

## Cross-Party Group Annual Report.

19<sup>th</sup> February 2013 – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015

### Cross Party Group on Rural Affairs

#### 1. Group membership and office holders.

Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM (Chair)  
 William Powell AM  
 Antoinette Sandbach AM  
 Cat Griffiths-Williams (Secretary)

External members and the organisation(s) they represent are invited to the meetings of the Group depending on the topic under discussion.

The Secretariat wishes to express its thanks to the Chairman and his officials for their enthusiasm and diligence in enabling the Group to function effectively.

#### 2. Previous Group Meetings since the last AGM.

##### Meeting 1

##### **New Horizons for Rural Wales**

**Meeting date:** 08/05/13

**Present:**

**Chairman:** Llyr Huws Gruffydd – Plaid Cymru (PC)  
**Vice Chairman:** Antoinette Sandbach – Welsh Conservatives (C)  
**Secretariat:** **The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW)**

**Assembly Members:** Russell George – Welsh Conservatives (C)  
 William Powell – Welsh Liberal Democrats (LD)  
 Rebecca Evans – Welsh Labour (L)  
 Jocelyn Davies – (PC)  
 Janet Finch Saunders – (Con)  
 William Graham – (Con)  
 Alun Davies – (L) and Minister for Natural Resources and food

**In attendance:** Peter Ogden – CPRW  
 Cat Griffith-Williams – CPRW  
 Dr Emyr Roberts - Chief Executive Natural Resources Wales  
 James Byrne – Wildlife Trusts Wales  
 Helen Murry – Planed  
 Angela Charlton – Ramblers Cymru  
 Tegryn Jones – Pembrokeshire Coast

Arfon Williams – RSPB  
 Greg Pycroft – National Parks Wales  
 Tim Pagella – Wales Environmental Research Group  
 Venessa Griffiths – National Trust  
 Julian Atkins – Brecon Beacons National Park  
 Lee Waters – IWA  
 Malcolm Harrison – Pub is the Hub  
 Tim Peppin – WLGA  
 Richard Tyler – Brecon Beacons National Park  
 Authority (Rural Alliances Project)  
 Dr Jill Venus – School of Business, University of  
 Wales Trinity Saint David  
 Ben Underwood – CLA  
 Ian James Johnson – Office of Leanne Wood AM  
 Stuart Taylor – Post Office Ltd  
 John Cook – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority  
 Catrin Davies – Plaid Cymru Group Researcher  
 Emyr Williams – Plaid Cymru Group Researcher  
 Dr Ruth Williams – National Trust  
 Andrew Stumpf – British Waterways  
 Howard Davies – National Association of AONBs  
 Carys Howell – Communications Consultant/BBNPA  
 Matthew Quinn – Director of Environment and  
 Sustainable Development, WG  
 Gareth Jones - WG

*Summary of issues discussed:*

Presentation by **Alun Davies AM the Minister for Natural Resources**. The Minister provided an overview of his perspective of what lay ahead in respect of the challenges facing the rural areas of Wales and the economies within these areas. The Minister invited the Cross Party Group to provide their thoughts and initiate an open and frank debate about the role of the uplands in the future of Wales.

**Dr Emyr Roberts, Chief Executive : National Resources Wales** provided a detailed overview of the approach that NRW would be taking in fulfilling its role and delivering the priorities outlined in its initial remit letter from the Minister.

**Dr Jill Venus : School of Business, University of Wales Trinity Saint David** Presented ‘Assessing Rural Vibrancy – Ideas for the Rural Alliances Project’ provided the Group with an insight into the work she and her colleagues in Germany were developing in the context of the EU funded Rural Alliance project which is being led by the Brecon Beacons National Park authority. She emphasised that this was work in progress but that it was already providing some important ideas and outcomes. Followed by a Q&A session.



