

Wales Biodiversity Partnership Conference Proceedings 2009

The second Wales Biodiversity Partnership Conference took place at the University of Glamorgan on the 16th & 17th September. Jane Davidson AM, Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing gave the opening speech with over one hundred delegates from a wide-ranging group of organisations in attendance. Aled Roberts, Environment Spokesperson, Welsh Local Government Association then addressed the audience followed by a Q&A session from WAG and WLGA.

Day 1

Chair: Gerry Quarrell, WAG

[Ministerial Address - Jane Davidson AM Speech ESH Minister](#)

Presentations Day 1.

[Biodiversity management and wind farms—an example of strategic environmental master planning; Mike Webb RSBP Cymru](#)

RSPB has always been supportive of TAN 8 (identification of strategic search areas). As part of this WAG is spatially expressing broad locations for onshore wild farms in seven areas across Wales. These areas cover 4% of the land area of Wales.

Opportunity mapping – looked at current and old land use/habitat maps and soil data to assess current and potential habitat types.

Produced management statements for each Ecological Character Zone for types of management needed to create priority habitats within each zone.

WAG has targets for renewable energy, so there is considerable development pressure within the identified areas.

RSPB recommended that a policy context should be established through SPG or development plans on how to manage land/wildlife within the development areas.

Community benefit – need recognition that environmental community benefit is a vital subset of community benefit (Denbighshire has recognised Environmental Community benefit).

Identify best locations for deployment of Env. community benefit zones within which, real biodiversity benefits can be made in accordance with BAP process, e.g. soil is good for blanket bog restoration and land owner is sympathetic.

Needs to be a rational way to identify community benefit in terms of developer cash perhaps based on concepts of sustainable development. RSPB have undertaken short

study of all existing windfarms in Wales to see how much developer invested (£ per Mwatt per year) in the community for community benefit.

Investigating usefulness of biodiversity levy to get funds from developers invested in biodiversity.

Q&A £2000 per Mwatt per year ave. invested in community benefit per developer.

[Gower Commons initiative: Good business for Biodiversity; Sion Brackenbury, City & County of Swansea](#)

Gower Commons initiative (GCI) established 1998 because the condition of commons was declining. Understood from the start that they needed to establish a level of sustainability in the work that was done. Faced with declining number of commoners/graziers. Needed to produce something to sell, needed to be creative so could communally generate an income.

Business principles: once business formed by GCI it was passed to the Gower Commoners association. They now have a good sales base and revenue in increasing (thanked WAG who initially invested £80k).

Products:

Bracken compost – significant biodiversity gains very quickly through managing bracken, also bracken removal allows more access to walkers etc.

Bracken is also bailed for animal bedding. After use it is returned for composting.

Use standard agricultural machinery, but older equipments tends to be better designed for these processes.

Need a hard surface to compost on so using abandoned airfield which leaves plenty of room for expansion.

Also expanding into composted manure and low grade woodchips.

Lessons learned; don't flood local market as it drives the price down!

Future: considering bracken pelleting for biofuel and sharing of equipment as it stands idle for a lot of the year.

[Restoring Active Blanket Bog in the Berwyn and Migneint Special Areas of Conservation; Mike Morris, LIFE Project Wales](#)

2.57 million pounds invested in this project, 75% comes from EU fund. Five year project 2006-2011, main sites are in North Wales consisting of the two largest areas of blanket bog left in Wales.

Talking to various groups e.g. gardening clubs to stop them using peat.

Huge number of ecosystem service gains form Bogs. Are other smaller areas of blanket bog around Wales e.g Brecon Beacons. Severn Trent and United Utilities have a vested interest in what happens to water quality as they use lake Vyrnwy to supply water to Liverpool.

Awareness – working with local children to introduce them to blanket bogs.

Lake Vyrnwy farm run by RSPB, in order to keep economically viable, the work on the bog mustn't negatively impact the work on the farm.

Digging of drains, overgrazing and coniferization done after the war are major detriments to blanket bogs. However, trees planted on bogs not economically viable as ground still too wet for them to grow properly so Forestry Commission working to remove them.

Drain blocking: difficult to find the right equipment as not an easy habitat to work with. Is hard on the machinery and track vehicles must be used to reduce ground pressure. 350km drain to block over 5000 hectares.

Project monitoring:

Vegetation surveys - blocked drain v not blocked areas.

Water chemistry, flow rate (Environment Agency and water companies particularly concerned about this).

