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LPIP
RURAL WALES

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales

Annual Report 2025

Adroddiad Blynyddol 2025

Welcome

Professor Michael Woods
Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales Director

It's been a busy first year for Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales since our launch at the Senedd in July 2024. Our initial policy-focused research projects have investigated how people in Rural Wales think about 'growth' in the economy and examined the role of women in farm diversification. Both have produced interesting findings and recommendations for regional and rural development policy.

Further policy-focused studies are underway on grassroots cultural activities and Welsh language policy; connecting food and wellbeing in rural communities; and achieving multiple benefits from Net Zero initiatives. We've also generated new insights into community resilience through a survey of Town and Community Councils.

The first round of Community-led Action Research projects are hard at work on locally-defined topics from community transport to swifts, with our team supporting community researchers as academic mentors. A second round of projects will start in the autumn, selected through an open competition.

When this report comes out, we'll be in the middle of workshops for our Innovation Labs, bringing together participants from different sectors to identify innovative ideas to unlock change in advancing a wellbeing economy in Rural Wales. You can read more about these activities in this report.

Our responsive and solution-oriented way of working depends on dialogue with policy-makers, practitioners, and communities. Over the last year we've been delighted to meet and talk with several Welsh MPs, Senedd Members, councillors, civil servants, local government officers, and individuals from police and fire services, health boards, businesses, third sector organisations, and community groups. Many have contributed to shaping our work, including through our Thematic Groups and Advisory Board. Thank you all for your support.

There's lots more to look forward to in the next year, as we roll out more research, public engagement and capacity-building events, and placement opportunities. Make sure to subscribe to our social media accounts to keep up to date and avoid missing out!

About Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales is funded across by UKRI to facilitate research, innovation, and knowledge transfer to support inclusive, sustainable development. We aim to help build a wellbeing economy in Rural Wales through strengthening the evidence base for policy-making, enabling innovative thinking, and empowering communities.

Our work is structured around the four themes of 'Building the Regenerative Economy', 'Empowering Communities for Cultural Recovery', 'Enhancing Wellbeing in Place', and 'Supporting the Net Zero Transition'. The responsive work plan is shaped by experts and stakeholders in Thematic Groups attached to these themes.

The Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales team brings together experts from universities, social enterprises, third sector organisations, and businesses to work collaboratively in achieving its goals.

Perceptions of Growth in two Welsh market towns

Dr Sophie Bennett Gillison and Dr Ellen Hjort

This research aimed to identify how growth, in terms of business and community development, is perceived by those living and working in rural towns in Wales. Case studies of Llanidloes (Mid Wales) and Llangefni (North Wales) were used to explore perceptions of growth and how enterprise can be supported in these locations through a better understanding of what growth and development means to those living there.

The picture that emerges is that there is very limited support among participants for a traditional approach to growth in the conventional 'upward' manner, namely in terms of the expansion and increase of profits, productivity, or market reach. Instead, communities and small businesses understand growth as ways of improving business sustainability or quality of life. In rural areas especially, entrepreneurs may go into business to enable a certain way of life (work-life balance) or wishing to be based in a particular location, and conventional 'business growth' may be less of a priority.

A qualitative research approach, using surveys, interviews, focus groups, and workshops revealed several different perspectives on growth, and a thematic analysis grouped these into seven 'types' of growth, including growth as community-building, growth through opportunity, and foundational growth.

For the Llanidloes and Llangefni communities, growth was about being better rather than bigger, and it was an endeavour related to values such as community, sustainability, lifestyle, place, and a good quality of life.

Several policy recommendations stem from the analysis, including tailoring growth initiatives to specific places, recognising economic benefits of community ownership, supporting lifestyle-based entrepreneurship, investing in the foundational economy, and adopting place-based indicators of growth.

The project report can be downloaded from the Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales website.

Women and farm diversification

Dr Alison Parken, Prof Sara MacBride-Stewart, and Dr Lucy Baker

Women play an important role in contemporary agriculture and especially in the diversification of farm activities for financial sustainability. However, the direct and indirect impacts on – and by – women in farm diversification, and how these intersect with policy, are not fully understood. This study hence aimed to further examine the roles and activities undertaken by women in farm diversification, including those addressing environmental challenges, and how women build and share knowledge and resources for diversification.

