



Wildlife Trusts
Wales
Ymddiriedolaethau Natur
Cymru

Wildlife, Wales and the World: **A YOUTH MANIFESTO FOR COP 16**



STAND FOR NATURE WALES:
bringing young people together to tackle
climate change and the nature crisis in Cymru

A foreword from our young people

There is no questioning the fact that we are currently experiencing a Global Biodiversity Crisis. The latest Living Planet report has revealed an average decline of 69% in the relative abundance of wildlife populations around the world in the last 50 years. Wales is no exception to this trend, with the State of Nature report suggesting there has been a 13% decrease in the average abundance of wildlife here in Wales. Of all the species present in Wales, 17% of them are faced with extinction. Without immediate action, we could face irreversible loss of biodiversity in our wild spaces.

As a young Welsh person, these figures cast a foreboding shadow over our future. Without wildlife, the vital systems that underlie our very survival cease to function. The crops we grow wither as our pollinators decline and invasive pests spread far and wide. The livestock we keep struggle as soils are sapped of nutrients and extreme weather washes the topsoil away. Our waterways become barren and undrinkable as pollution chokes our rivers and fish stocks dwindle. And on a more personal level, our well-being declines as wildlife is pushed out of our communities and to the very edge of extinction.

We cannot continue along this trajectory, and that is why we need major change to happen at COP16. Young people from across Wales have come together to write this manifesto, a summary of our key concerns and the major changes we want to see implemented to safeguard the future of biodiversity in Wales. If World leaders enact effective and immediate action, we could still reverse this decline and safeguard our future, and the future of generations to come. We have outlined our asks for the World, and our specific asks for Wales, with the hope that you will listen to our voices and take the necessary steps to secure the future of our natural world.



Alex Griffiths
Stand for Nature Wales Cardiff

A foreword from the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Wales is renowned for its natural beauty, from mighty mountains to our rugged coastline. We have some of the most stunning scenery in the UK and indeed the world. People visit Wales to enjoy its beautiful landscapes and diverse nature. Our environment defines us and protecting and restoring nature is critical for a prosperous and healthy future for us all. But we know our wildlife is in trouble and in serious decline. We also know that our relationship with wildlife needs to be reset and we need to take action before it is too late. The economic prosperity of Wales and the wellbeing of all depend on a thriving natural world.

The Welsh Government is firmly committed to addressing both the nature and climate crisis. We are working to ensure that taking action on these two vital issues is central to everything we do in government. Wales was the first country to declare a climate emergency and we need to ensure our response is up to the challenge.

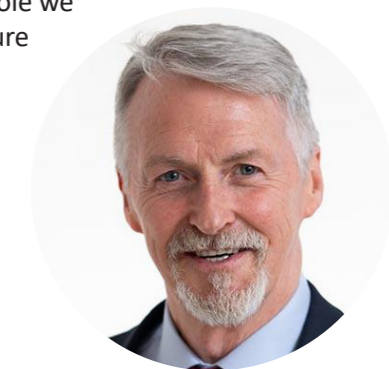
Since the last meeting of the UN Convention of Biological Diversity (COP 15) in Montreal, Canada two years ago we have been working, with multiple partners, to understand how we can achieve the 30 by 30 target that was agreed there – to protect and effectively manage 30% of land, freshwater and sea for nature by 2030. We have made progress in this area, through our biodiversity “deep dive” work, but we know that much remains to be done.

We also made other firm commitments at COP 15 to reduce the impacts of pesticides and nutrients on the environment by at least 50% by 2030 and are currently developing plans to achieve this. I welcome this Manifesto written by the young people of Wales to champion a positive outcome at COP16 in Colombia at the end of October 2024. This manifesto is ambitious and rightly so. It is their future under threat. We often think of Wales as the land of our fathers. But it is also the land of our children and young people, and of future generations. That’s why it’s so important that young people have their say and help to shape our country’s future.

The manifesto outlines actions to restore biodiverse habitats, create connected green corridors, sustainably manage our land, prevent pollution and produce food sustainably to ensure that our wildlife can thrive across the whole of Wales and in our seas. I see reducing nutrients, which pollute our rivers and seas, and pesticides, which can have such a negative impact on our pollinating insects, as a crucial part of our efforts to protect nature.