Peatland hydrology is returning to what it should be. Blocked areas re now more stable and less prone to flash floods which keeps more peat on the hill. The water colour has dropped and will hopefully drop further over time.

UKpopnet – University of York, large landscape scales carbon research. Have been taking trace gas measurements, intake or release of carbon from bog habitat measured. Can vary over small area so scale of measurement is very important. Sedges and rushes tend to release carbon, heather tends to absorb but again depends on scale so there is much more work to be done.

[The Green Valleys project: Lessons in sustainability, community and biodiversity gain; Gareth Ellis & Grenville Ham, Brecon Beacons NPA](#)

Triggered by Big Green Challenge – a 1 year competition to foster innovation, could win up to £1million.

Produced green valley's aims and set it up as a company which was owned by the community. Following 16 evening lectures, few hundred local people from BBNP signed up. The project has been looking at natural energy systems that could be owned by the community, such as small upland hydroelectric projects that e.g. produce electricity for 20 homes. Installation is cheap because they have trained local installers, now six trained in the local area. Can recoup costs of installation in 2 years. All profits are ploughed back into biodiversity projects. Have designed another 94 systems though not all may get planning permission. 60% of an areas electricity could be owned by the community in 3 years.

- A percentage of the profits go into regional purse
- A percentage go to biodiversity in that area and
- A percentage go into reducing carbon emissions in that area.

Can offer up front financing for individuals due to draw down arrangement with the bank.

Most of our current habitats were created as a side effect of human land use, they weren't created to be wildlife habitats. They come from natural resource management and economic needs. Problem now is over intensive use. Biodiversity has been lost alongside a loss in the connection between people and their landscape and economy, e.g. loss of farms etc.

Looking at the value of habitats from different perspectives. Disadvantages of hill farming now becomes a valuable asset for hydro electric power. Or need to store water (in case of flood, drought or higher demand) where ponds = free water for livestock but will also benefit wetland species.

Woodlands provide sustainable materials, energy, fuel and local products. Have instigated sustainable community woodland management initiatives.

Need to think in terms of the resources we have – the land (natural wealth) and the people (skills, energy, imagination). If we use natural resources in a sustainable way then biodiversity benefits becomes integral part of the process.

Q&A – Will there be any dead wood left in community woodlands if its being used for fuel? Yes dead wood is integral part of sustainable management.

In Merthyr a lot of trees are being cut down to fuel wood stoves because of increased energy prices this could happen everywhere? Sustainable coppice management should provide continuous supply. People should understand that if they use up all the resource now there will be none for next year.

Puts the control back into the hands of the people who are directly affected. Local authorities don't have much money but can enable a community to help themselves.

Information about the project has been passed onto other National Parks who are interested in running their own schemes.

Would there be pressure to plant faster maturing trees? Mostly looking at derelict woodland, these are then put under traditional coppice management using what is already there.

[River Usk Giant Hogweed Eradication Project; Stuart Craxford, Environment Agency Wales](#)

This project is good example of a lot of partners working together successfully.

Giant Hogweed is a huge plant that only spreads by seed (biennial, ave. 2-5 yr lifespan). Won't die until it succeeds in flowering. Leaves are 4 times bigger than rhubarb. Very invasive, particularly down watercourses.

River Usk – particularly bad infestation, health hazard to river users (Mons CC litigation issues). Impacts on river works and ecology e.g. erosion due to bare patches after plant death.

MSc student's project in 2000 produced baseline data of Giant Hogweed on the Usk. Was a need to coordinate removal work to make it sustainable and reduce costs. In 2005 public bodies got together and set up collaborative project (£5k from Environment Agency for the 1st phase). Mapped the distribution and developed a control strategy. Established funding.

Main infestation starts just upstream from Crickhowel and continues down to tidal limit at Newbridge. Occasional Hogweed below this. Cutting and herbicide treatment started at the top and worked downstream. Now have different teams working on different sections of the river. There are two main project meetings a year and the spray teams meet three times during the spraying season. Can train volunteers through Keep Wales Tidy to get herbicide certificates.

Seeds remain viable for up to 7 years so need to stop seeding to reduce the seed bank. Brief cold spell will trigger germination. Growth rate is very fast and ends up shading out everything else. Will also grow in crops and woodland away from the river.

The 2007 forum at Coleg Gwent brought the key groups together and was successfully repeated this year, well attended. Thought last year that numbers of plants had dropped but this winters cold spell triggered increased germination.

