

10. THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Key facts

71.8% of the AONB's population can speak Welsh. This is significantly higher than the levels across Wales .

The number of Welsh speakers in the AONB declined from the 2011 census (down from 72.3% in 2001)
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10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 The Welsh language is an integral part of Llŷn. It is the area's spoken language over the centuries, the language of education and religion. The 2011 Census reveals that 71.8% of the population of the AONB's communities are able to speak it, remaining among the highest throughout Wales. There are many policies, strategies and plans in place to support the Welsh language and strengthen it for the future – nationally by the Welsh Government (such as through the strategy named 'A living language: a language for living 2012-17) and also on a county level.
- 10.1.2 Here in Gwynedd, Hunaniaith is a body that continues to work as a Menter Iaith in the county, and works with Gwynedd Council, and in partnership with many other groups with the aim of strengthening the Welsh language as the language at home, in school, in the community and the workplace. The Gwynedd Language Strategy (2014-17) was launched in November 2014 with the target of *"Ensuring a 5% increase in the percentage of the population that can speak Welsh in Gwynedd by 2021"*.
- 10.1.3 Gwynedd Council as a Local Authority is very active in the sustaining the Welsh language. Welsh is the Council's administrative language and the organisation has committed to the Welsh Language Standards set out by the Welsh Government under Section 4A, The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The 2016 Gwynedd Welsh Language Policy states how the Council and its workers will plan and provide in order to ensure that each service meets the needs of the local population from a language perspective. It will also ensure the Council's compliance with the Standards stated above.
- 10.1.4 Gwynedd Council's Education Department also has an innovative language policy which is a great help to ensure that non-Welsh speaking children assimilate into the local community. Innovative projects were developed over the last few years, such as the Gwynedd Primary Schools' Welsh Language Charter, that promotes and encourages the children's use of the Welsh language in their everyday lives.
- 10.1.5 Coupled with the language, the culture is an integral part of life here - a rich combination of stories, legends, superstitions, sayings and characters. It also includes the names of houses, farms, fields and all the historic features and industrial remains etc. that can be found throughout the Peninsula. In addition, historical influences, values, attitudes and beliefs are also part of

this culture.

10.1.6 Detailed information about different aspects of the local culture can be found in history books, literature and poetry and also from local people's recollections.

10.1.7 The Main Aim of the Management Plan in terms of Language and Culture is as follows:

Main Aim

MAINTAIN, PROTECT AND PROMOTE LLŶN'S UNIQUE CULTURE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

Special Features

10.2 The Welsh Language

10.2.1 Up to the middle of the last century, nearly all of the population spoke Welsh as a first language and many were unable to speak any English at all. This is Llŷn's main language and it is used daily at home, at school, in the shops, workplaces and on the street. Also, the language is visible everywhere, on signs and posters. The local paper "Llanw Llŷn" continues to be published every month in Welsh.

10.2.2 Locations in Llŷn have Welsh names, but there are some examples of English names being created and used on some locations that are popular amongst visitors such as Porthor (Whistling Sands) and Porth Neigwl (Hell's Mouth).

10.2.3 Welsh names on historic sites and features hold their ground, as well as agricultural fields and a range of interesting names were highlighted in recent projects such as Prosiect Cynefin and researched work undertaken on behalf of the Llŷn AONB Service. These names mirror the past and reveal a lot about people and society.

10.2.4 Welsh is the language of local literature and most societies. One indication of the state of the Welsh language, which is not revealed by bold figures, are the numerous events and activities held solely in Welsh in Llŷn. This shows the language's strength in the area. There is no detailed information about events held in Welsh locally, but here are the main ones:

- Local Authority meetings (with simultaneous translation is needed)
- Community Council meetings
- Meetings of school governors and parents
- Welsh entertainment evenings
- Cylch Llenyddol Llŷn
- Merched y Wawr
- Yr Urdd

- Young Farmers' Clubs
- Local history, literature and social clubs
- Local eisteddfodau
- Services and Sunday Schools in the Chapels and some Churches.

10.2.5 A decrease in Welsh speakers in the AONB's communities was seen in the 2011 census (71.8% compared to 72.3% in 2001). In the future, support must be provided to protect and strengthen it so that the language and culture will continue to be an integral part of our communities.

10.3 Culture
10.3.1 Religion played an important part in Llŷn's culture over the centuries. From early Christianity, the age of the saints, the pilgrim's journeys to Enlli and the churches, to the later age of Protestantism, Puritanism, and Methodism and so on.

10.3.2 There was a strong religious upheaval in the nineteenth century, and there was a large increase in the congregation and chapels were built on a large scale. The Calvinistic Methodists or the "Hen Gorff" (the Old Body) developed the quickest and by mid-century they had as many chapels as the other nonconforming bodies, namely the Anglican Church, the Congregationalists, the Wesleyans and the Baptists combined. Very soon, there were chapels in every village, some in very rural areas and others in the main towns and villages such as Nefyn, Aberdaron and Trefor where there were several chapels of numerous different denominations.

10.3.3 Religion has remained important in the area's cultural life to date, although there has been a significant decline in meetings and congregation numbers since the mid twentieth century.

