
LLŶN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 02/07/2025

Present:

Members: Councillors **Gareth Williams**, **Gareth Tudor Jones**, **Gruffydd Williams** along with **Sian Parri** (Tudweiliog Community Council), **Noel Davey** (Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales), **Linda Ashton** (Natural Resources Wales), **Eirian Allport** (Clynnog Fawr Community Council), **Dewi Evans** (Aberdaron Community Council), **Andrew Parry** (Llanbedrog Community Council), **Jenny Emmett** (Gwynedd Archaeology), **Euros Jones** (FWAG Cymru), **Robert Parkinson** (National Trust), and **Morgan Jones-Parry** (Arfon and Dwyfor Access Forum)

Officers: **Bleddyn P. Jones** (Llŷn AONB Officer), **Heledd Fflur Jones** (Planning Policy Team Leader), **Morus Llwyd Dafydd** (AONB Project Officer), **Kevin Roberts** (Countryside Warden - Llŷn AONB) and **Rhodri Jones** (Democracy Services Officer).

Present for item 7: Iwan Ifan (Ffermio Bro)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was resolved to elect **Sian Parri (Tudweiliog Community Council)** as Chair for the 2025/26 period.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

It was resolved to elect Councillor **Gareth Williams** as Vice-chair for the year 2025/26.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

- **Einir Wyn** (Llanengan Community Council)
- **Councillor Angela Russell** (Cyngor Gwynedd Countryside Champion)
- **Hughie Williams** (Buan Community Council)
- **Gillian Walker** (Cyfeillion Llŷn)
- **Hedd Rhys** (NFU)
- **Sianelen Fleming** (Pistyll Community Council)

Andrew Parry was welcomed to his first meeting of this Joint Advisory Committee, upon being elected to represent Llanbedrog Community Council following the retirement of T Victor Jones (former Chair of the Committee). T Victor Jones was thanked for his vast contribution to the AONB Joint Committee over the years, wishing him a happy retirement.

Gillian Walker (Cyfeillion Llŷn) was thanked for her contribution to this Joint Committee, and it was noted that Cyfeillion Llŷn would be electing a new replacement representative in future.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Joint Committee, held on 26 November 2024, as a true record.

7. FFERMIO BRO

The report was presented by the Llŷn AONB Officer and Ffermio Bro representative.

It was explained that Ffermio Bro was a new environmental grant scheme aimed at helping farmers to protect nature and the environment whilst also supporting businesses and rural communities. It was noted that it had been developed by the Welsh Government, in partnership with the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), ensuring that only the areas of these designated landscapes would be eligible for this grant. It was noted that this scheme had been scheduled for the next three years.

It was noted that these designated landscapes received funding to enable farmers to apply directly to the relevant authorities for grant support, adding that £104,000 had been allocated to the Llŷn AONB for this financial year. Attention was drawn to the fact that the funding would be allocated to projects that would benefit both nature and biodiversity such as building and restoration of stone walls, inland restoration, creating ponds and hedgerows and supporting natural flood defences, amongst other projects. It was explained that the emphasis was being placed on a clustering and collaborative element, highlighting that it was a precursor to the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

It was noted that officers had been appointed to administer this grant in the Llŷn AONB areas and Eryri National Park, reporting that small and straightforward applications would be determined by the officers independently. It was emphasised that large applications would be considered by a Panel. The members were asked to elect a representative from this Joint Committee to attend a Ffermio Bro Grants Panel which would meet approximately twice a year in Penrhyndeudraeth, noting that the representative would be required to undertake some background work into the applications received before attending the meeting.

A reminder was given of the plans that are in place to raise awareness of this grant scheme in various different ways through the Agricultural Unions, Llygad Llŷn, Sioe Nefyn and the social media, with much interest having been declared thus far. Attention was drawn to the fact that 23 applications for funding had been received in the area so far, with the deadline for submitting applications for this financial year having now ended as it was likely that the budget would be spent in light of these applications. It was reported that the majority of applications within the AONB related to building hedgerows and creating sheltered areas to protect stock, with some applications detailing water quality projects. It was noted that any project funded within this financial year needed to be completed by 1 March 2026.

During the discussion, the following observations were noted:

Pride was expressed that so many applications for funding had been received, asking whether applicants from different areas within the Llŷn AONB had declared interest. It was also asked how the number of applicants compared with other areas eligible for the grant. In response, the Ffermio Bro representative confirmed that applicants within the Llŷn AONB came from different areas in the AONB, with some areas having several applicants. It was also reported that the Llŷn AONB had received more applications for grant money than the other areas.

In response to concerns, the Ffermio Bro representative assured that the plan would neither tackle re-wilding nor intend to modify farming methods in any way. It was noted that the intention was to support farmers as they were taking the lead, emphasising that there was no focus on doing anything to their land that they did not want. It was elaborated that the grant could support farmers to develop what is already on the land and did not intend to make any new access routes. It was explained that discussions would take place with AONB and Cyngor Gwynedd officers if such matters arose to ensure that there was no double funding of projects.