This is a long term project and need to keep the funding momentum going.

2010 Biodiversity Target—next steps; Katie-jo Luxton, RSPB Cymru

We know that we won't meet the 2010 targets. Wales looks pretty green and so most people are not aware of or understand the problems that are facing biodiversity.

However, we know more than we knew 18 years ago when the 2010 targets were set. We should gather our thoughts as an environmental movement to plan for 2010 and bear in mind that lots of good work has been going on e.g. the Environment Strategy, Birds and Habitats directives. We have a strong legislative framework producing a network of sites. We have a recently refreshed BAP process in Wales. So we have reasons for optimism but if we carried on as we are we would still not meet the targets by 2020. The Environment Strategy has a target for 2026 'of recovery on the way'. We only have a few years left to save some species and we all need to commit to delivering BAP..

What can we do differently to capture the agenda and sell to the Minister?

- We need political ownership of biodiversity outcomes –we need these in Assembly Manifestos and Government Strategies. Katie Jo has talked to other areas that have targets e.g. NHS waiting lists. The difference is we don't have political ownership of outcomes, i.e. not in a manifesto with political names
- against it. In 2010 political parties will be working on assembly manifestos for 2011 elections. We should get involved.

- We need clear lines of responsibility, who holds the power? and this should be linked to the tools to deliver
- It is important to hold onto resources
- We need significant new resources - There is money in Government, however we need to have clarity and consensus when we make arguments to secure funds and link to those delivering, and to policy drivers. We should challenge bad public spending and find new funds, e.g. plastic bag tax.
- The focus should shift from process to outcomes.
- Need new targets to fill in the steps up to 2026.
- We have already reached environmental limits for biodiversity, therefore trade off is not acceptable and need to address policy.
- If no money available then maybe we should go down the line of more regulation.
- We need to build unusual partnerships e.g. links to health. Need to be better at coordinating and working together, need shared messages. Need to link research to policy making e.g. links between mental and physical health and inactivity – inactivity costs the NHS £8 billion per year.

Q&A - we are losing so many small bits of habitat to planning, need to record exactly what we

Missed opportunities e.g. link between health and physical activity is well researched and there are ring fenced funds for Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) and coastal access yet we have not integrated biodiversity opportunities into these projects. The GQ answered that biodiversity can be delivered through RoWIPs and asked KJL to write to him outlining the issues.

Day 2.

Chair – Dr David Parker Director of Science CCW

[Ministerial Address Elin Jones AM Minister for Rural Affairs](#)

Presentations Day 2.

[Tackling Red Squirrel Conservation in Wales – a multi faceted approach – Liz Haliwell CCW](#)

Red squirrel are an iconic species with a role for seed dispersal.

Current situation map – red indicates good evidence of current presence; green indicates historic records.

How to protect them:

UK red squirrel group (UK lead)

Wales Forum (sets targets, devises actions)

LBAP action on the ground.

Recent approval was given by the minister for the red squirrel conservation plan. BAP target is to maintain the current range (included both red and green areas on the map), the conservation plan has a lower, more realistic target, focussing on the main sites.

Forest management; right mix of habitat for red squirrel, establish grey squirrel buffer zones around red sq. sites.

Anglesey; project work estimated a substantial population. To achieve success, need to get local people on board therefore awareness raising is important.

Clocaenog; Forestry Commission Wales forest with a good matrix of good habitat within poor habitat which is what works for the red sq. Ensure connectivity between pockets of good habitat through the management strategy.

Mid Wales; Grey and red sq. present, though reds are quite widespread.

Anglesey – high investment and local support

Clocaenog – FCW support over large area

Mid Wales – lower level of resources but making great strides.

Wales still has red squirrels but without action we would lose them. Commercial forestry and red sq. conservation can work together.

Squirrel pox virus; to date not had any outbreaks in Wales.

Q&A – Epynt forest used to have both red and grey sq. , they used to co-exist? Not aware of any left in that area, although they can co-exist for a while the reds generally lose out in the end.

Anglesey – you will have to continuously prevent greys coming over the bridge? Yes various measures are in place.

Anglesey – genetically isolated population, is this a problem?, yes, Pentrign also has genetically bottlenecked at some point, it would be good to introduce some individuals to improve the genetic diversity.