A collaborative approach is needed with action across all our communities, our businesses and across the whole of society. We all need to better understand the role we play and drive forward together. We must act now if we are to ensure a sustainable healthy future in a nature-positive Wales for young people and future generations.

Diolch yn fawr.



Huw Irranca-Davies MS

ASKS FOR THE WORLD



Solid commitment to **30 by 30** by (all) parties

Every country around the world has promised to effectively manage 30% of their land and sea by 2030. We now need investment to enable landowners to achieve this.

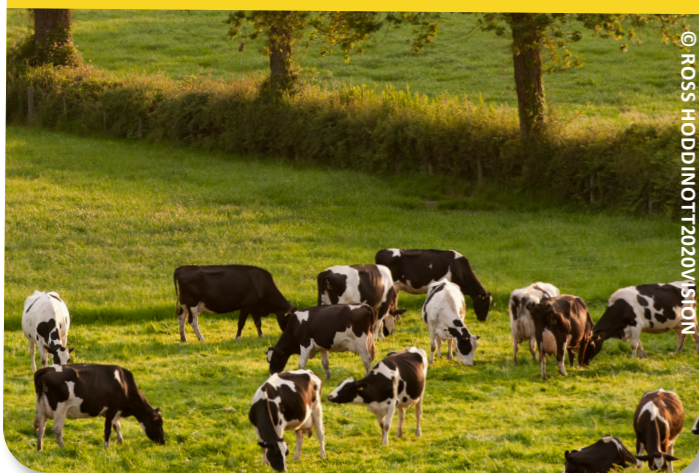


Biodiversity is considered in **ALL new developments** and a requirement for **neutral or positive impacts must be included**

Impacts to nature on all new buildings, infrastructure projects and energy deployment **MUST** have a positive effect on biodiversity with reporting processes created to measure progress

Overhaul of food systems for the **benefit of nature** with **measurable targets**

Ensure all methods of food production do not negatively impact biodiversity but rather contribute to its recovery through the elimination of destructive practices



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Stronger links between **climate change** and **biodiversity**

The twin crises of climate change and biodiversity are intrinsically linked, and this should be reflected in work to solve both crises

Massive commitments to **plastic waste reduction and elimination** of pesticides

Every country should commit to targets to eliminate the worst single-use plastics by 2030 through pathways to fully eliminate damaging plastics by 2040. Pesticides **MUST** be reduced by 2/3rds with guidance created for farmers on how to achieve this



Involvement of **young people** at **all levels** of decision making

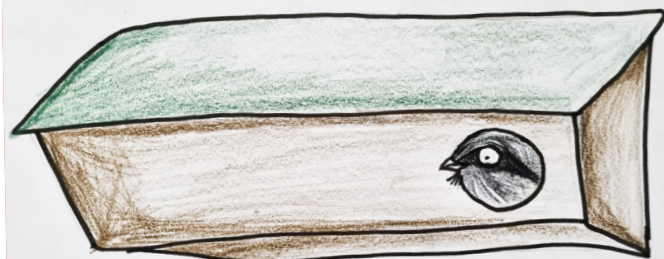
Future generations will be the ones who suffer the impacts of inaction, so we **MUST** be involved in all levels of decision making on this topic in line with article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

ASKS FOR WALES



All new Welsh developments must have a **positive impact on nature**

House building, private developments, national infrastructure development projects and any initiatives that involve the displacement of habitat **MUST** demonstrate how they will positively impact on biodiversity and report their impacts.



Action on **all pledges** made at **COP15**

Wales didn't just commit to '30 by 30', but also to half the levels of damaging nitrates in our rivers. We have to address farm run-off in our river systems.



Biodiversity targets for agricultural land, and **accountability of negative environmental impacts**

Landowners have a responsibility to restore nature so quantitative targets must be put in place for nature gain on all land across Wales. Anyone violating these regulations must be held accountable for their actions.

