

Bwletin Rheoli Adnoddau Naturiol

Natural Resource Management Bulletin



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Environment (Wales) Bill

Following introduction of the Bill, the National Assembly has now begun the process of considering the Bill.

So far, as part of the Stage 1 consideration of the general principles of the Bill, the Minister for Natural Resources has provided evidence to the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee (CLAC) on 1 June and the Environment and Sustainability (E&S) Committee on 24 June.

The E&S Committee will hold evidence sessions with stakeholders throughout the summer and will invite the Minister for Natural Resources back to the Committee in September. The Minister will also be attending the Finance Committee to provide further detail in relation to the financial aspects of the Bill.

The deadline for the Committees to report on the general principles of the Bill is 9 October. The Assembly will then be asked to debate and agree the Bill's general principles in Plenary, this is often referred to as the 'Stage 1 debate'. This will conclude Stage 1 proceedings.

The Assembly will also be asked to agree the financial resolution, which relates to the principle of charging expenditure on the Welsh Consolidated Fund as a consequence of the Bill.

Should the general principles of the Bill and the financial resolution be agreed, the autumn will see the next stage, Stage 2, which involves the detailed consideration by the E&S Committee, of any amendments to the Bill. Amendments may be proposed by the Government or by any other Assembly Member.

You can follow the progress of the Bill through the National Assembly for Wales through the link below:

www.assembly.wales

Don't forget that we have produced a short animated film to explain the key features of the Bill. A series of factsheets explaining the changes that the Bill will make can be viewed and downloaded via the Welsh Government's website.

These materials are available at the following link:

<http://gov.wales/environmentbill>

You can also keep up to date with developments on Twitter by following #EnvBillWales.

Nature Fund - Nature Action Zone Focus

Nature Fund Action Zone Focus – South Wales Valleys

The final Nature Action Zone focus is on the South Wales Valleys. This Nature Action Zone has three projects exclusively sited in the south Wales valleys with stakeholders collaborating at scale to build resilient ecosystems and provide a range of multiple benefits for communities across the south Wales valleys now and for future generations.

In the eastern valley uplands, the Forgotten Landscapes project brings together three local authorities (Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly) to work with farmers, Gwent Wildlife Trust and the emergency services to sustainably manage the uplands. The uplands are dominated by urban commons which are typically used for hill farming and recreation such as walking, horse riding and mountain biking. The uplands are also at risk from environmental crime such as arson, fly tipping and off-roading. The project is dealing with these issues by restoring the upland to ecological health and diversity for example through sustainable grazing and bracken control whilst also protecting the area from environmental crime through community outreach and the development of best practice guidance. These actions will help provide multiple benefits for communities such as providing more productive farmland, better and safer access for communities, more resilient habitat for wildlife to thrive as well as stimulating carbon capture and water storage in the uplands.

The project is also developing a natural resource management plan to set out the evidence and the decisions making process for the sustainable management of resources of the area. The project covers the uplands of northern Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen covering 200 km².

Meanwhile, the Pollinators for Life project is engaging with communities across Torfaen, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly council areas to enhance public sector green spaces and their connectivity for pollinating species and wildlife whilst also enhancing these green spaces for people to enjoy. This includes planting orchards and hedgerows and transforming roadsides into a blaze of wildflowers. There is a strong emphasis on training and education working with schools and community groups to improve habitats across the four counties. The project is also developing a long term Green Infrastructure Action Plan for land owned by the public sector and

other key stakeholders which will provide the medium to long term natural resource work programme for the areas.

In the Llynfi Valley, Natural Resources Wales are working with the local Health Trust, local authority, schools and communities to implement a woodland creation project that will transform a former washery site into 30 hectares of woodland creating accessible green space for the community to use.

Other projects are also active in the area but are not exclusive to the south Wales valleys. For instance, Pond Connections led by the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust has been undertaking work on over 30 sites across South Wales (including Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Nature Action Zones). The project has created and restored ponds to provide more resilient, better functioning habitats as well as reducing run off benefitting flood defence and nutrient management. The partnership is using local businesses and contractors to help the local economy and the up skilling of volunteers and community beneficiaries involved in the project will hopefully lead to increased employment opportunities in future.



Photo – WG Nature Fund team members visited Mr Davies' farm south of the Epynt, part of the Coed Cymru NF project. Gareth (Coed Cymru) and Mr Davies (farm owner) showed them how the fund has helped to create hedgerows and drainage solutions that is improving sheep management across the farm and will improve the quality of grass in the targeted fields. The hedging has been located and chosen to maximise the connectivity potential and the mix of trees species being planted aims to further the biodiversity potential in these upland areas.

Emily Finney and Nicola Thomas were pleased to be invited out to see the work first hand and to understand how, on such a windy day, the shelter provided by these hedgerows is so important for farm animals and for the animals and plant within the hedgerow.