(Con), Osian Lewis AMSS (PC), Emyr Williams AMSS (PC), Laura Cranmer AMSS (Con)

**In attendance:** Peter Ogden – CPRW, Cat Griffith-Williams – CPRW, Rhys Jones – Royal Mail, Stuart Taylor – Post Office, Natalie Rees – Cynnal Cymru, Irene Evison – CNP, Alex Phillips – WG, Karen Anthony – CLA, Terry Marsden – Sustainable Places Research Institute Cardiff, John Cook – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Edward Holdaway – Wales Landscape Partnership, Lowri Gwilym – WLGA, Beverley Penney – OSS, Jay Kynch – OSS, Ruth Williams – Landscape Institute, Emily Keenon – National Trust Wales, Jon Cryer – RSPB.

***Summary of issues discussed:***

**Presentation on the Rural Alliances Project by Richard Tyler from Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. Jeff Cuthbert AM and Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty with an overarching responsibility for Sustainable Development** set out how he intends to ensure SD is the central organising principle throughout all policy and legislation and offered his views on tackling rural poverty. **The Minister took questions from attendees.**

**Presentation by Rhys Jones – Royal Mail** set out the three key aspects in delivering sustainably robust rural communities:- **access, choice and connectivity.**

**Presentation by Stuart Taylor – Post Office.**

**Chairman’s closing remarks.** Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM confirmed the paper ‘Unlocking the potential of the Welsh Uplands’ was sent to Alun Davies AM and Minister for Natural Resources and Food. He explained the new rules for the operation for Cross Party Groups and the need to have an AGM to vote on a Chair and also the clear guidelines about the responsibility of the secretariat. He was very happy with how CPRW have delivered the secretariat and asked the attendees to vote that Cat Griffith-Williams, CPRW would continue in the role. The attendees endorsed this decision.

**Meeting 4.**

**Annual General Meeting**

**‘Rural Implications of the Planning Bill’**

***Meeting date:***

**19/02/14**

**Assembly Members**

**In attendance:**

Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM (PC),  
 Russell George AM (Con),  
 Osian Lewis AMSS (PC),  
 Laura Cranmer AMSS (Con),  
 Carl Sargeant AM (L),  
 Paul Pavia AMSS (Con)  
 Peter Ogden – CPRW,  
 Cat Griffith-Willimas CPRW,  
**Dr** Roisin Willmott, RTPI (Cymru),  
 Alex Phillips – NAW,  
 Edward Holdaway -Wales Landscape Partnership,  
 Raoul Brambral Wales Environment Link  
 Karen Whitfield - Wales Environment Link,  
 Laura Cropper – RSPB,  
 James Byrne - WT Wales,  
 Andrew Stumpf - Glandŵr Cymru,  
 Dr Ruth Williams - Landscape Institute Wales,  
 Richard Kirlew - Rural Affairs for the Church in  
 Wales, Siobhan Wiltshire - Welsh Government,  
 Planning Division,  
 Chris Lindley - Welsh AONB's,  
 Greg Pycroft - National Parks Wales,  
 Malcolm I Harrison - Pub is the Hub,  
 Russell De' ath, Department for Natural Resources  
 and Food, Welsh Government ,  
 Karen Anthony – CLA,  
 Aneurin Phillips - Snowdonia National Park  
 Authority,  
 Elaine Davey,  
 Jay Kynch - The Open Spaces Society,  
 Jim Wilson - Brecon Beacons Park Society,  
 Helen Rice - Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

***Summary of issues discussed:*****Annual General Meeting: Election of the Chair and Secretariat**

Llyr Gruffydd AM; the current Chair of the Rural Affairs Cross Party Group. As a standard procedure a Chair had to be elected for the coming year. Attendees were therefore invited to propose nominations for the position of Chair. Dr Ruth Williams - Landscape Institute Wales nominated Llyr Gruffydd AM. As there were no further nominations it was unanimously agreed by the attendees that Llyr Gruffydd should continue in his role as Chair of the Group. Llyr also asked for confirmation that Cat Griffith-Williams, CPRW should continue to provide the Secretariat role for the group - attendees agreed. Llyr led discussions on ideas for the future work programme of the Group; these included considerations of forthcoming the Rural Development Plan, Marine Planning including the link between land and sea and the Natural Resource Management Plan were all suggested topics.



