

Giving people and nature a better life and future

**Our asks for the
2026 Senedd election**

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The stakes have never been higher. Our own lives, and other species we share our beautiful country with, are in danger from multiple and interconnected crises.

But we have the solutions and there is hope. There's still time to make a difference, if we act like this is a true emergency, focus on justice and always put people and the planet first.

WHY WE MUST ACT

Everyone should have the right to breathe clean air, live in a clean and safe environment in warm and dry homes, protected from extreme weather and with access to nature and local wildlife.

In Wales floods are ruining people's homes, putting pressure on aging sewers, destabilising coal tips and increasing the risk of harmful contaminants being released from the land. Our air is toxic, due to heatwaves, wildfires, and burning fossil fuels, causing a public health crisis.

And it's not only people who are suffering. Wales is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world and unless we act, things will only get worse.

As a globally responsible nation, it's only right Wales plays its part in global efforts to stop the harmful gases wrecking our climate and driving the decline in nature – for the sake of people and the planet.

It's time to get tough on pollution that's harming us and our wildlife - and make polluters pay. We must double down on cleaning up our air, rivers and seas and land. This includes restoring old industrial sites.

Let's make the right decisions now to reverse the decline in our precious wildlife and ensure a better life and future for everyone.



IT MUST BE FAIR

Everyone, not just the better off, should be able benefit from cheaper and greener ways to heat our homes, travel and generally go about our lives.

Communities doing the least to cause the climate to heat up are suffering the most. They are also struggling the hardest to adapt. This is true for Wales as well as for countries in the Global South.

Those of us on low incomes, people of colour, and communities whose livelihoods depend on carbon intensive industries, are being hit the worst and so will need the most support. Communities at risk from flooding, wildfires, droughts and other extreme weather will need help to adjust to the changing climate.

It's a question of inequalities and injustice – and the changes we make to tackle the climate crisis must also lead us to a fairer, more equal society.



WHAT WE'RE CALLING FOR

To give everyone hope for a better life and future, climate and environmental justice must be at the heart of all decisions and policies, from trade to pensions and from health to education.

Our asks for the 2026 Senedd Election span 13 areas across three themes of **climate and energy**, **nature and environment** and **rights and justice** to ensure we can all live healthily, safely and sustainably in a globally responsible Wales.

Climate and energy

As a globally responsible country, Wales must continue to play its part in global efforts to reduce the harmful gases heating up our world and rely instead on cheap and clean renewable energy.

2024 was **the hottest year on record** at about 1.55 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The last 10 years are also the **top ten hottest years on record**. The threat of climate change tipping points and their timeframes means that we must double down on climate action here and use the levers we have available in Wales, to demand further and faster action from countries, states, nations, communities, businesses, organisations and individuals everywhere.

As a member of the international Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, Wales has agreed to stop licensing oil and gas production. The next Welsh Government must follow through on its commitment to a fossil free future. And ensure that there is a firm ban on **coal mining and fracking**.

Nuclear power, however, is a dangerous distraction from the **renewable energy** future we need and there's no solution for the dangerous radioactive waste that is left behind.

The cleanest, safest and most affordable way for Wales to power itself is through renewable energy from the wind, sea and sun. But instead of relying heavily on the often extractivist



approach of multinational corporations, we must make it easier for communities to own, control, or directly benefit from local energy projects.

We should also reduce the energy we use – this is, after all, the simplest and cheapest thing we can do but it often gets forgotten about. Wales's **homes**, for example, are the **heat leakiest in the UK**. Making our homes warm and energy efficient must be the top national infrastructure priority – it creates jobs, reduces people's heating bills and reduces damaging emissions.

Many of us need more support to make changes to our homes. Wales has led the way with a publicly funded Warm Homes programme (previously Nest and Arbed). Unfortunately, the budget for it is far from what's needed to tackle fuel poverty, let alone make all our homes energy efficient. But this could be about to change - the UK government's Warm Homes Plan for England commits to spend £13.2bn – so a substantial amount of additional funding will be coming to Wales from this winter .