Future Nature Fund Updates

The delivery phase of the Nature Fund projects is now coming to end. However, the learning provided by the projects will help inform the development of the National Natural Resources Policy and the Area Statements being introduced by the Environment Bill.

The fact sheets for the projects provide an overview of the practical demonstration of the sustainable management of natural resources. These can be accessed here: <http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/nature-fund/nature-fund-projects/?lang=en>

Other areas of interest

Water Strategy for Wales

On the 20 May, the Minister for Natural Resources launched the Welsh Government's Water Strategy for Wales. This Strategy sets out our long-term policy direction in relation to water. Our aim is to ensure we have a more integrated and sustainable approach to managing our water and associated services in Wales. This Strategy has been developed within this context and will contribute to the implementation of our wider natural resource management policy.

A more integrated approach to the way we manage our water resources will help to promote the coordinated management of water, land and related resources. This in turn will enable us to maximise economic and social benefits in an equitable way while protecting vital ecosystems and the environment.

We must ensure the long-term needs of a sustainable and resilient environment and ensure that there are sufficient, reliable water resources and waste water services available in Wales. This approach will also drive green growth by providing an essential resource for businesses, as well as providing new opportunities for employment.

This Strategy is set within the context of our long-term policy direction to improve our natural resource management and covers a broad range of matters relating to the management of our water systems, including all inland waters, estuaries and coastal waters. In particular, we will place a focus on how we can increase the resilience of our whole water system in order to maximise the benefits it can bring us and reduce costs to consumers and businesses including water companies.

The strategy can be found on the Welsh Government website at

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/waterflooding/publications/water-strategy/?lang=en>

Have your say on the Interim Agricultural Wages Order

A consultation is currently open concerning proposals for an Interim Agricultural Wages Order. We welcome and encourage you to provide your thoughts and comments. The consultation period closes on 3 August and your responses will need to be submitted on or prior to this date. This is an excellent opportunity for you to have your say on proposals for the order which, depending on the outcome of the consultation, will govern agricultural employment in Wales until the Agricultural Advisory Panel convenes. The consultation document and response form can be found at this link: <http://gov.wales/consultations/environmentandcountryside/consultation-on-the-proposals-for-the-interim-agricultural-wage/?lang=en>

Glastir

New Glastir Woodland Restoration scheme

The first Expression of Interest window for those farmers and foresters that have been affected by phytophthora ramorum closed on 5 June. Those that have not received a letter confirming the outcome of their Expression of Interest should contact the customer contact centre via their online account or by telephone on 0300 062 5004.

New Glastir Woodland Creation scheme

The Online Expression of Interest window closes at midnight on 17 July. Customers should be notified of the outcome by 7 August. If customers have not received any correspondence by the 7 August, they should contact the customer contact centre via their online account or on 0300 062 5004.

Next application window for Glastir Organic

The Glastir Organic 2016 application window will open on 20 July and close at midnight on 2 September 2015. Applications can be made through RPW Online only. Digital Assistance will be available for those who have difficulty in completing an on-line application.

Glastir Entry 2014 Contract holders

A reminder to all 2014 Glastir Entry Contract holders who have not yet fully completed their capital works that they have until 31 December 2015 to do so. Failure to do so will attract penalties and payment reductions.

Existing Glastir Advanced and Glastir Woodlands Contract Holders

Capital works under Glastir Advanced and Glastir Woodland Management contracts must be completed in the year specified in the Contract unless a derogation to vary the dates has been granted. Failure to do so will attract penalties and payment reductions with the possible termination of the contract.

Farmers and foresters who hold a Glastir Advanced and Glastir Woodland Management contract are encouraged to claim for completed capital works earlier this year, ideally by no later than 13 November in order for the Welsh Government to spend the allocated funds before the end of the year and under the outgoing Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.

Glastir Efficiency Grant Scheme

Final claims for grant under the Glastir Efficiency Grant scheme must be submitted by 31 October 2015 after which no further funding will be available. Any claims received after this date cannot be accepted and will be rejected.

To be eligible for payment all works must have been completed, installed and paid for in full before a claim is submitted and the claim must be accompanied by all the required supporting documents.

Glastir Queries

If customers have any queries regarding Glastir, they should contact the Customer Contact Centre through their RPW Online Account or on 0300 062 5004.

Biocontrol of Himalayan Balsam

Himalayan balsam's days in Wales could be numbered. Between 26 and 29 May, as part of a Welsh Government funded project, scientists from the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI) released a biological control agent to combat the spread of this invasive non-native plant.

