



ALGAO: Cymru
Countryside Committee
Virtual Meeting
04th December 2024 @ 14:00
MINUTES

In attendance

Tomos Jones, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (Chair)
Alice Thorne, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority
Guy Salkeld, Cadw
Kathryn Laws, National Trust
John G. Roberts, Eryri National Park Authority
Ian Halfpenney, Cadw
Chris Tucker, NRW
Rhiannon Tate, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Apologies

Jill Bullen, Natural Resources Wales
Jenny Emmett, Heneb – Gwynedd Region (Vice Chair)
Claudine Gerrard, Heneb – Glamorgan Gwent Region (Vice Chair)

1. Minutes of previous meeting/Matters arising

Minutes of previous meeting 20/12/2023 approved by those in attendance.

2. Strategic update (legislation, policy, guidance)

Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS)

Action from previous meeting:

Ian to keep Committee updated on developments regarding sustainable farming.	Ongoing.
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Ian provided the following update:

- Outlines for the Farming Scheme are available via <https://www.gov.wales/sustainable-farming-scheme-proposed-scheme-outline-2024-html>
- Universal action regarding the 10% area of woodland has been dropped from the plans. Historic environment has been mentioned in Universal Action 14.
- Regulatory baseline is scheduled monuments and landscape features will be afforded protection from damage and disturbance. Specific prescriptions for private gardens, scheduled monuments for monitoring. Scrub removal and basic erosion repair also included. Due to kick-in in 2026.

- Optional actions – farmers will have the option to undertake larger scale works, but would be an individual action for a specific part of the land rather than the whole farm, but the detail is still to be decided. The Universal Action has now passed consultation phase and received no objections.

Farming in Protected Landscapes:

Discussion amongst attendees regarding a potential Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme at £500k a year until 2029. No details but looks likely to go ahead. Focus is on Nature Recovery but English equivalent has inclusion of historic environment. Cadw not aware of this thus far. This scheme would be part of Tirweddau Cymru.

Action: All to circulate any information amongst committee members as and when available.

Forestry Act

Chris outlined the following:

- Some changes to the Agriculture Act that allows limitations to be placed on felling licenses.
- Two changes related to historical environment – a license holder must not damage historical objects on site, and any finds must be reported to Heneb.
- Tier 2 condition – specific feature on a site – a license holder must not damage scheduled monument on the site. Referred to Cadw if there are any issues. Both in place and enforceable since 1st April. License can now be amended or revoked if conditions not met. Allows for a stop on works if work isn't being carried out properly.

<https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/trees-woodlands-and-forests/tree-felling-licence-environmental-conditions/?lang=en>

Action: Chris Tucker to join Cadw/Heneb meeting on the 18th. Ian Halfpenney requested if a Q&A could be held with Heneb.

Agriculture Wales Act 2023

Four commitments relating to historic environment and protections/conservation. Embedded into Agricultural legislation.

Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023

Brings all the existing legislation into one act. This means that all of the sections have changed. There is a cross reference available via the link below so it should be easy to find the new section:

<https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/historic-environment-wales-act-2023>

Guidance and consultations

Actions ongoing from the previous meeting:

- Historic England Landscape and Seascape Guidance Development - **Action: Jenny to contact Neil Maylan, Cadw, Jill Bullen, NRW and John Briggs, NRW in due course.**
- A householder's guide to archaeology and planning in Wales guidance **Action: Jenny to feedback comments internally about the guidance and its continued use post-merger.**

Other consultations:

- [Marine licence exemption proposals | GOV.WALES](#) **Deadline: 14/01/2025**
- [Preserving trees and woodlands: new regulations | GOV.WALES](#) **Deadline: 14/02/2025.** Chris noted that this one mainly concerns Tree Preservation Orders and how they are processed.

3. Forestry/Woodland planting

Ian to invite John to the national forest meeting when convened to deliver presentation. Also, Chris to attend meeting.	Closed.
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Live consultation

- [Preserving trees and woodlands: new regulations | GOV.WALES](#) **Deadline: 14/02/2025.** As above comment.

National Forest

Chris provided the following comments:

- Not much progress on National Forest. National Forest initiative stills exists, and NRW are expanding their woodland estate, and community woodlands are still being encouraged. But has fallen off the political agenda somewhat.
- Anybody that wants to bring their site into the National Forest needs to allow public access. There is a team within NRW who are promoting the National Forest and encouraging woodlands to be bought into it.
- A lot of the private sector ones are new woodland creation.
- There are 6 National Forest officers (NW, NE, Mid, SW, S Central, SE). Chris can request relevant team provide an update, as well as contacts for the relevant officers.