Also, we must be able to get from A to B in a way that is least damaging to our pockets and our planet. **Transport** in Wales contributes 17% of our total annual carbon emissions and is the third largest greenhouse gas emitting sector. **Research** has shown repeatedly that building more roads has the unintended effect

of leading to more cars on the road (known as “induced demand”).

The Transport Strategy, “Llwybr Newydd”, introduced in 2021, shifted us on to the right track, as did initiatives such as the roads review, the 20-mph speed limit and the legislation on buses. The next government must continue this journey, so everyone in Wales can benefit from an accessible, affordable, and fair transport system.

Right: Residents and campaigners celebrate the decision by Carmarthenshire council to refuse permission to mine coal at Glan Lash (Carmarthen, 2023)

Below: Southeast Wales regional gathering of Friends of the Earth local action group members and activists (Pontypridd, 2022)



Our asks

Stop climate breakdown

- Work with experts, impacted groups and communities on an ambitious, comprehensive and fair climate plan for the Third Carbon Budget (2026 – 2030).
- Strive to go further and faster to reduce emissions, in line with global commitments and to avoid runaway climate change.
- Follow through on the work of the independent Net Zero by 2035 Challenge Group.
- Go further than the advice of Climate Change Committee on the Fourth Carbon Budget (2031 to 2035) and not rely on unproven technological solutions such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) to meet them.
- Develop a **Methane Action Plan** for Wales – a **short lived** but hugely important and potent greenhouse gas.
- Do not invest in, or give permission for, high carbon infrastructure, and put in place stronger planning and fiscal rules so neither Welsh Government nor public bodies do so – with full climate impact assessment of projects and proposals, including the downstream emissions.
- Endorse the international Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation Treaty.

Our asks

Focus on cheap, clean energy

- Aim for 100% of Wales's electricity demand to be met by renewable energy generated in Wales by 2035.
- Refuse applications by companies to re-mine coal from coal tips and open cast coal sites.
- Introduce a ban on coal extraction to prevent a future coal industry that is so damaging to the planet and communities.
- Rule out fracking for good by introducing a ban to back up current policy.
- Say no to nuclear power in all its forms (such as SMRs).
- Set ambitious targets to grow the community energy sector in Wales, removing barriers and ensuring sufficient resources to help build energy communities and enable communities and the people of Wales to become owners of as many energy assets as possible, and to use the energy locally.
- Make Wales a world centre for tidal energy, in a way that does not cause the destruction of marine habitats and species - for example by reviving plans for a Swansea Tidal Lagoon.
- Use Wales's industrial heritage for good, by developing and rolling out the use of mine water heat from former coal mines to heat homes, schools and businesses in former coalfield communities.
- Review all biomass power plants and proposals in Wales to ensure that none of them are sourcing materials from overseas or from non-sustainable sources.
- Emphasise the energy hierarchy and the need to reduce our use and take action on simple ways to reduce energy – such as putting doors on supermarket fridges which use 1% of UK electricity.



Our asks

Warm homes for all

- Eradicate fuel poverty in the next Senedd term, ensuring everyone in Wales lives in a safe and healthy home.
- Ringfence the substantial Barnett consequential from the UK government Warm Homes Plan to ramp up the current Warm Homes programme in Wales and fund an area-based programme.
- Establish an area-based home energy efficiency plan and programme to deliver improvements at scale for people and communities.
- Continue, and implement the adoption of, the Marmot principles to reduce health inequalities.
- Push the UK government for more funding to ensure people in Wales can benefit fully from cheaper and greener ways to heat their homes, such as heat pumps and battery storage.

Right : Over 50 local groups met with their MP to call for lower energy bills and warm homes for all. Nov 2023.



