recommendations and reports](#); comment on [policy and current affairs](#); produce [toolkits and resources](#); provide advice directly to organisations; convene people around a problem or policy area; and respond to members of the public that [contact us](#).

### **A day in the life**

A day for one of our Public Body Leads involves many different activities, and no day is the same as the one before. A typical Monday may look something like this:

- Begin the day with a coffee while reading and responding to emails, looking in particular at our public bodies' newsrooms, social media and the policy briefings we receive from Camlas to stay up to date with what our public bodies are working on.
- At 10am we attend our weekly all-staff team meeting to share current and upcoming priorities, ensuring integration between our office and public bodies. Monday meetings also include a 'lunch and learn' from an external expert, continuing our development of knowledge and encouraging us to think critically about topics outside of our normal remits.



5 - [Sam in our video about working flexibly](#)



6 - [Christian and Colleen in our video about maintaining health and well-being in work](#)



*7 - Public body team away day*

- We have regular meetings with our public bodies to learn about their current work and support them with tailored advice and information. Some of these meetings have specific agendas and topics for discussion while others are a space for open conversation. These meetings all require follow-up whether that be connecting people, sharing resources or highlighting good practice.
- In addition to our roles as Public Body Leads, we all manage or support on the delivery of the office's priority areas and statutory functions. Alice's focus is on Policy and Reviews, Jenny specialises in the Commissioner's requirements around Monitoring and Assessing, and Colleen and Sam's expertise lies with the statutory duties to provide Advice and Assistance.
- Whatever we're up to in the day we stay connected through Teams. We work together to answer questions, share information and resources, and highlight good practice from one region that could be utilised elsewhere. For example, Alice working with public bodies in



North Wales will often highlight good practice that Sam and Colleen will share in Gwent and South Wales or Jenny will utilise in Mid and West Wales, and vice versa.

- Lastly, we always try to make time for well-being within our working lives. Sam regularly takes meetings while walking around a local reservoir to get into nature and remove his eyes from the screen. Jenny, Alice and Colleen will often be found working in the company of, and usually while cwtching, their gorgeous dogs. Walking the talk for our personal well-being is something we as a team feel is incredibly important and we do what we can to keep happy and well in the course of a productive working day.

### **What next?**

Fast-forward to 2023 and ‘supporting public bodies and Public Services Boards to collaborate, with each other and other sectors, to implement the Act’ has been a major topic of conversation for the new Commissioner as he meets with leaders and people around Wales and asks what [‘Our Future Focus’](#) should be.

Our new workplan will be published in Autumn and, while our budget is still limited and our team remains small with increasing demand, we want to continue this important work and support public bodies and PSBs across Wales to act today for a better tomorrow.

Which is why, more recently, we have also offered learning and development opportunities to support public bodies to apply the Act in their context and meet others trying to do the same. Our sessions cover topics like procurement, long-term and futures thinking and scrutiny – topics most requested of our Public Body Lead Contacts.

**Representatives of public bodies can register for upcoming workshops [here](#).**

**And for more information on how we provide support and assistance to public bodies in Wales, visit our website [here](#).**

## **Future Generations Leadership Academy 3.0**

We’re excited to be launching the third cohort of our Future Generations Leadership Academy next month and supporting the journey of a diverse group of participants as they develop their leadership skills, build connections and learn more about the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Keep an eye out in our September issue for a full feature on the new participants, their onboarding session and what they’ll be learning until their graduation in March 2024.

For more information on the Academy, [visit our website](#).

Academi Arweinyddiaeth  
Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol  
**Future Generations**  
Leadership Academy





## Movement for Change

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*This month my team spoke to **Sarah Walkley, a freelance writer and researcher who set up [Purplefully](#)** to help organisations to develop their sustainability strategy and communication.*

*This is what she had to say about her research project helping people build connections with nature through language.*

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"Reconnecting people with nature is increasingly seen as fundamental to building a sustainable future. We protect and cherish the people and things to which we feel most connected. However, few of us stop to think about how we build that connection, or the role that language might play.

And yet... conversations connect us to other people. Names identify the people and objects that we value. Naming our first car gives it an importance far beyond its financial value. We are more likely to take interest in a robin, or blue tit, or crow than 'just a bird'.

However, the way that we use natural terms is evolving. We are less likely to know the difference between species, referring to birds, flowers and trees. We are as likely to think of the cloud as the place to store our photos as a fluffy white mass in the sky. And what about web, tweet or stream?

As a linguist who has spent many years working in publishing, I have long had a love of words, as well as a love of nature. These two interests combined in a research project inspired by the Future Generations Commissioner's FG Report 2020 recommendation "*that the Welsh language should be a driver for economic and environmental change*".

### Language, sustainability and the Act

Though language and culture underpin 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is no specific goal related to cultural protection.





Wales is unique in formally recognising the role of language and making ‘A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language’ one of seven interconnected well-being goals for a sustainable future.