Increase the number of **"green corridors"** and **space for wildlife**

Wildlife is struggling to move around due to countless hard barriers, so green corridor creation should be fast-tracked across Wales to ensure wildlife can travel unhindered, as well as more space set aside for wildlife to thrive.



Reduce domestic and agricultural pesticide use by **two-thirds** if not more by **2030**

Pesticides act to indiscriminately destroy nature and we can no longer support their use in Wales so a reduction in their use by two-thirds **MUST** be achieved by 2030, including domestic pesticides such as pet flea treatments and garden pesticides.



Fund initiatives that enable communities in **urban areas** to access **green and blue space**

People will not protect what they do not care about, and with society becoming more urban it is important that an understanding of nature through experiences in the natural world is provided to people of all ages.



Natural methods to BRING BACK OUR BIODIVERSITY - THE BEAVER!

The humble beaver is an extraordinary animal and possibly one of Britain's secret solutions in the fight to bring back flourishing nature to our countryside.

Often referred to as 'ecosystem engineers' beavers can modify the habitats and landscapes they live in through coppicing, feeding, burrowing and in some cases damming (beavers living on lakes or main rivers have little need of constructing dams). Because of this activity, beavers introduce a whole range of new habitats that other wildlife can thrive in.

The beaver was widespread throughout Britain during the Middle Ages, but because of over-hunting by humans they became extinct. It is already being shown that reintroducing beavers back into our landscapes is helping ecosystems thrive again.

Though beavers can help in our efforts to improve biodiversity, we all still need to work together to make sure that nature is thriving again. Beavers are one part of a wider picture here in Wales, and we must realise that we need to work together to ensure a future for nature.



A Wildlife Trusts Wales project



© EMYR EVANS



Beavers are known as NATURE'S ENGINEERS.

They make changes to their habitats which create diverse wetlands for other species to thrive.



They start coppicing trees, opening up the canopy for other plants to thrive and helping to stabilise river banks through strong root systems

The land behind the dam becomes a wetland!

The water in the stream is filtered resulting in better water quality

More insects mean more birds and bats . More birds mean more birds of prey.

The ecosystem is healthy and diverse again!

Two beavers find a new home on a stream

They make a leaky dam, helping to hold back water in the stream to create a stable waterbody

Wetland provides new habitat for insects, amphibians, and lots more

The slower stream helps prevent flooding further downstream

More water means more plants, which means more grazers

IMPORTANT FACTORS

to achieve these manifesto points

Our manifesto asks will help us as a species bring back nature for everyone, and there are other important factors that we identified need to be addressed if our manifesto points are to be achieved. These include:



sustainable
and **affordable**
transport for **all**



Greater focus on
the importance of
biodiversity in all
places of education



Promote **local** food
production



Make sure this
manifesto applies
to **all** sectors of
society, **including**
business



Identify ways to
fund the work that
needs to take place

“ We shouldn’t just protect what nature is left, we should **actually bring animals back into their habitats** to make the world wilder again ”

– **Jacob aged 11**



This manifesto was created by **young people** involved with **Stand for Nature Wales**, a project that enables them to run **climate related projects** in their **local areas**.

Being delivered by the Wildlife Trusts across Wales, these schemes focus on nature-based solutions such as tree planting to bring back nature whilst sequestering carbon.



“ In my previous roles as a teacher and then an outdoor activity instructor I engaged with thousands of young people from different backgrounds and from many different parts of the UK. Having conversations about being out in nature and about biodiversity and conservation with young people was (and still is) a huge part of my daily life. Through these conversations it’s been made very clear to me that young people care deeply about the natural world. This manifesto illustrates the desire that young people want to make a change and it is essential that they are listened to, because they will live to see the future consequences of the decisions made today ”

**Arran Wilson, Youth Activism Manager,
The Wildlife Trusts**

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This manifesto couldn't have been possible without the amazing hard work and creativity of young people across Wales volunteering on the Stand for Nature project, so a big thank you to Alex, Catrin, Ceinwen, Eden, Ellen, Finn, Henry, Joe, Kasia, Madeline, Megan, and countless others who passionately supported the creation of this manifesto.

This manifesto has been printed in the UK using FSC-certified recycled paper.

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