Guidance on Woodland Creation schemes

Alice asked if there were any recommended guidance on Woodland creation schemes. Bannau and National Trust both using Woodland Trust guidance as it stands.

Ian provided the link below and stated that Wales was looking to adopt something similar.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/historic-environment-guidance-for-forestry-in-england/historic-environment-guidance-for-forestry-in-england>

Alice noted that small community level schemes are particularly difficult to find guidance for.

Chris noted that the steps in the guidance scheme provided by NRW for woodland management is also suitable for all schemes. Any woodland schemes that are not part of Welsh government scheme can look at NRW guidance.

UK Forest Standard Guidance

Version 5 was approved in October last year but had a lead in time to go into practice, but that is now live.

UK Forest Assurance Standard has also been approved for V5 by PEFC but not by FSC yet, just in terms of timeline. No known issues holding up the approval.

Useful links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-forestry-standard>

<https://ukwas.org.uk/>

<https://ukwas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/UKWAS-5.0-2024.pdf>

4. Historic Landscapes

Planning consultations and registered historic landscapes

Jill will be bringing together a report of planning application trends in Registered Historic Landscapes (RHLs) over the past 7 years. This will be completed in the new year with a view to holding a meeting February/March to discuss this and other influences on the RHLs.

Action: Any interested in attending the meeting with Heneb, Cadw and NRW to contact Jill directly.

State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)

Chris provided the following update:

- All the information has been pooled together and each chapter has now gone out to a relevant team member for peer review. As such, chapters are at different stages.
- November/December 2025 is when it will be published, entirely web based rather than as a pdf as in the past.

5. Peat

Actions ongoing from previous meeting:

Ian to setup meeting regarding peat projects with relevant attendees of the Committee.	No progress.
Ian to circulate the peat guidance produced by Fiona Grant.	Ongoing.

Ian provided the following:

- Cadw have been involved on the UK peat work, but no substantial progress has been made regarding peat and the historical environment in recent weeks as the lead on this project is currently on leave.
- NRW looking to establish more focus on peatland (National Peatland Action Programme met its target one year ahead of schedule).

Ian asked if there were any current schedule of works.

Alice noted that Bannau Brycheiniog National Park have been working on a peatland project, meeting with Dave Thomas, the new South Wales Archaeologist for the National Trust, so interested in peat restoration from a historical environment perspective.

Action: Chris to see if there is a programme of works.

6. Wildlife/Nature recovery

Historic environment best practice for natural environment projects

Actions ongoing from previous meeting:

Ian to consider calling the document a 'best practice guidance'	Ongoing
Ian to share a draft of the document with Jill in the new year.	Ongoing

Ian provided the following update:

- This is almost complete and will be a guidance for natural environment practitioners across all disciplines.
- Version due to be shared with Natural England and also ALGAO: Cymru.

Action: Ian to circulate copy with members of ALGAO: Cymru via Tomos.

Other useful information:

- Oxford Archaeology is leading a new collaborative project, funded by Historic England, that will explore the historic environment and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) developments. [BNG | Oxford Archaeology](#)
- Oxford Archaeology Tree Roots and Archaeology report. Consideration of the impact of tree roots on buried archaeological remains. Ian encourages everyone to have a look at it. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383219569_Assessing_the_Impact_of_Tree_Roots_on_Archaeology

7. Climate change

- A Sector Adaptation Plan Workshop chaired by Lou Barker, RCAHMW was held in Aberystwyth on 19/11/2024. Useful session, but concern raised as to whether adaptation planning is a tick box exercise rather than reflective of actual buy-in and the impact it is having.

