

# Countryside Alliance



Delyth Jewell MS  
Chair of Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International  
Relations Committee  
Senedd  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1SN

11 October 2022

Dear Delyth

I write to you as chair of the above committee to ask if you and your fellow committee members would consider holding an urgent short inquiry into the sale and purchase of agricultural land sold in Wales for tree planting to companies who wish to use this as an off-set for carbon emissions or as part of investment funds.

The trend of purchasing Welsh farmland to mass plant trees to companies outside of the farming sector is ripping through our countryside like a fire-ball and we firmly believe that this is a threat to our culture, heritage and Welsh language.

The effects of the pattern of purchase will be seen in years to come across rural communities the length and breadth of Wales and we feel strongly that something must be done to ensure that any planting undertaken does not impact negatively on the fabric of rural life.

We met with Julie James MS, the Minister for Climate Change on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 whereby I had the opportunity to put forward the Countryside Alliance's proposal to implement a Rural Community Impact Assessment for all tree planting applications in Wales. The proposal was warmly received by the Minister.

The RCIA would assess the potential impact the planting of woodland would have on the local rural community assessing whether this would disproportionately and significantly detrimental to people living in rural areas.

The RCIA would look at the impact the woodland would have on the fabric of rural life and would include food security under the following headings;

- Rural economy;
- Food security; sustainability, traceability and affordability, and the impact on
- Culture, Heritage and the Welsh language.

This would need to be undertaken and approved prior to any woodland creation undertaken by public bodies and other companies who wish to “mass” plant trees on agricultural land. It is our belief that this would need to be undertaken independently from Government and Natural Resources Wales but should include a delegation of experts in various fields who could study the potential, both positive and negative, that large plantations could have on rural communities.

The Countryside Alliance is absolutely not opposed to tree planting and support tree planting as part of the wider campaign to combat climate change but we feel strongly that this must be the right tree, in the right place, for the right effect and should not jeopardise the future of the people in rural of Wales or indeed our future food security.

I would welcome the opportunity to bring this idea to fruition with the support of your committee and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

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Countryside Alliance  
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