[Moelyci: A community managed farm for biodiversity John Harold and Dr Delia Fazey](#)

A community 350 acre working farm owned by local people who have bought shares in the land. The farm includes the mountain of Moelyci and a variety of habitats. People are involved in a variety of ways and the farm offers real opportunities for people to interact with biodiversity. There are 9 employees and different projects that bring in people who can then learn new skills e.g. through work experience and community service. In addition there are many volunteers involved in conservation management on the farm.

The powerpoint presentation sets out all the different projects and activities but in summary they include the market garden, green waste composting, green

woodworking sessions, allotments and many other cultural, craft and special interest activities.

Specific courses are run from introductory to professional levels.

Management for Biodiversity

The farm has 200 acres of upland heath and blanket bog and a range of species including some endemic species on specific sites. Heathland management is largely through grazing by ponies and sheep to maintain open areas and break up age structure. Support comes in various ways e.g through the Natur Gwynedd project and through volunteers. The key threats are fire and the impacts of climate change. There has been a series of catastrophic fires over the years, so need to create a mixture of age structures across the heath to prevent this in the future. Experimental management, such as the effect of raking up cuttings on regrowth, is carried out on the farm.

The farm brings in local expertise and in doing this rare fungi and other species have been discovered on the farm. Need to keep an open mind when looking at different areas of the farm as some areas may appear to be less interesting in terms of biodiversity and yet closer investigation may lead to discovery rare and vulnerable species. The open countryside and what is there is a result of long term consistent management.

SOAPBOX Writers block and biodiversity in words – Huw Jenkins, Natur Cymru

Natur Cymru flies the flag for Wildlife in Wales. Many of you have yet to contribute – this is your magazine and NC want your articles.

Natur Cymru is running a competition sponsored by WWF. We are asking you to write a 1000 word article on wildlife or the environment and submit. The winning article will be published in June. See <http://www.nature2010.org.uk/> for details.

Looking at the database last night Huw discovered that many delegates at this Biodiversity Conference are not subscribers to Natur Cymru and offered to give a £2 discount for an annual subscription to anyone who approached him to sign up during the conference.

[Joint working to make a bigger difference – South Wales perspective Alison Jones, Caerphilly County Borough Council](#)

Biodiversity issues really started coming to the fore when the counties re-organised into unitary authorities. At this point, not all had specialist ecologists so the Glamorgan and the Greater Gwent Biodiversity Action Groups (GlamBAG and GGBAG) were established to help share the writing of biodiversity action plans.

GlamBAG set up in 1999 produced 6 action plans as a 1st tranche

GGBAG set up in 2000 produces a further 13c action plans.

Then local action plans started to be developed so there was less need for regional plans and the BAGs adjusted their scope to support the LBAPs.

SEWBReC was set up following lessons learned from the Powys record centre pilot, GGBAG instigated the scoping exercise for the establishment of SEWBReC.

Recorders' forums are a good example of joint working; they are good for networking and engaging recorders in the BAP process.

The BAGS developed the south Wales wildlife sites guidance, to develop a full wildlife sites system with management plans and grants for landowners, though not yet been fully achieved. The guidance has been expanded to cover the whole of Wales (available on WBP website).

Other projects:

“Think wildlife” guide for planners and developers.

Churchyard project – big success, lots of interest by more churches than the project can cope with.

Connectivity project, used a spatial analysis model developed by forest research.

Workshops will be available soon to learn how to use this tool.

Nightjar; Merthyr found the funding and brought it to GlamBAG who developed the project.

[Natur Gwynedd Implementation Project – Rhys Jones, Gwynedd County Council](#)

Natur Gwynedd is the name of the Gwynedd LBAP which was published in 2004. Natur Gwynedd covers the area of Gwynedd that is outside the Snowdonia National Park. Objective 1 money was successfully drawn down to implement Natur Gwynedd in partnership with Gwynedd LA, Plantlife, CCW, EAW, FWAG and the Gwynedd Sustainable fund. The total value of the Natur Gwynedd Objective 1 project was £799,000. There were 2 elements to the project

1. The strategic project (delivered by the partners)
2. The Natur Gwynedd Grant Fund enabling local land owners to apply for funds for work that would contribute towards the LBAP

Project Officers were employed to take action forward, although at this stage it became apparent that some of the actions in the LBAP were difficult to implement as they had not been properly thought through when they were written..

The strategic project targeted coastal heathland and included fencing – however one of the problems is that once the money ended there was no follow up. The fencing at Moelyci was a success as there is continued sensitive management there. Other successful action included fencing on the Afon Soch to stop encroachment from cattle which was threatening migratory fish, water vole and otter. Work to clear vegetation in pools at Cilan (SAC/SPA/SSSI) with plantlife was also a success.