The research interviewed 29 women active in the diversification of a farm in Wales, some of whom also represented farming organisations. Nearly all women identified themselves as involved in diversification, but not all identified themselves as farmers. Self-defined diversification activities were broad, and included types of on-farm and off-farm economic activities. The predominant goal of diversification was to ensure economic survival of the farm, which included its agricultural and business components, but also the people, animals, and nature that lived there.

Our initial analysis focused on the impacts of policies and a range of considerations such as women's labour, time, skills, and responsibilities. The practices and roles of women that are emerging most strongly generally reflect aspects of economic diversification that are supported by local grants and policies. Gender analysis reveals the rising costs on women's labour and time, with shifts about decisions regarding diversification reflecting the kinds of support and mentorship available from the Welsh government and other farming organisations.

The study points to the need for more place-sensitive agriculture and rural development policies in Wales that reflect the differing geographical contexts in which farm diversification is attempted, as well as policies that recognise the specific contributions of women entrepreneurs in farm diversification and the challenges they face.

The project report will be available from the Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales website from summer 2025.

Net Zero, net gain: unpacking the co-benefits of climate action

Dr Sophie Wynne-Jones, Dr Elen Bonner and Dr Siobhan Maderson

While many local authorities and public sector organisations are committed to addressing the Climate Emergency through efforts to achieve Net Zero, they are also facing economic challenges and the need to deliver other environmental, social, cultural, and economic priorities. To date, science and policy responses have frequently operated in silos, limiting the potential for integrated solutions to multiple, interconnected challenges.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets a powerful precedent for joined-up thinking, and momentum is growing behind whole-systems approaches that recognise the complex interconnections inherent in climate action. The Net Zero Co-Benefits project builds on this foundation, focusing on Rural Wales to explore how Net Zero efforts can generate multiple, complementary benefits. It aims to identify 'multi-solving' actions that address GHG emissions as well as wider socio-economic and environmental challenges, and examine the conditions that enable such approaches, ensuring that climate actions support a just and inclusive transition.

The research will develop a systems map to visualise the opportunity space for Net Zero in Rural Wales, identifying key emissions priorities, interdependencies, and past trade-offs.

A literature synthesis will highlight actionable areas and identify relevant case studies. Qualitative interviews will be carried out with practitioners and policymakers experienced in delivering or supporting Net Zero initiatives which also deliver co-benefits. These conversations will deliver practical insights into enabling conditions, challenges faced, and priorities for future action.

This project will provide guidance for policy-makers, practitioners, and communities on how to take climate action and unlock co-benefits, thus delivering lasting benefits for present and future generations.

The use, management, and potential of rural community spaces

Prof Michael Woods and Dr Lucy Baker

Communal spaces are important parts of life in rural communities, from village halls to playing fields and allotments. Yet, many struggle with funding and maintenance, and many are under-used assets that could be enrolled in supporting social and environmental resilience. This study builds on the Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales Community Survey (see page 6), to explore how rural community spaces are being used, how they are managed, and how their benefits to the community can be maximised.

Web research, online interviews and case studies are being used to identify examples of good practice, from which lessons can be drawn to develop recommendations for policy. Particular attention is being paid to models of community ownership of key assets; the incorporation of community spaces into community energy projects and environmental projects; and the development of multi-purpose community hubs providing access to public services and resources.

Community food and wellbeing in Rural Wales

Prof Paul Milbourne and Dr Ellen Hjort

Much of the research and data on rural food has focused on the mainstream agri-food system, while studies of the community and wellbeing aspects of food have largely been undertaken in urban places. What follows from this is that there exists an evidence gap in relation to the community, welfare, and wellbeing elements of food in rural areas. This project aims to plug this gap by examining community food and wellbeing in Rural Wales.

The project consists of four phases of work. In the first, existing academic and grey literature on community food and wellbeing will be reviewed, and available data on food insecurity, food aid, and health in Rural Wales analysed. The phase two work will utilise GIS analyses to produce new data on, and maps of, food accessibility across Rural Wales. In phase three, interviews will be conducted with organisations and projects working on food, community, and wellbeing issues in Rural Wales, with particular attention given to issues of malnutrition, poverty, and social isolation. Finally, in-depth research will be conducted on community food and wellbeing in a small number of rural counties to examine their local foodscapes. This will involve working with local food partnerships, local authorities, health boards, community food projects, and food advice and support groups.

