

**Welcome to your Ystadau Cymru  
Conference and Awards Special**

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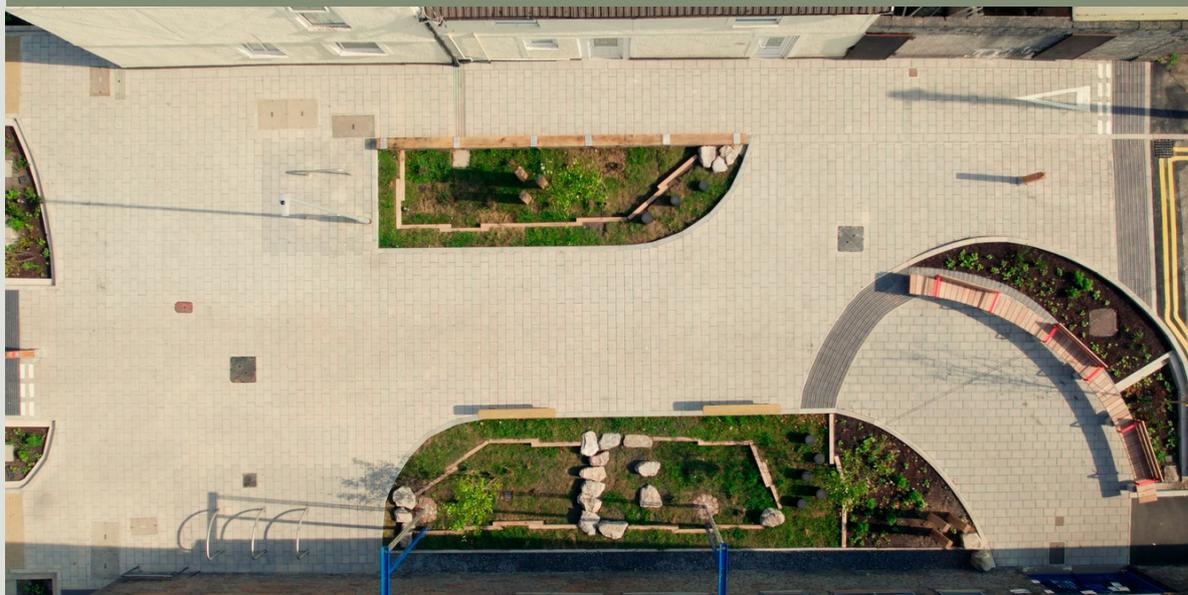
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# **Ystadau Cymru Awards 2025**

## **Collaboration success in Swansea**

### **SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS IS THE OVERALL WINNER OF YSTADAU CYMRU AWARDS 2025!**



**This innovative project from Swansea Council, Natural Resources Wales, Urban Foundry and St Helens School shows how we can adapt to climate change within urban areas and improve local neighbourhoods, read on to find out more on page 3.**

## CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

I am especially pleased with our twelfth issue of the Ystadau Cymru newsletter, which is essential reading for all involved in the Welsh public estate.



Beverly Owen

**Welcome to the newest edition of the Ystadau Cymru Newsletter, which spotlights our award winners and key moments from the 2025 Ystadau Cymru conference.**

Our partnership with Derek Walker and the Future Generations Office team played a crucial role, bringing valuable expertise that helped make this year's conference one of our most successful yet.

As we approach the end of the current Programme for Government, we should take a moment to reflect on our journey. This is a time to be proud of all that we have achieved together as Ystadau Cymru.

At present, three active YC Thematic groups are focused on Building Safety, Environmental Sustainability, and Community Assets, drawing members from various organisations throughout Wales. Our three regional groups continue to operate, and we are preparing to publish the Community Asset Commission Report – it's a very busy period!

We acted swiftly to issue interim guidance on Electric Vehicle Charging and Lithium Battery Safety to provide best practices for installation and safety while we commission a more comprehensive version. Additionally, a YC guide focused on decarbonisation and climate change adaptation for the public sector is being developed together with the Welsh Government Energy Service and is expected to be published by March 2026.

The Assets Collaboration Programme Wales (ACPW) grant is now fully allocated, having supported twenty-five varied projects since 2022. From urban rain gardens to public land farming, I'm proud as Chair of the progress and collaborative innovation across Wales' public estate.

As we look to the future, Ystadau Cymru remains committed to supporting best practice in managing our public estate. Through our various work streams and the Ystadau Cymru web pages, we will continue to champion collaborative asset management across the public sector.



