

National Assembly for Wales
Environment and Sustainability Committee
NRW 2015 – 37
Natural Resources Wales – Annual Scrutiny 2015
Response from Cambrian Mountains Society



Llywydd: Iolo Williams
Cadeirydd: Prof. Roger Earis

President: Iolo Williams
Chairman: Prof. Roger Earis
www.cambrian-mountains.co.uk

8th April 2015

Annual Scrutiny of the Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Dear Mr. Jones

1. The Trustees of the Cambrian Mountains Society (CMS) value this opportunity to comment on the work of Natural Resources Wales. The Society is concerned about the responsibilities and duties that NRW inherited from the former CCW, in particular its role in landscape conservation.
2. CMS's vision for the 'Cambrians' is to see this unique landscape receive greater recognition and protection. To this end Trustees of the Society have in recent years met with, amongst others, the late Morgan Parry and Professor Peter Matthews. At all of these meetings CMS has promoted; *Pathfinder - Testing the Appropriateness of Designation*, (CCW Research Contract NW3-054 080 EPG 08, March 2009). The Society is aware that that this publication largely dealt with the extension of the Clwydian Hills AONB but it also considered the case for the Cambrians.
3. Whilst the Society understands that NRW operations have to work within the annual remit letter from the Minister it believes that the organisation's landscape team should, over the last year, have been more active in exploring Protected Landscape status for the Cambrians (as well as other areas). This could have run alongside WG's Independent Review of Protected Landscapes and perhaps even suggested to Professor Marsden's team that the Cambrian Mountains would be a highly suitable area to pilot a new National Landscape designation. Indeed, the Society has, in the last few weeks, written to Minister Carl Sargeant suggesting this very possibility.

4. CMS believes that NRW over the last year should have been tackling the core question from the Pathfinder Report (page 5) with regard to the Cambrians. *“What does the area need to tackle the forces for change and what difference would AONB designation make?”* In the Society’s opinion NRW should have been progressing a strategy to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of these hills as well as ‘fire fighting’ the more damaging forces for change now threatening them.
5. Linked to the above, the Society is disappointed that NRW, over the last year has not promoted *Landmap* as a means of showcasing high quality landscapes. Many high scoring landscapes, often higher scoring than areas within our NPs and AONBs, are not receiving the attention they deserve from an organisation with conservation at its core!
6. Finally, CMS considers that the balance in NRW’s work, since its creation, has leant far too heavily in favour of seeking business opportunities for its natural resources rather than in defending and enhancing some of the best landscapes in Europe.
7. The Society has no objection to this evidence being published.

Yours faithfully

Mr. Peter Foulkes, Trustee, Cambrian Mountains Society

Mr. P. Foulkes,

CMS Chairman Prof Roger Earis,