Photo courtesy of Ceridwen



Photo courtesy of
@welshbusenthusiast2210



Our asks

Fair and affordable travel

- Aim to at least double the proportion of journeys made by walking, cycling and public transport by 2030.
- Invest in active travel infrastructure, path networks and routes needed for commuting routes, and to connect urban neighbourhoods and marginalised communities with nearby green spaces and nature, drawing on best practice from other nations.
- Ensure everyone in Wales has access to regular, affordable and accessible public transport.
- Commit to delivering on the Bus Act when enacted, through the franchising of bus services in Wales, introducing a single ticket system throughout Wales, integrated with train journeys and timetables, and enabling active travel.
- Devolve powers and funding for rail infrastructure.
- Commit to rolling out free bus travel for all, using some of the funding from HS2 and other investment in rail infrastructure that Wales is owed.
- Investigate reopening more train stations and lines.
- Say no to the M4 Relief Road, the Red Route and other highly damaging proposals for new roads and bypasses and implement the Burns Report without delay.
- Enable take up of EV cars, with fast EV charging on public estates, and a reliable and fast network on main trunk roads.
- Continue the 20mph limit, with flexibility for local authorities in line with the guidance.
- Commit to not subsidising the aviation industry directly or through international or investment strategies.
- Ban vehicle idling, with increasing fines for repeat offenders.

Nature and environment

The next Welsh Government must reverse the steepening decline in species in Wales, and ensure a healthy environment for all, by treating the nature and the climate crises as interlinked and equally important and tackling growing levels of pollution.

It is said we are now living in the time of the **sixth mass extinction of life** on our planet - this time driven by human activity.

The UN predicts that **1 million plant and animal species** are at risk of extinction through climate change, deforestation for agricultural land, introduction of invasive species, pollution and the over exploitation of wild populations.

In Wales rare species like ospreys and bitterns are making a remarkable comeback, thanks to conservation efforts. However our nation Wales is still one of the most nature depleted countries on the planet. A WWF study has indicated that wildlife populations worldwide have **declined** by around 73% in the last 50 years. Since 1994 Welsh wildlife has declined by 20% and 1 in 6 of all species here at risk of extinction.

The triple planetary crises of climate breakdown, biodiversity loss and pollution are negatively impacting humans as well as animals - particularly the most vulnerable in our society, **according to the UN**.

Although we have succeeded in reducing air pollution in recent years, breathing in **toxic air** is still causing a public health crisis, affecting vulnerable groups the most. Breathing in toxic air, for instance, is causing a public health crisis. It contributes to up to **1400 early deaths** and costs the **Welsh NHS almost £1billion every year**. More children are developing asthma, their lungs are not developing as they should be, and people's existing health conditions are getting worse.

Our rivers, lakes and seas are also being poisoned by sewage and other pollutants, and our land is littered with contaminated ex-industrial sites, leaky landfills and toxic waste dumps. Companies are walking away from opencast coal mines, without doing the restoration they promised, and thousands of toxic sites are not being inspected.

Right: Bitterns are making a remarkable comeback in Wales (Credit: CC BY-SA 2.0)
Below: Greening front gardens in St Thomas, Swansea – the Postcode Gardener programme is a partnership between Friends of the Earth and The Co-operative Bank to restore greenery and wildlife to nature-deprived spaces.



Cleaning up our air, water and land is vital to ensure a healthy environment for everyone. We need a strong environmental watchdog that can hold ministers and public authorities to account. And we need to make polluters pay.

It's time we truly get to grips with **plastic pollution**. We know that plastics can break down into ever smaller pieces called microplastics and then into even smaller pieces called nanoplastics. They have been found in **human tissue** (such as placental tissue, brain tissue and in testes) prompting serious concerns as to their **impact on human health**. We need to understand the impact of various sources of microplastics and nano plastics on our ecosystems, wildlife and people.

The plastics industry is the fastest growing source of industrial greenhouse emissions in the world, and if we don't address this, it will account for **19% of all global climate emissions by 2040**. 400million tonnes of

plastic is produced every single year. Around **19-23 million tonnes of it** ends up littering our neighbourhoods and being discarded into ecosystems around the world, ending up in rivers, seas and oceans and as litter in our neighbourhoods.