**Howard Sutcliffe** – Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB  
**Beverley Penney** – Open Spaces Society,  
**Melanie Doel** – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority  
**Siobhan Wiltshire** – Planning Division Welsh Government,  
**Ruth Bradshaw** – Campaign for National Parks  
**Emily Keenen** – National Trust Wales  
**Rachael Sharp** – Wildlife Trust  
**Madeline Harvard** – Natural Resources Wales

***Summary of issues discussed:***

**Professor Terry Marsden - Director of Cardiff University's Sustainable Places Research Institute, Independent Chair- Designated Landscapes Review Panel**

Professor Terry Marsden indicated how pleased he was to have been invited to Chair this review of designated areas in Wales and noted how important it was that these areas are protected and function in an appropriate policy context. He highlighted the need to develop approaches which reflect the role and relevance of these designated areas as exemplars of Sustainable development. He outlined the two distinct phases of the review with the conclusions of the first Phase being reported to the Minister by the end of January 2015 before the second phase commenced thereafter. It was anticipated that the Panel's work would be completed and its overall conclusions presented to the Minister by the end of July 2015.

**Meeting 6.                      Off-roading in Rural Wales**  
**Does the economic benefit out-weigh the environmental damage?**

***Meeting date:***                      **27/01/15**

**Chair:**                                      **Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM (PC)**  
**Cat Griffith-Williams** - The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW)

**Present**

**Assembly Members**

**Russell George** - (Con),

**William Powell** - (LD)

**Antoinette Sandbach** - (Con)

**Elin Jones** - (PC)

**Aled Roberts** - (LD)

**Mark Isherwood** - (Con)

**Invited speakers:**

**In attendance:**

Robin Hickins - Treadlightly  
 Duncan Green - Treadlightly  
 Rev Richard Kirlew - Church in Wales  
 Sheila Wren - John Muir Trust  
 Rachel Evans - Countryside Alliance  
 Anita Banks - On behalf of Alun Davies AM  
 Robert Taylor - Welsh Government  
 Rachel Lewis-Davies - NFU Cymru  
 Alun Jones - Cambrian Mountain Society  
 Rosemary Watton - CPRW  
 Diana Mallinson - SOPS/GLPG  
 Hannah Norman - on behalf of Ramblers Cymru  
 Jocelyn Kynch - Open Spaces Society

***Summary of issues discussed:***

**Mr Adrian Walls** : Rights of Way Manager for Denbighshire CC; Secretary of the Welsh Rights of Way Management Group of the County Surveyors Society / Association of Directors of Environment Planning and Transport Member of the Parliamentary Rights of Way Review Committee

**Mr Jont Bullbeck**

Access, Recreation and Tourism Team Leader, Natural Resources Wales  
 Welsh Off Road Motoring Steering Group

Representatives on behalf of Green Lane, Byways, and Bridleway groups, and representatives on behalf of Off-Road Vehicle users all made contributions from the floor.

Presentations were given on differentiating between the illegal and legal use of recreational motor vehicles. Data was presented on potential off-road stock and potential participation. Statistics and findings of off-roading sites and routes in Wales were presented. Estimates of the economic benefits were discussed as well as the impact that it has on the environment.

**Meeting 7. Annual General Meeting - Election of the Chair and Secretariat**

**Launch of the Adfer Ban a Chwm (ABC) Report into views on affordable housing and using derelict vernacular buildings to help address this need in rural communities.**

**Meeting date:** 17/03/15

**Present:**

**Chair:** Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM (PC)



## Cat Griffith-Williams - The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW)

### Assembly Members

**Russell George** - (Con),

**William Powell** - (LD)

**Mark Isherwood** - (Con)

**Alun Ffred Jones** - (PC)

**Gareth Llewellyn** - Office of Leanne Wood AM (PC)

### In attendance:

Moira Lucas - Swansea Council

Karen Anthony - CLA Cymru

Edward Holdaway - Alliance for National Parks Cymru

Cat Griffith-Williams - CPRW

Peter Ogden - CPRW

Carys Matthews - CPRW

Julian Preece - Powys CC

Stuart Davies - Powys CC

Joanie Speers - ABC

Roger Mears - ABC

Nico Jenkins - ABC

Anjuli Quartermaine - ABC

Helen Whitear - ABC

David James - ABC

Lee Cecil - Asiant Capital

Kate Biggs - Monmouthshire CC

Judith Leigh - SPAB (Wales)