Understanding and supporting cultural wellbeing in Rural Wales – grassroots cultural activities

Dr Eifiona Thomas Lane, Dr Elen Bonner and Sean Martin

Wales is the only country in the world to recognise cultural wellbeing as part of its statutory definition of sustainable development. While this places Wales in a unique position, concerns have been expressed about the current state of culture, which some consider to be critical.

Within a challenging economic climate, culture is not always prioritised, and cultural wellbeing goals often receive less strategic attention within Local Wellbeing Plans compared to other targets. As a result, public bodies have been criticised for failing to demonstrate clear actions in relation to their cultural wellbeing objectives.

This research addresses these issues within a rural context where, due to structural changes, the challenges to culture are even more complex. Rural communities take pride in the strength and vibrancy of their culture which is reflected in the many societies, eisteddfodau, Young Farmers' Clubs, local shows and concerts

However, there is a perception that rural cultural activities at grassroots level are often 'invisible' and under-represented within policy discussions.

The aim of this work is to highlight the cultural activities that are important to rural communities and explore how they can be more effectively supported through Local Wellbeing Plans.

Alongside a written report, a creative output in the form of a film will also be produced by a young creative.

Strengthening data for policy-making

How resilient are Wales' communities?

Dr Lucy Baker and Dr Ellen Hjort

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales has been gathering evidence on the resilience of local communities through a survey sent to Community and Town Council Clerks, in collaboration with One Voice Wales. Councils were asked about topics such as community assets and community ownership, social and voluntary activities, community energy and net zero actions, access to food and other resources, future planning, and inclusivity and engagement in community decision-making.

The 161 responses received from councils in all parts of Wales provide a snapshot of what is happening in local communities and the ways in which Community and Town Councils are working to strengthen community resilience in the face of social, economic, and environmental uncertainties. These are some of the highlights.

Communities are taking over local assets.

Community ownership has been promoted as an answer where local authorities are unable to continue providing public services or facilities, or where commercial services close down. Just over half of responding communities had taken on ownership or management responsibilities for key assets in the last 5 years, most commonly:

Benches or seating **30%**

Flower beds **22%**

Playgrounds & recreation fields **19%**

Bus stops **15%**

Public toilets **11%**

A few had taken on:

Shops **4%**

Post offices **2.5%**

Cafes **3%**

Pubs **1%**

Libraries **1%**

The majority of community ownership schemes involve Community or Town Councils, sometimes through shared-ownership with partners, but other community organisations, trusts, social enterprises, and community-owned businesses are also active. The main obstacle to increasing community ownership is funding.

Access to locally-produced food is variable.

Opportunities for residents to buy or obtain locally-grown or produced food are present in around three-quarters of the surveyed communities, but the format varies. Two-fifths have community gardens where food is grown and around a quarter have food box schemes. There are farm shops or farm vending machines in 24% of communities, and roadside sales of local produce in 20%, with fewer communities reporting a farmers' market (12%) or a community-supported agriculture project (11%).

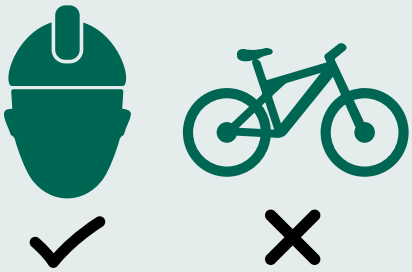
Farm shop/ vending **24%**

Farmers' market **12%**

Roadside local produce **20%**

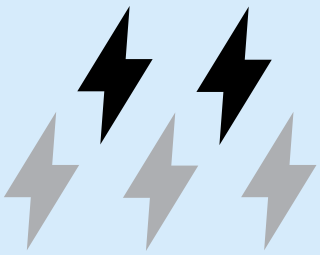
Community-supported agriculture project **15%**

It's possible to find a builder in almost all communities, but not to get a bicycle repaired.