- Tomos explained that Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority had meet with Swansea University regarding offering placements for students, including climate change related issues.
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Museum of London Archaeology and Futureworks project in 2025, looking at sites at risk from climate change and teaching young people aged 16-20 how to communicate about the issue by creating content. Exciting as this a group of young people who are not in education, training or work. Hopefully opportunity to help them deliver skills towards employment/development.
- Jill Fairweather, Cadw is currently working with a researcher on climate change impacts to built heritage in South Wales.
- Forest Fawr Geopark has been chosen as part of a UNESCO study looking into preserving a suite of areas for the future, and Bannau Brycheiniog are looking to include the Historic Environment Sector Adaptation plan as part of this.
- PCNPA in the process of commissioning an Adaptation plan for the Coast Path, but this will encompass historic environment as there are many monuments along the trail.
- Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority has a treescapes project ongoing. Data officer is Catrin Evans, who has been drawing data together from lots of different organisations, including Cadw. Also have a landscape categorisation project, coming to the end of the pilot stage, currently looking at whether this will be continued. Catrin has been looking at data for potential woodland creation, Cadw have provided them with some data for this. Seeks to identify areas of lost woodland that appear on early maps, and where the woodland has changed (from mixed to monoculture, for example). Lost woodland being restored is potentially better received than new woodland creation. Uses an AI tool to identify sites – took a long time to set up at Cadw, but now that is has been done it can process data very quickly. Could be useful to hear a talk from the team involved to explain what they’ve done, to see what the potential is for other uses – looking at peat cutting, for example. Evie at Welsh Gov would be happy to provide a technical presentation. RCAHMW and their deep mapping project are aware of this tool also. Swansea University looking at using AI to identify historical boundaries.

https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/new?layer=geonode:ai_woodland_output#/

Action: Tomos to pass on contact details for Swansea University to Ian.

8. Heritage crime

Action from previous meeting:

Tomos to contact Sgt. Paul Roberts to identify the new All Wales lead for Heritage Crime.	Closed (see below)
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Tomos provided the following update:

- The new All Wales lead is Inspector Christine James, Gwent Police. She is working across Wales and is supported by PC Dan Counsell, who coordinates Heritage Watch for the Gwent Police area. Email for new lead - Christine.James@gwent.police.uk
- Heritage crime week of action took place on 18/11/2024. Patrols conducted in Pembrokeshire with Dyfed-Powys Police and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.
- Dyfed-Powys Heritage Watch display was present at the Pembrokeshire and Wrexham Archaeology Day events to raise public awareness of the issue. Also, repair work at a

disturbed Bronze Age Cairn carried out in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park with the assistance of police cadets. The next quarterly meeting for the Dyfed-Powys Heritage Watch area takes place in January.

- No update regarding development of a North Wales Heritage Watch scheme, but Heneb have created a Heritage Crime section on their new website which provides information that cover all areas of Wales - [How to Report Heritage Crime - Heneb](#)

9. Training, conferences, networks

Tomos noted that Archaeology Day events were held in Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Wrexham during 2024.

Chris highlighted training opportunity in relation to woodland and historical environment. Original focus was woodland creation but looks like it may be somewhat broader. Potential for a series of webinars over a couple of weeks broken down by topic, as an alternative to traditional in person training day. Definitive content to be decided.

Action: Chris to take forward training related to woodland and historical environment.

10. Volunteering opportunities

- Rebecca Bennett and her team are currently developing the lidar portals on behalf of Eryri National Park Authority and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. The Pembrokeshire Coast portal will be launched as a citizen science portal for volunteers in 2025.
- Volunteers are continuing to monitor and carry out conservation work on monuments within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.
- The National Trust and Eryri National Park Authority are in their final season of the Carneddau Project. Including gorse clearance and also other vegetation with volunteers. Been a very popular activity, so had benefits for engagement and for the monuments. Work done in tandem with contractor led work.
- The Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority 'Adopt a Monument' programme ongoing with regular volunteer activities coming out of that. Capacity is the limiting factor for volunteering opportunities. Trying to keep volunteers engaged over the long term and happy, to make sure the work is celebrated and continues over the long term.
- Cadw has been developing a new monitoring system for scheduled monuments. Cadw keen to have it circulated and used. Has deliberately been kept very simple, and intention was that this could be used in hand with the Sustainable Farming Scheme. One piece of feedback was that it's not clear for volunteers where the data is going (they can't review it afterwards). Bannau Brycheiniog use a Heros based system, so both officers and volunteers can see this information.

<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdatamap.gov.wales%2Fsurvey%2Fcadw-condition-monitoring%2F&data=05%7C02%7CJan.Halfpenney%40gov.wales%7Cac438d14ee8f41aede3e08dcdcb14805%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C638627901176973320%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6Ik1haWwiLCJXVC16Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=A%2FyIpi5XkaTjSLLRmrAWs4Z9kGR5b6f8lVeqmE7vLY%3D&reserved=0>

11. AOB

Action: All to send one representative from respective organisations as a minimum.

12. Date and time of next two meetings

03/06/2025 @ 2pm via Teams.

03/12/2025 @ 2pm via Teams.

Note: Agreed by all that a meeting should be held every six months.

FINAL