My research explored the role that language can play in building a connection with nature and how learning Welsh or using the language more extensively could help to drive environmental change. To do this, I studied the Carneddau Landscape Partnership, which goes beyond traditional habitat and heritage conservation, ensuring traditional knowledge about the landscape is also recorded.

### **Driving deep connection**

For many of us, our first experience of nature and the outdoors comes from a geography field trip; it is all about ‘clipboards and cagoules’. But there are many other ways that we connect with nature that are being applied in the Carneddau and are applicable more broadly across Wales and beyond. We could forage for food, paint the landscape or think about the words we use for nature.

Individuals do not have to become fluent in Welsh. Despite having a long family background in Wales, I have only learnt the rudiments of the language during my research; I hope to learn more. Learning key terms and phrases can still be beneficial.

My research identified six strategies that Wales’s cultural institutions could adopt to connect individuals with nature, including greater precision in our use of language, rehumanising the landscape to create intimate connections and changing value judgements around landscape.

For example, Welsh has several words for mountains, valleys and many other natural features. You have to look carefully to know why one piece of high ground is a *mynydd* and another is a *carnedd*. With that level of attention to detail comes connection.

We have always seen shapes in the landscape that remind us of ourselves, which is why we use bodily terms such as *cefn* (back) and *braich* (arm). Taking time to appreciate that can create a sense of intimacy with the world around us.

Jungle and savannah have been adopted into English because they describe a landscape that is special and unique. In north Wales consistent use of the word *ffridd* achieves something similar.

This is just a small selection of the ways language can help to build a connection identified in my dissertation for a master's in Sustainability Leadership at the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership."

If you are interested in learning more about this work, please email Sarah via [hello@purplefully.com](mailto:hello@purplefully.com).

## Decarbonising FGC

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*As a team, we aim to 'walk the talk' of the Well-being of Future Generations Act so that when it comes to implementing the Act, we practice what we preach.*

*We also believe in learning by doing, and walking the talk means we're better equipped to support and advise others.*

*As part of our work to look more closely at our carbon footprint and produce a carbon reduction plan, our team have undertaken carbon literacy training.*

*Here's some of what Hollie, our Correspondence and Communications Officer, learned throughout the training and will be thinking about going forward.*

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***"We have got to change the tone of this conversation. There is no way we can achieve victory without optimism"*** was one of the first things I heard going through this training; setting a great tone for the rest of the course.

Thinking about how we tackle the huge issues around climate change and the nature emergency can be incredibly overwhelming. But focusing internally on making sure we're doing the best we can feels like a big step forward and is inspiring my own personal action.

Co-produced by One Earth Education, our carbon literacy training course was created to be tailored to meet the specific needs and objectives of our team. With relevant and practical content about how we can reach our sustainability goals and commitments, the course was made to empower our team with the knowledge, tools, and strategies to drive positive change, within our office and across Wales.

The training covered a wide range of topics including:

- the causes of climate change
- what is meant by emissions scopes
- the need for organisations to act
- your digital footprint
- practical know-how of how to prepare a carbon reduction plan



Some of the most impactful and interesting things I learned throughout the training were around our digital footprint, the unseen negative impacts of technology and how we can be more conscious with our use of it.

While there's a time and place for emails, there are over 64 million unnecessary emails sent in the UK every day. Being more strategic with how and over what platform we share information are small changes that are indicative of a greater culture change.

For instance, each UK adult sending one less 'thank you' email a day would save over 16,433 tonnes of carbon a year – the same as taking 3,334 diesel cars off the road!

And in the new world of Zoom and Teams, you can reduce the carbon footprint of your video call by 96% by just turning off your camera. Connection to your colleagues and loved ones is important, but considering when using camera is really necessary is bound to have a positive impact.

As Mike Berners-Lee, researcher and author of 'How Bad are Bananas' and 'There is no Planet B', has said: ***"Whilst the carbon footprint of an email isn't huge, it's a great illustration of the broader principle that cutting the waste out of our lives is good for our well-being and good for the environment. Every time we take a small step towards changing our behaviour, be that sending fewer emails or carrying a reusable coffee cup, we need to treat it as a reminder to ourselves and others that we care even more about the really big carbon decisions."***

In this time of climate and nature emergencies, it is important that we make sure we're doing all we can to minimise our impact on people and planet. I'm happy to be a part of the team where we're taking a proactive approach to reducing our organisational carbon footprint. And even better, where we're working to be carbon positive – meaning our net carbon emissions are below net zero.

I'll be taking what I've learned from the carbon literacy training forward in how I work and live and look forward to noticing how my carbon footprint reduces where possible through WWF's calculator.

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If you're interested in learning more about how we're walking the talk and embedding the Act in our processes and policies, [visit our website](#).



For more specific information on our decarbonisation work, please email Rhiannon Hardiman, Change Maker (Climate, Nature, Decarbonisation) via [rhiannon.hardiman@futuregenerations.wales](mailto:rhiannon.hardiman@futuregenerations.wales).

## 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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