

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith /
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Cymru Sero Net / Net Zero Wales
NZ13
Ymateb gan GwyrddNi / Evidence from GwyrddNi

**GwyrddNi Written Evidence and Suggestions for Key Themes on Net Zero Wales:
Committee for Climate Change, the Environment and Infrastructure**



GwyrddNi is a community-based and community-led climate change organization. GwyrddNi is funded by the National Lottery Climate Action Fund, and is led by DEG, a social enterprise in Gwynedd, in partnership with five other community organisations; Partneriaeth Ogwen, Cyd Ynni, Siop Griffiths, Cwmni Bro, and Ynni Llŷn.

The fact that 'consumption' emissions will be measured as well as 'territorial' emissions is welcomed. But as well as importing materials, Wales and its communities are exporting wealth. For example, a large percentage of the wealth created by electricity generation is exported in from GwyrddNi communities. In this way Wales exports the ability of some individuals to live lives that make a huge contribution to the climate crisis (see <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/media/press-releases/carbon-emissions-of-richest-1-set-to-be-30-times-the-15c-limit-in-2030/>) and undermine Wales' contribution to reaching net zero. Shouldn't the carbon emissions that Wales exports be measured as well as those that are imported? Measuring this, as well as territorial emissions and consumption, would enable the Welsh Government to formulate policies and measures that would be far more effective in managing a fair social transition to a cleaner future, while developing prosperous circular and foundational economies within Welsh communities.

The Wales Together Approach, or at least the way it is referred to in Zero Net Wales does not seem to recognize communities or the community sector as distinct entities to work with. Not doing this is flawed in two ways. a) It doesn't recognize the reality that the citizens of Wales organize their lives through their communities b) The Welsh Government will miss the opportunity that working with communities as entities would offer to deliver highly effective and efficient results.

No doubt the easiest thing for the WG to do will be to attempt a top-down approach, market-led so as to outsource responsibilities (and ultimately benefits and profits) to large, multi-national orgs. This may be easiest but it is unlikely to be most effective in encouraging the changes needed by each and every person in Wales.

We have been seeing statements from Ministers such as “We must bring communities with us” - thus suggesting that communities are not part of the “us” and are unwilling to make the changes needed. Yet, the Climate Change Commission makes it clear that people must be at the heart of the transition to Carbon Zero. Our experiences in developing rooted, community based approaches to climate change highlights that change is more forthcoming and welcomed when giving local people the lead. Furthermore the benefits of this approach outweigh a top-down approach as we see increased confidence and empowered local citizens willing to take further actions. This is an integral approach that needs to be embedded across all action. For example, statements such as “make sure our policies and interventions are designed around the citizen” must be turned on its head to read “Make sure citizens are designing policies and interventions”.

This is true across all areas but here are three areas as concrete examples:

The successes of community energy projects such as Ynni Ogwen and Ynni Padarn Peris demonstrate the benefits, in so many different ways, of the community approach. With the community leading the process and owning the resource, electricity generation technology transforms from electricity generating equipment into a resource that creates and sustains a thriving community and all the benefits associated with that.

Currently the process of a ‘fair transition’ and economic prosperity is undermined by the way that tree grants can be distributed to individuals or businesses that act against the needs and aspirations of the community. By applying the policy design principles and measures outlined above, which place the community at the helm of the process, the grant allocation system could be transformed so that tree planting contributed to the prosperity of the local economy and would be a source of pride within the community.

Solutions to reducing emissions in transport, which rely on improving local infrastructure and services to reduce the need to travel, will need to be a complex weave of active and zero or very low carbon modes of transport, as well as members of the community using the infrastructure, services, and modes of transport are going to vary from community to community. Putting members of that community at the helm of exploring and developing solutions would, very efficiently, ensure that those transportation systems respond to the travel needs of the community, in all its complexity, and, as a result, crucially, will be used by citizens.

What we emphasize, on a practical level, is the need to:

- Identify the wealth and emissions being exported from our communities,
- Acknowledge communities as entities to work with on the journey to net zero,

- Support communities to develop Local Climate Assemblies across Wales to create space and opportunity for communities to explore solutions to the climate crisis,
- Respect the expertise of communities in this area,
- Ensure communities be lead on the development of local decarbonisation schemes
- Develop new challenge funding to develop innovative approaches to community led decarbonisation.

We welcome any feedback or questions on this written evidence.