The Natur Gwynedd Fund was attractive to land owners as it has a simple application process and offered grants up to 80%. Much of the work funded involved linear habitats to improve connectivity e.g. fencing, river corridors and cloddiau restoration. Planting work was also carried out on Ynys Enlli (Bardsey).

There was also a community element to the project which was outsourced to Anna Williams the Wildlife Gardening Officer with Wildlife Gardening Wales..

With the end of the funding came the end of the project. Hoping to be able to carry on with some of the work through the Llyn Landscape project which has received £1rk.50,000 from HLF for habitat work. Gwynedd LA and the National Park are also putting in a LIFE bid to work in Invasive species.

SOAPBOX Conservation Challenges; Dr Dan Forman, Swansea University

Sharing data:- There is still a problem sharing survey and monitoring data. The maps that we base decisions on are not adequate and this leads to loss of biodiversity. Greater integration is needed. We need to support Local record Centres and make sure others send in data.

Alien Species:- this is the biggest threat to biodiversity loss. A whole industry is in the business of putting non native plants into the countryside. Ireland is likely to ban the sale of non native plants as it is possible that their sale is contravening EU law. The cost is enormous and the effect on biodiversity and quality of the environment which we all use is huge – we need to feed this message back to the public.

TEEB:- The Economics and Ecosystems and Biodiversity:- This is a framework for sustainability of the world. We need to embrace economics (i.e. the allocation of resources). We can't have the economy without the environment but we can have the environment with the economy. We need to think altruistically – **we are not here to save the planet we are here to save humanity.**

[Evaluating Success: A multi-taxa approach to monitoring Welsh agri environment schemes; Tony Morris, RSPB](#)

Agri-Environment Schemes (AES) aim to 'enhance environmental impacts of farming' they are compulsory in all EU states since 1992 under pillar II of the Common Agriculture Programme (CAP) – they should be contributing to the 2010 Biodiversity target.

Participation in schemes is voluntary. Compensation under income forgone and costs incurred is paid. How the schemes operate varies across the EU (and within the UK). Wales is developing a new hierarchical scheme called Glastir.

In order to know the effectiveness of these schemes and to properly inform policies, the CAP health check, progress towards the 2010 target, progress towards WAG objectives and targets and the development future schemes it is necessary to evaluate existing schemes.

Until recently there was no real evidence that agri environment schemes in Wales contributed to biodiversity conservation as there was no monitoring and no control sites, in fact evidence emerging from unrelated monitoring pointed to a decline in key species such as farmland birds.

Recently a review of the effectiveness of AES on delivering biodiversity has been set up focussing mainly on Tir Gofal farms (less so on Tir Cynnal and Organic Farms). The review is looking at various species from multiple taxa.

The Evaluation process

1. Desk Top review (literature review)

Looking at the Tir Gofal prescriptions for species and where these prescriptions occur in key areas for the species. This identifies if the prescriptions are being used sufficiently for specific species in the right areas of Wales.

There is potential conflict between some species needs and so the prescriptions are ranked for delivery of priority species and ranked in order of up take and area. E.g the TG prescription for unimproved acid grassland was the top ranked for delivery of priority species but had a low uptake and low land area coverage.

The desk review concluded the following:

- TG prescriptions have potential to meet year-round ecological requirements of a wide range of species
- low coverage/uptake of some prescriptions could limit the benefits
- for some species, TG did not provide all essential requirements
- there are knowledge-gaps

These conclusions need to be confirmed by monitoring.

The desk review now needs to be confirmed through field monitoring and this is happening between 2009 and 2011 with resurvey planned for 2012. There will be random stratified sampling of key areas for 18 species (multiple taxa) and the same for non AES farms as a control.

SOAPBOX LBAP musings Richard Wistow; Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council

Localness – a sense of place in the valleys that is locally distinctive.

The coal spoil initiative is linked to the industrial heritage and the value of the heathland. Feeding in local stories to a project increases the value of the resource as local people know their area so well. It is important to enjoy what we are doing. The LBAP process has helped link different factors and helped us to learn about the local area and environment. It is important to get out in the environment – you feel better and it improves your local knowledge. **A site visit is never wasted.**

[Protected sea areas and biodiversity gain; Aethne Cooke, CCW](#)

To prevent the degradation of the marine environment the best action is usually to remove the damaging activity and the biodiversity to recover.