10.3.4 A vast number of churches and chapels have closed down in Llŷn by now, and some have been converted into houses, flats, workshops or other uses. Nevertheless, they echo and record interesting and important periods in our culture and are also important features of our historic environment.

10.3.5 **Art and Literature** Llŷn has inspired many poets and notable artists over the centuries. Amongst obvious names are Cynan and J. Glyn Davies, T.Rowland Hughes and Meirion MacIntyre Huws.

10.3.6 In terms of prose, there are examples of many local authors with much of their work celebrating the history, culture and beauty of the area. There are also historic novels that mirror our society during specific periods over the centuries.

10.3.7 There are also many artists who continue to be inspired by the area's beauty and special qualities. Works are showcased at Oriol Plas Glyn y Weddw and Oriol Tonnau, Pwllheli. There is also an annual exhibition by a local group, Arlunwyr Sarn Artists. Their 2016 exhibition was based on Meirion MacIntyre Huws's famous poem, "Penrhyn Llŷn".

10.3.8 **Eisteddfodau** – Eisteddfodau are an important part of the culture throughout

Wales and are a special and unique characteristic to the nation. In Llŷn, many chapels, churches and schools as well as Young Farmers' Clubs and Urdd hold an Eisteddfod.

- 10.3.9 There are many Eisteddfodau held in the AONB itself such as Eisteddfod Gadeiriol Aelhaearn held every November, and Eisteddfod Flynyddol Uwchmynydd MC held every Easter Monday.
- 10.3.10 **Folklore** – The area's folklore is full of superstition regarding fairies, ghosts, wizards and witches. Some features are named after these beliefs, such as Cae'r Bwgan (in Pwlldefaid, Aberdaron) and Y Goeden Bechod (near Ty'n y Coed, Nefyn). Also, several famous fables in Welsh culture derive from Llŷn; the most notable are the fables of Castellmarch and the story of Rhys and Meinir, based at Nant Gwrtheyrn. There is a connection also between this area and the tales of the Mabinogi.
- 10.3.11 Llŷn also has characters like every other area and people are still aware of the most notable ones today. Dic Aberdaron is a historical character who apparently spoke up to fifteen languages. There are references to him in literature and poetry. Thomas Love Duncome Jones Parry, Madryn was a colourful character who has left his mark on Llŷn.
- 10.3.12 As is the case with many other areas, a connection is mentioned between King Arthur and Ynys Enlli and Llŷn. Chris Barber (1993) makes a strong claim in his book 'Journey to Avalon' that the Battle of Camlann was located in Porth Cadlan near Aberdaron, and that Enlli was Ynys Afallon.
- 10.3.13 Enlli itself has a very strong sacred tradition and background, and it is likely that the first monastery was established on the island between 516 and 542 AD. Cadfan was the first Abbot and his successor was Lleuddad, who had a great influence on Enlli and parts of Llŷn. The Saints apparently buried there include Dyfrig, Deiniol, Trillo, Padarn, Mael and Maugant, and according to tradition, 20,000 saints have been buried there. Due to the special religious status of the island, it has developed into a famous pilgrimage centre.
- 10.3.14 **A Way of Life** -Farming has been an industry and a way of life in Llŷn for centuries, providing sustenance for individuals, families, farm hands and noblemen. There are numerous practices, stories, sayings and characters associated with farming in the area. Farming has also played an important part in terms of sustaining the people, communities and culture of Llŷn, including the Welsh language. Despite the major changes that have taken place during the past few years there are still many mixed family farms in the area and continuation from father to son is common. Recently, honour has been brought once more to the old traditions and events such as the Sarn and District Ploughing Match and sheepdog trials.
- 10.3.15 The residents of Llŷn have been fishing and collecting crabs and lobsters for many years. Nefyn and Porthdinllaen developed into important herring ports in the eighteenth century and the herring can be seen on Nefyn's coat of arms today. There are some full time fishermen in Llŷn today – mainly

fishing from Porth Meudwy, Porthdinllaen and Nefyn, and herring and crabs continue to be important local produce.

10.3.16 By today, most of Llŷn's ports are for pleasure activities and the bright and colourful history of the past is a distant memory. Many stories and poems are heard that shows the strong influence the sea has had on the area. Also, a lot of information and interesting exhibitions can be found at the Llŷn Maritime Museum in Nefyn.

10.3.17 **Quarrying and mineral extraction** – The various granite quarries and mines in Llŷn have also largely contributed to our culture and their remains are an obvious and integral part of the area's identity. Following the demand for granite stones in the nineteenth century many quarries were developed on the igneous hills of Llŷn. There was work for the local people in the quarries, but quarrymen from other areas came here as well and some of these people set up homes in Llŷn and they became part of the society.

10.3.18 The manganese works commenced in Rhiw in 1827 and by 1840, 50 people worked there. A lot of work was carried out in Rhiw during the two world wars, and it is estimated that 196,770 tonnes had been produced between 1894 and 1945. Lead was mined in the Llanengan and Bwlchtocyn area, and the tall chimney which can be seen in the centre of the village is testament to the work in the past. Miners from other areas came to work in these works as well and they set up homes in Llŷn, and this explains some of the different surnames that can be seen on the census list during the nineteenth century in this area.