The survey asked about the presence of businesses in the community that provide a range of basic services in everyday life. Building services (including builders, carpenters, electricians and plumbers) are available in 94% of responding communities, with gardening services in 90%, and property maintenance services in 87%. Vehicles can be repaired in 65% of communities, but bicycles in only 18%. Nurseries for children can be found in 55% of communities, and childcare providers in a similar number. There are businesses providing IT services in 54% of communities, and catering for events in 55%, as well as hairdressers in 59%, and taxi services in 42%, but hiring a vehicle is possible in only one in ten of the communities.

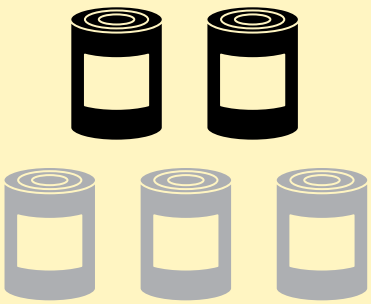
Around two-thirds of Community and Town Councils surveyed have implemented actions for the environment.



A further 15% are considering taking one or more actions. The most common actions include nature conservation or restoration projects (43%), reducing mowing of grass (40%), and energy efficiency measures in properties (22%). A sixth have switched to a green energy supplier, and 8% have installed charging points for electric vehicles. One in six have declared a 'Climate Emergency'.

Around a fifth of the communities have a community energy scheme (some involving the council, others not), most commonly with solar panels or wind turbines.

There are food banks in two in five communities.



Many of the reporting communities have services and activities aimed at supporting those in need. In addition to food banks (found in 40%), 30% have a prescription pick-up/delivery service, 22% have volunteer food shopping delivery, and in 22% there are schemes offering free or low-cost meals.

Repair cafes, or similar upcycling initiatives, are present in a fifth of communities, and borrowing schemes (such as toy libraries) in 15%. Additionally, 16% of community halls are opened as 'warm spaces'.

Making data accessible – the Rural Wales Data Hub

Prof Scott Orford

The Rural Wales Data Hub will enhance access to data for policy-makers, practitioners, and other users by acting as a portal both to existing datasets for Rural Wales and to new data generated by Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales. The Hub, which is being built for Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales by the WISERD Data Team, will contain dashboards and mapping interfaces that will allow users to discover, navigate, explore, and interact with a wide range of data relevant to economic, social, environmental, and cultural policies.

An early version of an interactive dashboard on accessibility in Rural Wales using different modes of transport has already been developed and allows users to explore the mix of goods and services available for different communities in Rural Wales. Work in this area will also include mapping local community assets based on work undertaken with Together for Change in Pembrokeshire, and work currently underway in Anglesey around the County Council's five town regeneration project.

Forthcoming surveys

Throughout the summer of 2025, Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales is conducting a **Farm and Rural Crime Survey** in collaboration with the four Welsh police forces. Building on previous surveys of rural crime undertaken by Dr Wyn Morris and Dr Gareth Norris at Aberystwyth University, the survey aims to capture progress made in addressing key issues on community perceptions of farm and rural crime. Participants will answer questions on farm theft and damage, crime in rural communities, wildlife and environmental crime, and the impact of crime on people and wellbeing.

The Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales **Business Survey** will run in autumn 2025 to take the temperature of small and medium sized enterprises in Rural Wales. Run in conjunction with Antur Cymru, and with the questionnaire co-designed with stakeholders including Welsh Government, local authorities, and business associations, the survey will update the evidence base for policy from the last Wales Rural Observatory Business Survey in 2013.

Innovation Labs – unlocking pathways to change

Rachel Tuckett, Dr Ruth Stevenson, Dr Siobhan Maderson, Amie Andrews, Dr Matt Reed, Dr Aimee Morse, Prof James Lewis, Dr Huw Lewis, Dr Owain Lewis

Achieving change is difficult. Obstacles get in the way of agreeing and implementing innovative policies that address the big challenges facing Rural Wales. The Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales Innovation Labs are working to find novel solutions to overcome these barriers and unlock changes that will enhance the sustainability and wellbeing of the region.

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales is running four parallel Innovation Labs, one focused on each of the LPIP's themes. The challenges addressed by each Lab have been selected by experts and stakeholders in the respective Thematic Groups as policy areas in need of innovative thinking.

Each Innovation Lab brings together invited participants from the public, private and third sectors.

Through a series of workshops over summer 2025 they are working on identifying desired objectives, discussing obstacles to change, and exploring innovative solutions to overcome barriers.