The biocontrol agent in question is a pathogenic rust fungus that is incredibly host-specific to Himalayan balsam. The scientists from CABI began their search for a suitable agent in 2006. They travelled to the Indian Himalayas, the native range of Himalayan balsam, to find one of the many insects or fungi that attacked the plant. CABI then had to establish which of these could be released into the UK to control the weed while leaving indigenous species unharmed. From this work, CABI successfully isolated a pathogenic rust fungus that does just that. During the course of the research, testing in quarantine laboratories has established that the rust fungus causes significant damage to Himalayan balsam and does not impact on any native UK species.

Himalayan balsam plants infected with the rust fungus have been planted out at four sites in Wales. The progress of the disease will then be monitored over the next three years. A similar project began in England last summer. Early indications from that trial are that the rust fungus is successfully spreading to balsam stands within the trial areas and beyond. As with any biocontrol agent, time is the key factor. If successful, it is anticipated that there will be around an 80% reduction in the Himalayan balsam population in Wales in the next five to seven years.

Draft Energy Efficiency Strategy

Action on energy efficiency:

- contributes strongly across our wellbeing goals,
- is a major factor in green growth, jobs and supply chains,
- is the most cost effective means of meeting our commitments to reduce carbon emissions,
- lowers the costs for businesses and the public sector,
- can directly address fuel poverty and reduce fuel bills.

The Welsh Government has had significant impact with its energy efficiency programme to date, and by setting out long-term direction in a first Wales Energy Efficiency Strategy, we have the opportunity to engage more widely in realising the opportunities and addressing barriers to uptake.

An energy efficiency call for evidence was held between 16 October 2014 and 8 January 2015 seeking the views of stakeholders on a potential vision for energy efficiency in Wales and options for a way forward. A collation of responses document sharing the results of the call for evidence has now been published. All responses have been considered fully in developing the strategy further, and we believe that this draft strategy reflects the current evidence and the views of stakeholders. We would now like to give you the opportunity to shape the final strategy.

Start of consultation: 17 July 2015

End of consultation: 9 September 2015

<http://gov.wales/consultations/environmentandcountryside/?lang=en>

Resource Efficient Wales



The Resource Efficient Wales service has now been operational for 7 months, following its official launch by Carl Sargeant, the Minister for Natural Resources at the end of October 2014. The service provides a single point of contact for trustworthy information, advice and support to individuals, community groups, businesses and public sector organisations to help them to save on energy, water and waste and to generate renewable energy.

Formal marketing of the service commenced in April 2015, with a focus on raising awareness of the service with householders and included a range of mechanisms such as press adverts and articles, online advertising and advertising on buses across Wales. The marketing activity has focused on raising awareness of the service generally but specifically on quick fixes to make homes more energy efficient and combating cold calling.

Resource Efficient Wales is here to help people and organisations in Wales to find the right support, by providing information on what support is available and referring callers to the range of advice and support services that are available to help them including the more specialist advice and support that is available through the REW Client Manager Service.

For further information about the support that is available through the service call **0300 123 2020** between 9:00am and 5:00pm, go to the website www.wales.gov.uk/resource-efficient or e-mail ResourceEfficientWales@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK

The National Survey for Wales

The National Survey for Wales results for 2014-15 were published on Thursday June 11th. These results are based on over 14,000 face-to-face interviews across Wales carried out between April 2014 and March 2015. Results are available at national level, local authority level and Local Health Board level.

The National Survey collects robust, detailed information on the views and experiences of people in Wales, on a wide range of subjects. The release will contain headline results from each of the topics that the survey covers, including:

- Visits to and satisfaction with arts events, museums, and historic places
- Future generations- expectations of Wales in the future
- Well-being, including quality of the local area
- Active travel - walking or cycling to get to places
- Recycling
- Energy saving measures

The results are a valuable source of evidence to help in making policy and monitoring changes over time. The release is published on the [National Survey webpages](#) and more detailed tables of results will be available on [StatsWales](#). Over the coming year the National Survey team will be carrying out further analysis of the 2014-15 results.

This is the final set of results from the National Survey in its current form. From March 2016, a new wave of the National Survey begins that will replace the current National

Survey as well as the Arts in Wales Survey, Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey, the Welsh Health Survey and Active Adults Survey. The new approach will continue to provide vital information for decision-making, collected to the highest standards.

If you would like to request further analysis of the 2014-15 results, be kept up to date with progress, or suggest topics for the survey in future, please email the National Survey team: surveys@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

Ways to keep updated

To learn more about the Natural Resource Management Programme please visit: www.gov.wales/naturalresourcemanagement

The web pages include [frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#), an [information pack](#) and some [case studies](#).

You can also keep up to date with developments on Facebook and Twitter by following @WG_NatResMin and liking the Welsh Government's Facebook page.

If you have any questions or if you want to join the mailing list, please email us at naturalresourcemanagement@wales.gsi.gov.uk