DECISION

- **To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.**
- **To elect Councillor Gruffydd Williams to represent the Joint Committee on the Ffermio Bro Grant Panel.**

8. UPDATE ON LLŷN AONB CAPITAL PROJECTS

The report was presented by the Llŷn AONB Officer.

It was reported that these capital projects were being funded through a Welsh Government Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Places grant scheme (SLSP), noting that SLSP was only available for designated landscapes in Wales (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks). It was explained that the projects mentioned in the report had now ended as the SLSP only ran between 2022-2025. However, assurance was given that the scheme would continue for 2025-2027.

Details were given of the capital projects for 2022-2025 noting that the Welsh Government's themes for projects within this timeframe were: 'Biodiversity and nature recovery', 'Decarbonisation', 'Resilient and green communities' and 'Sustainable Tourism'. A reminder was given that the Llŷn AONB had projects that were eligible for all of these themes, as mentioned in previous meetings and more recently in the Llygad Llŷn newsletter. It was elaborated that these projects included:

- **Common Land** - improvements to common land such as Foel Gron, Horeb and Rhos Botwnnog.
- **Native Trees** - planting 5,000 trees on well-known sites.
- **Invasive alien species** - tackling alien species such as Himalayan balsam, rhododendron, and Japanese knotweed in several areas within the AONB, focusing specifically on the area of Trefor.
- **Y Ganolfan, Llithfaen** - renovating the centre in partnership with a significant budget from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity fund. Pride was expressed that the Centre had now been reopened to the public.
- **Car Park at Llanbedrog Quarry** - tidying the area including resurfacing the car park, installing picnic benches and cutting growth and planting trees.

It was explained that cooperative work had been completed with other designated landscapes such as the 'Traditional Boundaries' in the area of Cilan and Edern, 'Dark Sky' and 'Landscape Education Pack' projects in cooperation with Pembrokeshire Council.

It was confirmed that the SLSP scheme had been funded by the Welsh Government for an additional two years. It was noted that no amendments had been made to the themes of the projects being supported however that a specific focus was being placed on 'nature recovery' and 'decarbonisation' during this period.

An update was given that the Llŷn AONB capital projects for the next two years would include: Planting native trees in the AONB, Eradicating invasive alien species, Site of Special Scientific Interest at Abergeirch and Decarbonisation of village halls/centres.

During the discussion, the following observations were noted:

There was agreement with the viewpoint that invasive alien species affected plants in the AONB and pride was expressed in the fact that there were plans in place to continue to address these challenges.

In response to an enquiry about preventing invasive alien species, the Llŷn AONB Officer confirmed that the aim of the AONB was to deal with growth on public land or land bordering with public land. The need to contact Cyngor Gwynedd with any issues arising on public land was noted.

In response to an enquiry about the budget available for these capital projects, the Llŷn AONB Officer confirmed that approximately £200,000 was available and assured that more detailed information would be circulated to the Joint Committee members.

DECISION

To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.

9. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

The report was presented by the AONB Project Officer.

It was explained that £100,000 had been allocated to the Fund for the 2024/25 financial year and that the budget had been claimed in full by supporting the following projects:

- RSPB Morfa Dinlle
- 1st Mate Maritime Museum
- Cydio yn awen Enlli (Writing on Enlli)
- Llanbedrog Playing Field
- Melin Daron
- Antur Aelhaearn
- Menter Rabar
- Menter y Tŵr
- Tudweiliog noticeboard
- RSPB Porth Ceiriad

An update was given that £95,000 had been allocated to the Fund for 2025/26. It was stated that this money was very likely to be claimed in full as a number of projects had already been supported, with the Panel's next meeting having been scheduled for July.

Details were given of the projects that have been supported by the Panel so far this year, namely:

- Llŷn Flexi Bus
- Llanbedrog Playing Field
- Nefyn multi-use paths
- 1st Mate Maritime Museum
- Enlli solar power
- Porthdinllaen Rowing Club
- Decarbonisation of Rhiw Hall
- Antur Aelhaearn Garden

Pride was expressed that an allocation of £95,000 had already been confirmed for 2026/27. It was elaborated that the new Welsh Government requirements noted the need for 60% of the applications supported to be earmarked for projects that align with the Nature Recovery and Decarbonisation themes. It was foreseen that reaching this target in Llŷn would prove difficult considering the projects that have been funded in the past, however attention was drawn to the fact that projects such as installing double glazing, insulation and solar panels contributed towards the decarbonisation targets - it was assured that this information would be shared with the public.