One or more suggested interventions from each Lab will be selected for testing in a real-world setting with a partner over 12 months to autumn 2026.

The Innovation Labs are facilitated by a team that draws on experience and expertise from the Centre for Alternative Technology's Zero Carbon Britain Innovation Lab, the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise at the Countryside and Community Research Institute, and the former Y Lab at Cardiff University.

The Innovation Lab challenges

A Wales where nature-friendly, net zero horticulture is supported and rewarded

Building homes, happiness, and community in Rural Wales: addressing the labour shortfall across the construction industry

A Rural Wales where there are opportunities to grow, cook, and eat together with a diverse range of people, in an affordable, comfortable, and inclusive setting

A Rural Wales where sport is used to support and increase the social use of Welsh

Facilitating community-led action research

Jessie Buchanan and Amy Nicholass

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales strategic partner Together for Change (see partner profile on page 14) is co-designing community-led research projects across Wales, collaborating with local projects and organisations to tackle the challenges identified as priorities by those communities themselves.

Examples of Community-led Action Research Projects:

Dyfi Biosphere – Screams and Streams

This project is led by the third sector organisation Biosffer Dyfi Biosphere who host a planning team comprised of existing community-led projects, Lab Dŵr Dyffryn Dyfi and the Dyfi Biosphere Swift Project. Biosffer Dyfi Biosphere invited research ideas and two groups came forward with proposals which were then combined into the 'Screams and Streams' project to look at the relationship between water quality, insect numbers, and presence of swifts.

The project planning team decided to spend some of the budget provided by Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales on hiring a part time Research Coordinator who started in mid-April and will support the team to deliver the research until mid-August 2025, when the research is due to be completed.

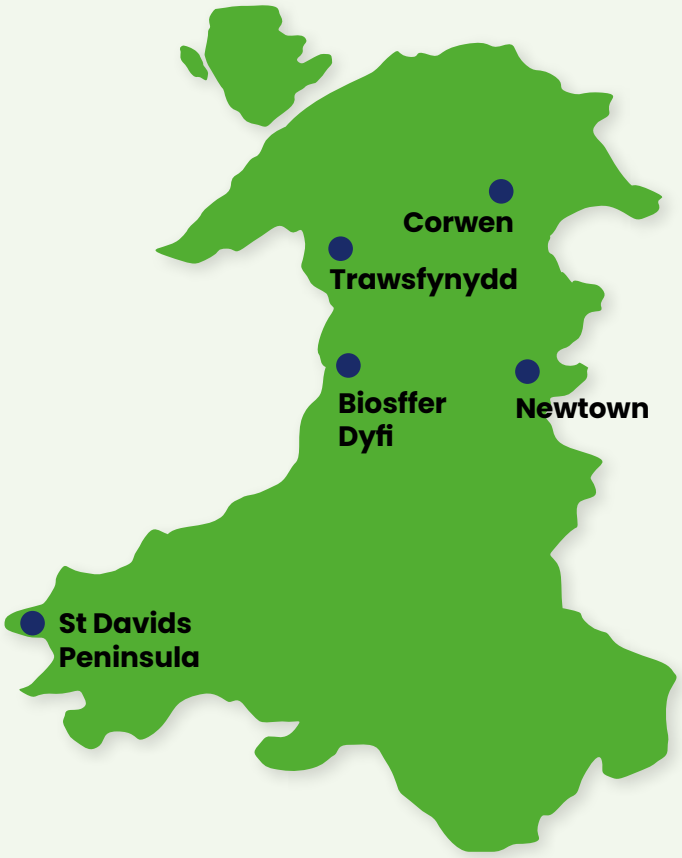
Corwen – Transport Needs

The South Denbighshire Community Partnership, a third sector organisation, lead this project and provide in-house project management. Following on from their own consultation, they have chosen to explore the research theme of 'transport need' in an area where there is no existing community transport provision. The team have worked with their academic mentor to design and pilot a bilingual online and paper postal survey which has been circulated to the relevant rural population. They have also interviewed current users of the community transport service (where it is already available) to explore its impact on their wellbeing. Over the summer, the team will analyse their survey responses with support from their academic mentor, receive thematic analysis training, and carry out follow-up interviews.