We must crack down on **litter and fly tipping**, which are getting worse year on year, polluting our ecosystems, killing wildlife, costing millions of pounds each year to clear up, and significantly impacting on our wellbeing.

To stop pollution from happening in the first place, the next government must ramp up its efforts to **reduce waste and encourage re-use**. Wales is the 2nd in the world at recycling, and community-driven repair cafes and Bentyg library of things are dotted across Wales. Circular economy initiatives benefit people in so many ways. Toy libraries, for example, can save families money, foster a sense of community, reduce emissions and waste and even create green jobs.



Ruthin Repair Cafe, organised by Ruthin Friends of the Earth.

Our asks

Save our wildlife

- Implement the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Act at pace.
- Set ambitious targets (both short and long term) within 12 months of the above act receiving royal assent to reduce pollution, improve ecosystems and reverse the decline in species.
- Commit to an overall “headline” target of 2035 to halt and reverse the decline of species abundance in Wales and a target to achieve nature recovery by 2050.
- Commit to Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework calling for the effective protection and management of 30% of the world’s terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine areas by the year 2030.
- Clean up our waterways through better regulation and enforcement, urgently taking forward the proposals for an independent new water regulator for Wales, and actively working with Dŵr Cymru and Natural Resources Wales to minimise the amount of sewage released into our rivers and seas.
- Commit to a national system of river catchment area plans to ensure that pollution from sewage, road and urban runoffs, chemicals, microplastics, agriculture and other sources are properly dealt with together with issues such as water runoff and soil health.
- Protect our peatlands by banning peat in horticultural products in Wales.
- Ensure our land is used and developed in a way that supports nature and does not harm existing wildlife – proposals to unleash the power of the wind, the sun and the tides should be nature-friendly.

Our asks

Clean our air

- Implement the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024 (the 2024 Act) as a matter of urgency and avoid further delays.
- Introduce targets for reducing all the pollutants listed in the 2024 Act, in line with current WHO guidance, prioritising NO2 due to its impact on our health.
- Implement Clean Air Zones, with impact assessment and avoidance for disadvantaged communities and groups.
- Ensure better monitoring of and public awareness of air pollution especially vulnerable groups, including public health alerts.
- Ban the installation of new wood burning stoves in homes except in special circumstance and phase out domestic wood burning in urban areas.

Our asks

Clean up contaminated land

- Make polluters pay – ensure this principle is enacted in Welsh law and enforced.
- Ensure the newly established Office for Environmental Governance in Wales (OEGW) is well resourced and independent so it can do its job of protecting people and nature.
- Work with the UK government to ensure local authorities have sufficient funding and resources to carry out duties under part 2A of Environment Protection Act 1990.
- Carry out an independent review of part 2A of Environment Protection Act 1990 and the 2012 statutory guidance and come up with a series of recommendations.
- Based the outcome of this review, either strengthen the Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance for Wales 2012 or introduce a new Welsh law to replace part 2A of Environment Protection Act 1990, ensuring the principles of Zane's Law are embedded throughout.
- Safely restore all opencast sites, as promised to the communities who suffered from the impacts of opencast coal mining for years, and have been left with dangerous and unrestored sites.
- Ensure full funding from the UK government to make coal tips safe, with an accelerated public programme in line with the Disused Mine and Quarry Tips Act, prioritising public safety not exploitation of coal for private profit.
- Initiate an independent public investigation into legacy sites in Wales where metals and minerals, chemicals, PCBs and waste have or could have been dumped by past industry, to investigate public and environmental health issues, publishing results including locations and proposing a way forward to ensure sites are made safe.
- Introduce a 1000m buffer zone between new quarry sites and proposed quarry extensions and communities including homes, schools, health facilities and public amenities, and protected habitats.