10.3.19 Piers were developed in order to serve the stone and mineral industries, such as for exporting granite from Trefor, Porth y Nant and Carreg y Llam and in Porth Neigwl and Porth Ysgo for vessels which carried manganese from the Rhiw area. The remains of some of these structures can still be seen today.

10.3.20 Over the centuries, therefore, our language and interesting and rich culture have thrived hand in hand and largely contribute to the AONB's character and way of life in the communities today.

Key Issues

10.4 Young People Leaving the Area

10.4.1 One of the main key issues in terms of the effect on the language and culture in Llŷn is the tendency of young people to move away. This can be for various reasons such as the lack of work opportunities, studying and also it may also appeal to taste life in towns and cities. If young people wish to live and work in the area, it is vital that there are work opportunities and courses available. It is also important to raise awareness amongst young people about the advantages of living locally.

10.5 Migration into the Area

10.5.1 Many families from other areas decide to move to Llŷn. People retire here also – with studies showing that these people have often holidayed here or own a summer residence. This not only has an effect on the language but also on the local culture and history. It should be ensured that initiatives are available to incomers to play a part in the community, be aware of the history and culture and their importance, as well as to learn Welsh.

10.6 Tourism

10.6.1 Although tourism is to be welcomed, past research has shown a link between migration into the area and the decline in Welsh speakers. Initiatives to limit the adverse effect of tourism on the language and culture would be beneficial as well as raising awareness.

10.7 Modern Attractions

10.7.1 There are now many leisure and sport opportunities available meaning that not as many people attend chapel and church and that some of the old traditions become forgotten. More ventures are needed to strengthen the appeal of the area's indigenous history and culture, to residents and visitors. It would be beneficial to give more support to traditional events such as the sheepdog trials and the annual Ploughing Match.

10.8 Media

10.8.1 Films, various television programmes and the internet have a big influence on the interests of children, young people and adults. There is an opportunity here to develop initiatives to convey local history and culture in an appealing way and offer support to Welsh language events. There is also an opportunity to raise awareness by social media.

Total of Welsh Speakers, AONB Communities (%)

Community	1981	1991	2001	2011
Aberdaron	89.5	77.1	76.6	74.2
Botwnnog	85.5	81.5	78.3	75.9
Buan	82.1	75.1	74.1	74.3
Clynnog	80.3	72.6	69.3	73.2
Llanaelhaearn	90.9	83.4	81.1	73.8
Llanbedrog	73.2	53.5	55.6	54
Llanengan	71.5	63.0	59.8	63.4
Nefyn	84.5	77.8	78.6	76.1

Pistyll	85.7	78.0	74.9	-
Tudweiliog	86.4	84.9	75.0	73.9
Morfa Nefyn				72

Policies

IP 1 SUPPORT RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE.

Many activities are held in the area ranging from Eisteddfodau, talks and lectures to sheepdog trails and so forth. They are all important events to maintain and promote the culture and language and are valuable in terms of the social wellbeing of local residents. Recently, examples of good practices were seen from communities with traditional events that had dwindled once again resuming, such as Gŵyl Ifan. Due to their importance in terms of maintaining the culture and history, the AONB Service and its partners will support such activities by various means and raise awareness.

IP 2 PROMOTE THE USE OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE AMONG BUSINESSES AND ESTABLISHMENTS IN LLŶN.

Even though many businesses and local companies use the Welsh language, there is an opportunity to encourage others to give further attention and prioritise the language on signs, advertisements, and websites and among staff. Promoting and encouraging businesses and establishments in the area to use the language is crucial to its continuation as the area's main language and to maintain the area's character. Also, promoting the language amongst visitors will highlight our special culture and heritage.

IP 3 RAISE AWARENESS OF THE AREA'S SPECIAL CULTURE.

Our culture is not only recorded in books – artworks, photographs, films and memories are also important. The Llŷn AONB Service and other partners such as the Llŷn Maritime Museum, the National Trust and Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw will support initiatives to record and share our unique culture with present and future generations.

IP 4 CELEBRATE THE AREA'S CULTURE AND TRADITIONS THROUGH ART, LITERATURE AND POETRY.

As well as recording aspects of our history, culture and traditions it is also important to celebrate through art, literature and poetry. There is much currently in place – ranging from local Eisteddfodau to arts festivals, exhibitions and competitions. The Llŷn AONB Service, Gwynedd Council and other partners are eager to see the prosperity of such activities and support them through various means including financial support if available.

IP 5. RAISE AWARENESS OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND THE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE.

Llŷn is one of the areas with the most Welsh speakers in Wales and the language is an integral part of the area's character. Therefore, as well as supporting activities amongst current speakers it is important to ensure opportunities to learn Welsh and learn about our culture to people who either visit or move here.

There are many opportunities through further education courses, course at Canolfan Iaith a Threftadaeth Nant Gwrtheyrn and local initiatives. It is aimed to raise awareness about those opportunities through means such as adverts, taster sessions, and articles in magazines, open days and so on.