St Davids Peninsula – Cynefin

The name of the project in the St Davids Peninsula is 'Cynefin' and the general theme is about exploring the economy of the area. There is an active research planning team with committed individuals who are representatives from third sector organisations, community councils, the County Council, and Tourism and Trade Association.

The team decided to use some of their project budget to hire a part time freelance Community Research Coordinator from March until June 2025, who has recruited researchers from the community to carry out analysis of secondary data, following a plan designed with guidance from their academic mentor. The secondary data analysis will inform the next stage of the research.



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The Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales team have been a great help in providing resources and inspiring volunteer groups to expand their research work. Partnering with Biosffer Dyfi, Lab Dŵr Dyffryn Dyfi, and the Dyfi Biosphere Swift Project, Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales has been there at every stage of the development of an impactful research plan. The Screams and Streams project has partnered with academic mentors to hone the collection of a valuable base line of data that will be a springboard to further research.

James Cass, Biosffer Dyfi

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Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales have supported me to improve my research skills and focus my research in a more useful direction. I hope that the results from this research will be used to help inform both SDCP's development and Welsh Government policy in the future.

Sian Dixon at South Denbighshire Community Partnership / Partneriaeth Gymunedol De Sir Ddinbych

Making connections

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales launches at the Senedd

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales was formally launched at the Senedd in July 2024, before an audience of academics, researchers, politicians, policy-makers, and sector experts. Setting out the project's vision, the event shared Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales' ambitions to create a positive change, actively contribute to the development of new policies, and bring about new solutions to the challenges facing communities in Rural Wales.

As Professor Michael Woods noted before the stakeholders: "Our work will be solution-oriented. We are NOT doing research for the sake of doing research, but in order to make a difference."

MPs learn about rural youth

In January 2025, Professor Michael Woods and Rhian Curtis (Engagement Officer) took part in 'Evidence Week' at Westminster, an annual event organised by Sense about Science to present the latest research to politicians. They met with seven MPs, as well as Members of the House of Lords, parliamentary researchers and journalists, sharing results from a survey of young people in Rural Wales and recommendations for tackling youth out-migration.

They also briefed participants on Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales, leading to several follow-up meetings with MPs and peers to discuss how the LPIP can support their work and inform policy. The participation in Evidence Week was facilitated by the Wales Innovation Network (WIN).

From Auckland to Bethesda

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales colleagues in Bangor and Cardiff hosted Dr Mark Harvey from the University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau in April 2025. Dr Harvey is an artist and researcher, whose work in New Zealand focuses on using artistic practice to connect with communities and build public awareness around ecological issues, social justice, and related general level mātauranga Māori perspectives. He spent time with community members in Bethesda, North Wales, learning about community development projects and local history, and turning his insights into an artistic performance. Mark also gave a public talk and ran a workshop on creative skills at Pontio arts centre, a Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales partner.

Above: Dr Harvey along with students from Pontio's BLAS project, who enjoyed a workshop learning how to use creative skills to share Welsh proverbs.

Celebrating success from our seed corn funding

Rhian Curtis and Dr Siobhan Maderson (Innovation Manager) joined an event at the Senedd in March 2025 to celebrate the success of projects funded by the Wales Innovation Network (WIN). WIN provided the seed corn funding that enabled researchers and non-university partners to co-design the proposal that was successful in winning £5m in funding from UKRI. The event was a fantastic opportunity to showcase the work of Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales to stakeholders including Senedd Members, leaders in businesses and innovation, community mobilisers, local and regional government representatives, and public sector organisations.

Sharing insights on tackling rural inequalities

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales convened a panel on 'What does success look like in projects to address rural inequalities' for the Public Finance Wales conference in November 2024, with CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy). The panel highlighted different perspectives on 'success' in rural development projects with the audience of local government finance officials.

Prof Michael Woods discussed the LPIP's research on perceptions of growth in the rural economy, while Jessie Buchanan shared insights from Together for Change's work on how communities evaluate success in projects.

Media mentions

Catherine Fookes (MP for Monmouthshire) cited research by Prof Michael Woods on rural housing and youth migration on the ITV Wales politics news show *Sharp End* in January 2025. The same research was mentioned in the House of Commons by Ann Davies (MP for Caerfyrddin) and shared by David Chadwick (MP for Brecon, Radnor and Cwm Tawe) on his Facebook page.