Richard Keen - APT AHF (Wales)

Roisin Willmott - RTPI Cymru

Helen Fry - BBNPA

Ryan Greaney - BBNPA

Helen Roderick - BBNPA

Carys Howell - HLF

Cllr Geraint G Hopkins - BBNPA

Mark Major - AMSS Suzy Davies AM

Roger Belle - Pub is the Hub

### *Summary of issues discussed:*

**AGM** - **Llyr Huws Gruffydd** AM opened the AGM and thanked everyone for attending. He explained that it is a National Assembly for Wales annual requirement to elect a Chair and Secretariat for the group. As current chair, Llyr passed on the procedures to Peter Ogden who proceeded to explain the protocols of operation of a CPG. He asked for proposals for a chair and Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM was re-elected as Chair of the Cross party Group on Rural Affairs. **CPRW** expressed their contentment to continue for another year as secretariat, Llyr asked for a vote to accept

CPRW as secretariat. Attendees voted yes and CPRW will continue as secretariat of the CPG on Rural Affairs.

### **Invited speakers:**

**Joanie Speers**, ABC founder/director introduced the work of ABC, the story behind the project, and what ABC hope to achieve by this launch. She explained why the session has been called 'The future of rural Wales: grass roots heritage and affordable homes' as there are two things that can be said with total confidence: There are many derelict vernacular buildings in the Welsh countryside and there is a need for affordable housing in rural Wales.

**Nico Jenkins**, ABC programme development officer shared the key findings of the project.

**David James**, Rural Housing Enabler for Monmouthshire talked about his experience of the need for affordable housing in rural areas.

Joanie reiterated what ABC want to achieve; ABC need the members help to achieve 3 things, very simple: 1) Help get these two issues together on the Assembly's agenda and ensure the Heritage Bill and the Planning Bill support this combined approach. 2) Help ABC recommendations, though ambitious, to be taken seriously. 3) Help ABC show that this can work, and that means endorsement, commitment, and of course financial support.

ABC also requested direct assistance from the CPG with driving their message forward by asking them to consider five potential recommendations, it should also be noted that these were ABC's initial views. Peter Ogden suggested that all participants at the meeting be given an opportunity to consider and respond to ABC's recommendations (details can be found within the minutes on the NAFW's official web site). Once opinions had been collated Peter Ogden would then produce a common agreed set of recommendations for the CPG to consider.

### **Professional lobbyists, voluntary organisations and charities with whom the Group has met during the preceding year.**

The Group met with no professional lobbyists.

The Group did not meet with any voluntary organisations or charities outside of these meeting.

CPRW as Secretariat to the Group has been responsible for coordinating and reporting on the outcomes of each meeting during this the Group's full operational year.

Accordingly this Annual summary report of the Rural Affairs Cross Party Group has been compiled on behalf of the Chair by:



**CPRW**  
Ty Gwyn  
31 High Street  
Welshpool  
Powys

**Annual Financial Statement.**

19 February 2013 - 17 March 2015

**Cross Party Group on Rural Affairs****Chair** Llyr Huws Gruffydd – Plaid Cymru**Secretariat:** Cat Griffith-Williams - The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW)

<b>Group's Expenses.</b>	None.	£0.00
<b>Costs of all goods.</b>	No goods purchased.	£0.00
<b>Benefits received by the group or individual Members from outside bodies.</b>	No benefits received.	£0.00
<b>Any secretariat or other support.</b>	Cost of the secretariats time.	£3450
<b>Services provided to the Group such as hospitality.</b>		
All refreshments paid for by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales.		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Description and name of provider</b>	<b>Cost</b>
8/5/13	National Assembly for Wales in house catering	£170.88
01/10/13	“ “ “	£74.04
19/2/14	“	£205.32
4/11/14	“ “ “	£63.00
27/1/15	“ “ “	£126.12
17/3/15	“ “ “	£236.52
<b>Total cost</b>		<b>£4325.88</b>