Our asks

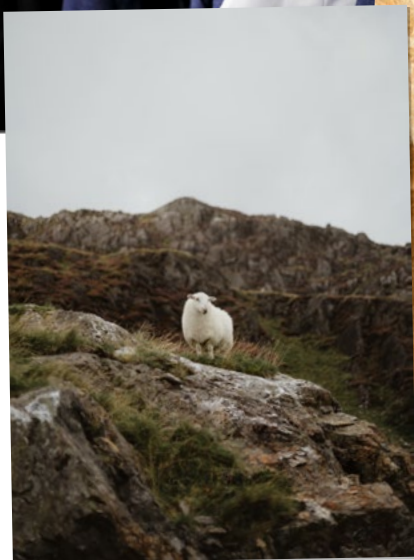
Tackle plastic pollution

- Commit to a new Microplastics Action Plan in Wales.
- Ban the use of grass turf containing plastic mesh netting, an unnecessary practice of using plastic to hold grass turf together.
- Commit to a new **National Litter and Fly Tipping Prevention Plan** - Wales is currently the only UK country without such a plan.
- Ban the use of single use plastic on fresh fruit and vegetables where it has been proven to provide negligible benefit in elongating shelf life.

Our asks

Reduce waste and encourage reuse

- Support the new proposed Deposit Return Scheme for Wales (which will include glass), and work with the other UK nations on the roll out of the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme.
- Introduce a new network of **cloth nappy libraries** to save money for families, reduce waste, plastic and climate emissions.
- Ensure every school has a school uniform and sports kit swap shop - many schools already have uniform swap shops, but this needs to be scaled up so all families with school age children have access to one.
- Roll out successful schemes such as **Play it Again Sport** to all areas of Wales to save families money, reduce resource use and provide local jobs.
- Introduce a new **network of toy libraries** in Wales to give children access to stimulating and educational toys and games and to provide another networking focal point for communities.
- Encourage an industrial hemp circular economy in Wales - hemp is a **wonder crop** that **absorbs more CO₂** during its lifecycle than forestry or any other crop and can be made into many different products, from construction materials to clothing.
- Develop a Welsh Wool Plan for how we can produce, process and use Welsh wool in Wales for the benefit of farmers, rural economies and SME Welsh businesses.



Rights and justice

As climate change affects some of us more than others, we must stop releasing emissions that are wrecking our climate in a just and globally responsible way, so no one gets left behind.

From extreme weather to pollution, the climate and nature crisis affects us all. But marginalised communities, especially people of colour, are hit hardest.

Around the world, people of colour and Indigenous communities face **deforestation, food and water scarcity, land grabbing and displacement** – both from climate impacts and exploitation.

Today's environmental injustices are rooted in **colonialism and racism**. And the countries hit hardest by climate change have done the least to cause it. Early industrialised nations like Wales must face up to their historic responsibilities by supporting communities most affected by climate change.

But it isn't all about the past. The commodities Wales imports and consumes are contributing to the devastation of the world's forests, wildlife and Indigenous communities. Communities suffer human rights abuses, environmental destruction, and the impacts of climate change because of the actions of multinational companies.

Wales is a small nation, but is leadership in initiatives like fairtrade, nation of sanctuary, anti-racist action plan, and the ground-breaking Well-being of Future Generations Act have inspired others to take similar actions. We urge the next Welsh Government to go further to make Wales a truly globally responsible nation.

Fighting injustice is key to solving the climate and nature crisis - at home and abroad. And everyone must have a say – particularly those most impacted.

As Wales strives to tackle the climate crisis, it must ensure the **transition to a green economy** is just and equitable. Our economy is changing to adapt to the climate crises – so too must our jobs. We have already experienced devastating examples where this

transition has been managed badly, without the voice of workers, such as the closing of the blast furnaces at Tata in Port Talbot. This must not happen again.

In the UK, people of colour – and other vulnerable communities like disabled people and those on low incomes - are more likely to live in **cold homes**, in areas **lacking green space** and in areas with **dangerously high air pollution**. These communities are also more vulnerable to extreme weather and environmental changes, so will need support to adapt to the changing climate.