Skomer Marine Nature Reserve (MNR) will become the 1st Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Wales (Skomer Island and the Malos Peninsular). It was 1st designated a MNR in 1990 and a by law was introduced that prohibited the use of scallop dredges and the taking of scallops by divers in the reserve. The reserve is managed by CCW

and a team of marine biologists who have surveyed the scallops and the in fauna, previous surveys had been carried out in 1984. Scallop density increased from 1 to 17 per metre square from 2000 to 2008 and significant increases in density were found in 4 of the 6 sites (see graph on PP). This success has been mirrored by similar action around the Isle of Man where density and size increased and cross over benefits were found outside the closed area. The diversity of marine life within the sediment (the in fauna) was also surveyed and this increased over time from 80 – 160 per 100m² This demonstrates how removing the threatening activity has benefited biodiversity.

There is a need to prevent dredges on the Mael and Seagrass beds in Milford Haven Estuary. Both habitats are sensitive to disturbance and one pass of a single dredge can lead to 70% destruction of Maerl and after 4 years there is likely to be no recovery. South West Sea Fisheries have a prohibition order preventing bottom trawl fishing over Horse mussel reefs off the Llyn Peninsular. A rich animal community lives on the reef that is now protected.

Regulations in the marine environment can contribute to biodiversity benefits. Tangible benefits may take many years and in some cases there is no certainty that recovery will ever happen as with prolonged disturbance of Maerl beds. The worse the degradation the longer the delay, also sometimes other unidentified factors may be at play. In the marine environment many successes yet to be made, but once established the benefits to biodiversity will multiply very quickly. Prevention is far better than cure and we can't proactively encourage recovery.

Future priorities include Mudflats as piecemeal loss around the coast is adding up to significant amount. Local development control is crucial to protect Mudflats. MPA:- Must make sure these are ecologically coherent. The need to encompass species and habitats in decline (Sect 42). 90% of marine BAP priorities reported unfavourably for since BAP reporting began in 1999.

[Wildlife Trusts Wales Perspective; Howard Davies, Wildlife Trusts Wales](#)

The Wildlife Trusts Wales is a partnership of trusts and a Corporate body. It is the coordinating department for all the trusts in Wales.

There is a growing need for the trusts to change from a sites based approach to a landscape based approach. Landscape is a complex concept and 3 different definitions were presented in the powerpoint. The latter definition was used in the European Landscape Convention and this is an important lever to push forward biodiversity work and is worded as:

“An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”.

The IUCN landscape approach (see PP) links biodiversity and cultural diversity. Traditionally we have blocked these priorities off from each other and yet as far back as the 1949 Act integration has been suggested although back then it was not taken forward. The Landscape approach includes environment, social and economic function.

The Wildlife Trusts first priority continues to be its Nature reserves but looking much more at connectivity. The reserves are managed for biodiversity and the tangible and non tangible benefits to people. This is important as there continues to be a loss of biodiversity. Gathering data is also important part but the economic and political response to this data is crucial. We need evidence based policy BUT NOT policy based evidence!

We need to focus on survival and profit. Biodiversity and the environment do stimulate the economy the Osprey Project attracts 75,000 people a year and contribute £450,000 to the local economy.

We need to demonstrate to other sectors how they can contribute and benefit themselves. A shift to a public service delivery model and away from public sector delivery would be helpful. Wildlife trusts should be working with health, education etc etc as well as with CCW. We have the tools – the Sustainable Development Scheme, NERC Act etc – we need to use them.

Land use is becoming hotly contested and we need to put biodiversity at the centre of this as the glue that holds it all together.

Conference Summary; Diana Reynolds, WAG

We came to this conference to celebrate success and take the next steps. There is plenty of feedback to take back to the Welsh Assembly Government. Very pleased that Aled Roberts (WLGA) announced that biodiversity is to become a regular part of Scrutiny Committees.

As Rhys pointed out it is as important to learn from our mistakes and it is right to set out future challenges – **it is too late to be pessimistic.**

DR set everyone 3 challenges

We have all contributed to the environmental problems so

- **do something to make yourselves more sustainable**

Natural resources are the solution – we must not allow ourselves to become marginalised. Communication is key

- **subscribe to Natur Cymru.**

Getting back to being local is important. DR's Performance indicator is biodiversity gain and the Assembly Head of Sustainable Futures has agreed to the same PI.

- **Important to get out there in Nature**