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# Newsletter of the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor (IEPAW) for Wales: December 2023

The IEPAW has committed to publishing newsletters on their work.

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# Introduction

The Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (IEPAW) oversees the functioning of environmental law in Wales and provides advice to Welsh Ministers to improve environmental outcomes. The IEPAW publishes updates on its work progress.

## Events

Dr Llewelyn Jones attended the Royal Welsh Show at Builth Wells in July. This provided an opportunity to meet informally with a range of key stakeholders. She was able to gather views and information on issues relating to the functioning of environmental law that is proving useful in ongoing work.

On 15 September 2023 we held a well-attended Stakeholder meeting. The virtual meeting provided an opportunity for Dr Llewelyn Jones to share an update on ongoing work. It was also an opportunity for her to answer questions about her work and issues of concern currently being considered.

## Submissions

Since June 2023 further submissions have been received relating to the following issues:

- the functioning of tree preservation orders and regulatory enforcement in relation to planning
- the application of planning guidelines relating to the management of ammonia emissions in agricultural development

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One of these submissions is the subject of a report currently in development by the IEPAW. We are currently carrying out a scoping exercise in relation to the other submission.

## Current work programme

The Interim Assessor is working on several reports. These are at various stages of development and relate to a range of environmental issues.

The Forestry Report will focus on tree preservation orders, felling licences and planning regulations. This is currently undergoing final revisions and is due for publication shortly.

The Hedgerow Report is also nearing completion. This considers the effective functioning of regulations for the protection of hedgerows and the impact on biodiversity and wildlife. This is closely linked to the Forestry Report as several overlapping issues have been noted.

A report into the legal framework for protected sites is in formulation following responses to the call for evidence and we are currently reviewing that evidence.

The next stage of the report into the use of civil sanctions in environmental law will involve a call for evidence. This will be issued shortly to collect evidence and views on their current use and whether expanded use might aid the correct functioning of environmental law in Wales. Details of how to submit evidence together with dates for the call will be made available on the IEPAW website.

The IEPAW continues to follow issues around water quality, particularly regarding sewage discharges into Welsh rivers closely. In 2024, the aim of the IEPAW is to review current regulations and legislation to determine what the key issues are in relation to how they function and whether there are beneficial

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amendments that could be made. The IEPAW intends to undertake a series of fact-finding visits to sites of relevance. This will help develop understanding of the issues from a practical perspective.

## PHD students

Several students are to be recruited for part-time internships with the IEPAW in 2024. These posts will allow students to develop their understanding of the functioning of environmental law and practical challenges in its implementation. Students will also be supporting the IEPAW's ongoing work on water quality and protected sites.

## Stakeholder meeting

The next stakeholder meeting for Dr Llewelyn Jones to provide an update on her work will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> December from 10:30 to 11:30. If you would like to receive further newsletters and communication from the IEPAW please get in touch via the email address below to be added to the stakeholder mailing list.

## Contacting IEPAW

The IEPAW welcomes submissions on the functioning of environmental law. If you would like to discuss issues or concerns, please contact the IEPAW through the main IEPAW mailbox, [IEPAW@gov.wales](mailto:IEPAW@gov.wales)

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