Climate change impacts people's fundamental rights to life, health, food, water, and housing. In a democracy, people should have a right to be heard and to express their opinions in peaceful protests. The **right to protest** is a fundamental cornerstone of any democratic society and must be protected. It has been the driver of progress for human liberty and freedom.

The next Welsh Government must be a champion of human rights, increasing opportunities for citizens to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. However, we can't keep championing the idea of boundless **growth and consumption**, measuring success solely by GDP. We are already crashing through the boundaries of our limited planet. It's time to start investing in a **wellbeing economy** instead.



Our asks

Show global leadership

- Ensure ethical public procurement and investment to eliminate links to deforestation and exploitation overseas.
- Join the Climate Justice Coalition's call for a new law that requires companies to avoid harm in their supply chains.
- Champion global solidarity and advocate for equitable climate finance, loss and damage support for those communities on the front-line of the climate crises, with the UK paying its fair share.
- Commit to accounting for Wales's global footprint, based on the impact of what we consume, and develop and implement a plan to reduce it by 30% before 2035.

Our asks

Strengthen people's rights

- Introduce a right to a healthy environment.
- Ensure communities have their voices heard on the design of solutions for tackling the climate crisis by using participative democracy to develop policies and strategies.
- Ensure the planning system is democratic and open, with public and community participation, tightening requirements for protections such as Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), and introduce a third party right of appeal for interested parties to reduce the imbalance between developers and communities.
- Strategically plan for Wales's land use, in consultation with communities, to avoid the unintended proliferation of developments such as data centres, with their enormous demand for energy and water, and to ensure that developments are in line with the transport and energy hierarchies and based on local need.
- Strengthen the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to enhance its impact and give the Future Generations Commissioner the teeth and powers it needs to stand up for future generations.
- Uphold the Aarhus convention principles on the right to access environmental information, participation in environmental decision-making and access to justice when challenging environmental decisions.
- Stand up for the right to peacefully protest and lobby the UK government to stop the draconian restrictions on protest and safeguard our human rights and membership of the European Convention of Human Rights.

Our asks

Help communities adapt

- Acknowledge the increasing impact of climate change on communities and emergency services in Wales – from flooding to wildfires - and act urgently to scale up adaptation plans and funding accordingly.
- Require public bodies to carry out climate risk assessments to identify vulnerable communities and services and put an action plan in place to ensure their resilience.
- Prioritise communities most vulnerable to impacts and make them central to developing solutions, for example through support for community flood resilience groups, with targeted mental health support.
- Develop a clear policy for prioritising nature-based solutions.
- Reduce water use to adapt to long, hotter, drier summers – for instance, with a **water use target** (suggestion 80 litres/person/day).

Our asks

Invest in a wellbeing economy and just transition

- Develop a just transition strategy in consultation with workers, unions and impacted sectors that ensures no one is left behind in the transition to a green economy - safeguarding workers and supporting training for impacted communities.
- Ensure a just transition actively supports rural communities and strengthens Welsh language communities, by investing in local green jobs, sustainable land use, infrastructure and services in a way that builds local resilience, strengthens the cultural and linguistic fabric and helps the environment.
- Stop prioritising GDP growth as the main measure of development - instead focusing on improving people's lives in a way that doesn't go against planetary boundaries and includes measures to strengthen preventative health, community cohesion and local services, and local jobs.
- Take a wellbeing approach to fiscal budget setting – with a climate impact assessment, prioritising preventative and long term spend, and mapped to the Wellbeing Goals.
- Work with the Wales Pension Partnership and other relevant stakeholders to keep reducing the amount of money invested in fossil fuels and to formulate a joint strategy that sees Welsh Pension Funds investing in positive infrastructure projects in Wales, benefiting their pension fund holders and local communities.
- Lobby the UK government for our fair share of investment from rail infrastructure, energy projects and water.
- Devolve the Crown Estate to bring Wales in line with Scotland, ensuring the revenue can be used to address the poverty and inequality in communities across Wales.

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