Dr Lucy Baker and Dr Ellen Hjort featured in the Cambrian News where their survey exploring the resilience of Welsh community was highlighted in January 2025.

Partner spotlight: Together for Change

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales is a partnership between universities, social enterprises, local resident and activist groups, businesses, and policy partners exploring how research and innovation can help find solutions to the challenges facing Rural Wales.

One such partner is the organisation 'Together for Change'. Director Jessie Buchanan shares the organisation's ethos and approach to community engagement:

Together for Change is a social business that connects community-led action, research, and policy to ensure community voices are heard by decision-makers and that grassroots organisations receive the support they need to thrive.

In Wales, community-led action is growing, building on a rich history of local collaboration and engagement. Together for Change believes that when communities lead, inequalities can be reduced, social justice strengthened, and people can live well.

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales presents an exciting opportunity to collaborate on a pioneering national programme that aligns with our values of research, policy, and practice working together to create lasting change for rural communities in Wales.

Our focus is on building the capacity and confidence of rural communities to shape their own futures through research. Community-led action research approaches are developing locally rooted projects that tackle locally identified challenges.

We have seen how passionate people are about their community and the knowledge that exists to tackle some of the most pressing challenges, such as rural transport or the impact of high visitor numbers in popular tourist regions.

The work is constantly evolving, and we are continually inspired by the creativity and forward-thinking of people and communities determined to make a better future for themselves and future generations.

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales Partners:

- Aberystwyth University
- Bangor University
- Cardiff University
- CCRI, University of Gloucestershire
- Antur Cymru
- Centre for Alternative Technology
- DEG: Datblygu Egni Gwledig
- Represent Us Rural
- Rural Health and Care Wales
- Sgema Cyf.
- Together for Change

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Terry Marsden (Chair of External Advisory Board)

Wales needs a concerted, proactive and distinctive rural development policy which encourages and supports diverse and place-based local community actions and partnerships to achieve sustainable development goals.

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales is a key research and innovation partnership which has now completed its first year of foundational activity across a range of diverse local projects across Wales and in partnership with a range of locally-based stakeholders.

It is refreshingly problem-solving and solution focussed, and in its first year has set at pace a range of innovative place-based research projects.

Sharing innovative good practice, finding ways to enhance and empower local communities, and gradually building more resilient communities are significant products of this applied and problem-oriented research approach. The partnership is beginning and will continue to develop strong links and interfaces with policy-makers at local, Wales and UK government levels - much needed knowledge-transfer so as to raise Rural Wales's opportunities for its people, services and businesses.

Funded by

UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council

UKRI Economic and Social Research Council

UKRI Innovate UK

Hosted by

WISERD

Rural Futures Hub

Core Partners

1872 Prifysgol Aberystwyth University

SGEMA

Prifysgol Bangor University

Gyda'n Gilydd Dros Newid Together for Change

anturcymru enterprise

BEG

CCRI Countryside and Community Research Institute

Cardiff University Prifysgol Caerdydd

Represent Us Rural

Centre for Alternative Technology Canolfan y Dechnoleg Amgen

Iechyd a Gofal Gwledig Cymru Rural Health and Care Wales

The LPIP network: sharing best practice

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales is one of four Local Policy Innovation Partnerships (LPIPs) funded by UKRI, the UK Government's research funding body, in a major investment to strengthen knowledge exchange for place-based policy.

The programme also includes EPIC Futures in Northern Ireland, FORTH2O in Scotland, and the Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP) in Yorkshire and Humberside. The LPIPs are working closely together to share lessons and experience, and synthesize findings, supported by the LPIP Hub based at the University of Birmingham.

In March 2025, Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales welcomed colleagues from the other LPIPs and the LPIP Hub to Cardiff for their quarterly meeting.

The agenda focused on working with communities, featuring a masterclass led by Together for Change on 'How do we work with communities to achieve change?', a share-and-shift session to learn how the LPIPs and related projects are engaging communities, and roundtable discussions of practical issues.

The event proved an excellent opportunity to develop new skills, identify new collaborative practices, and ensure that co-designing projects alongside our community partners will reap inclusive and sustainable benefits.

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