It was noted that new guidance for the Panel would become operational in April 2026, which would affect the Panel's membership. Assurance was given that officers would present further information on this matter at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

During the discussion, the following observations were noted:

It was agreed that the target presented by Welsh Government was very high. In response, the AONB Project Officer confirmed that a number of projects approved this year, such as the Llŷn Flexi Bus and Llanbedrog playing field, were projects similar to those that could contribute to this target. Attention was also drawn to a new scoring system that would be presented to assess whether or not projects met the statutory requirements.

It was asked whether Welsh Government could be contacted to modify this target, as it did not align with the Llŷn AONB's vision in producing a new plan. However, the AONB Project Officer confirmed that this target could not be modified as it affected all AONBs and National Parks, with all being asked to comply.

A request was made to receive information about the projects supported over a 5-year period in future reports so that Members could compare the projects that have been submitted.

DECISION

To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.

10. **REVIEWING THE AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The report was presented by the Llŷn AONB Officer.

A reminder was given that an initial discussion on the Management Plan had taken place at the last meeting of the Joint Committee, held on 26 November 2024. An update was given that a Guide had been updated and published by Land Use Consultants on behalf

of Natural Resources Wales on how to prepare and review Management Plans. It was emphasised that consultation with AONB residents and stakeholders was crucial. It was noted that this was a lengthy guide and that Welsh and English summaries were in hand but had not yet been published. Attention was drawn to the fact that the main steps to be taken in creating and producing a management plan included:

- Assessing the latest information about the area's features
- Taking into account and incorporating information from relevant plans and strategies
- Reviewing the Aims/Objectives and Policies of the Plan
- Creating a new action plan for the Management Plan period
- Reviewing the Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitats Regulations.

It was noted that a Report on State of the Llŷn AONB has been commissioned by the AONB Unit in 2021, with copies having recently been circulated to Joint Committee members. Attention was drawn to some observations received in light of this, such as:

- Why the report was English only
- A lack of information on some matters such as climate change, landscape, welfare, pollution and biodiversity.
- No reference to the Shoreline Management Plan.
- That more recent information was now available on some matters such as agriculture.
- It would be useful to see how other plans tied in as part of the content of the revised Management Plan such as the Local Development Plan, Gwynedd and Môn Welfare Assessment and the North-West Area Statement.
- That the State Report needed to align with the new guide commissioned by NRW

It was explained that the intention was to amend and update the State Report to obtain an accurate picture of the area and pressure on the environment. Assurance was given that both a Welsh and English version were being prepared. It was noted that the intention was for this revised report to be published by November 2025.

A reminder was given that no amendments had been made to the Special Features for the AONB but that members had formed a new vision at the last meeting of this Joint Committee, namely:

A beautiful landscape and coastal area with native wildlife and their habitat flourishing, a low level of environmental pollution and a variety of access and public opportunities. Historic buildings and features in a good state, local businesses succeeding and Llŷn AONB communities maintaining and strengthening the Welsh language and its culture.

An update was given that officers had sought members' opinions regarding what the controversial matters were in relation to the AONB's features, for these to be incorporated into the Management Plan and present a summary of these observations and officers' response to them.

It was reported that officers would amend the objectives and policies of the current Management Plan to ensure that they were up to date. It was explained that it was likely that new policies would need to be introduced in light of observations and also to respond effectively to new and emerging challenges. Attention was also drawn to an Action Programme over a 5-year period which is part of the current Management Plan, confirming that most items within this had now been completed. It was noted that this

document could possibly be amended for the next period with new activities whilst ensuring that anything already on the list was also noted for this period.

During the discussion, the following observations were noted:

A sense of pride was noted that this Joint Committee had a role to play in the development of the Plan. Officers were asked to ensure that the Joint Committee was central to decisions, and whether Joint Committee members would agree to share e-mail addresses so that wider considerations could take place beyond this meeting. In response, the AONB Officer confirmed that officers would seek guidance on this matter to ensure that everybody's e-mail addresses could be shared in accordance with data protection regulations.

Several ideas of partners that could enrich the plan were shared such as Menter Iaith Gwynedd, GwyrddNi and Cylch yr Iaith along with some matters that require a response within the plan such as Housing Assessments and Article 4 Direction within planning. Consideration was also given to asking for the opinion of the local Community Councils for the State Report to which the AONB Officer replied that the Report would be produced based merely on facts about the AONB features confirming that there would be an opportunity to discuss with councils and individuals at a later stage in the development process.

Responding to an enquiry, the AONB Officer gave reassurance that the Welsh language and its culture were central considerations when dealing with all aspects of the Plan.

In response to the query, the AONB Officer explained the need to establish two documents, as the State of the AONB Plan included vital information obtained from censuses or from partners such as Dŵr Cymru (Welsh Water) or Natural Resources Wales, whilst the Management Plan responded to any emerging challenges, with the community having the opportunity to make observations once the draft plan had been produced.

DECISION

- **To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.**
- **To support the intention to update the State of the AONB Report and continue with the work of reviewing the Management Plan.**

The meeting commenced at 4.00pm and concluded at 5.30pm

CHAIR