# Ystadau Cymru Awards 2025



## We are proud to announce Sustainable Neighbourhoods in Sandfields, Swansea as our Overall Winner!

Swansea Council, Natural Resources Wales, Urban Foundry, St Helens School

**This project is our winner due to its integrated approach to flood risk management, creation of green spaces, improved access to schools, and promotion of active travel.**

The neighbourhood experienced problems with surface water flooding and heavy traffic during rush hours, putting St Helen's Primary School at serious risk. The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Project responded by creating a new community space, introducing sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs), and developing active travel routes.

### Keys areas are:

- » **Innovation using public assets** – This scheme is a first of a kind for Swansea and the primary innovation for this project is the transdisciplinary, multi-organisational approach working with contractors and multiple funding streams on a public highway.
- » **Improving biodiversity** – Planting native or species with a demonstrated biodiversity value, providing shelter and food for insects and pollinators.
- » **Improving environmental sustainability** – Meeting the principles of Green Infrastructure (GI).

- » **Generating economic growth and resilience** – Reducing flood risk and urban diffused pollution making Sandfields a better place to live, work and play.
- » **Creating social value using public assets** – Transforming a 'stop ended' street into a multi-generational community space with seating, cycle infrastructure and access and informal play with year-round amenity value.

Genuine partnership working was fundamental to the success of the project, fostering a spirit of cooperation and ensuring that each organisation's expertise and resources were utilised effectively for the benefit of the neighbourhood.

### Next Steps!

Both Penny Gruffydd and Fran Rolfe, from Swansea Council and Natural Resources Wales, have taken part in a policy exchange, with staff from the Future Generations Commissioner's office in Vienna to learn more about green infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage. The learning from the trip will help them further their work in this area and will also inform the [www.greenthcity.co.uk/adapting-to-climate-change/](http://www.greenthcity.co.uk/adapting-to-climate-change/).



# Ystadau Cymru Awards 2025



## Runner up project – Preserving the Past, Powering the Future

The National Library of Wales & partners



The century-old slate roof protecting priceless collections needed to be urgently replaced and what began as an essential reroofing project to safeguard vulnerable collections evolved into a leading national example of decarbonisation in practice.

The initiative not only protected heritage assets but also delivered tangible social and economic advantages, including the creation of **valuable training opportunities and the development of new skills.**

- » The library was reroofed with 40,000 Welsh slates from Blaenau Ffestiniog, reinstating the building's original random-slate design ensuring resilience for the next 100 years.
- » 797 photovoltaic panels were installed across the roofscape, enabling the site to generate a third of its energy needs and significantly reduce its carbon

footprint. **The panels have produced 91,000MWh of clean energy, saving 70,000kg of CO<sub>2</sub> – the equivalent of planting over 1,000 trees.**

- » The library has created an EV charging hub with 40 high-speed chargers available 24/7, the site supports local residents and businesses while providing a vital stop for travellers between north and south.
- » All major contractors involved in the project were based in Ceredigion. This approach not only sustained local employment but also helped to build regional expertise, particularly in the fields of sustainable construction and renewable energy installation.

The initiative demonstrates how heritage estates can be powerful drivers of decarbonisation, community support, and positive change for the future.



# Ystadau Cymru Awards 2025



## Finally, our Commendation Award goes to...

### Theatr Clwyd re-development

**Flintshire County Council, Theatr Clwyd Trust,  
Arts Council of Wales, and Welsh Government.**



The redevelopment of the 1976 building, now a Flintshire County Council asset, has shown strong commitment from partners and the community. The project has already protected jobs for 140 staff, 100 casuals, and 400 freelancers each year, while creating 80 permanent positions. The theatre's new design also prioritises sustainability with a gas-free, air source heat pump system. Other areas include:

» **Upskilling and Workforce Development:** Offering tailored learning programmes that address skills gaps and embrace sustainable practices, supported by cutting-edge facilities.

- » **Community Engagement and Heritage Preservation:** Showcasing North Wales' cultural and linguistic heritage, integrating the Welsh language into learning, and innovating tourism experiences.
- » **Sustainability and Resilience:** Embedding sustainability into curricula and operations, preparing the workforce for an ever changing and innovative sector.
- » **Collaborative Ecosystem:** to find solutions and amplify transformational growth and impact.

The transformation of Theatr Clwyd represents a vital investment in both the building's future and the region's cultural landscape. By tackling urgent infrastructure issues and embedding sustainability throughout the redevelopment, the project has not only safeguarded jobs and improved operational resilience but also created inspiring new spaces for creativity, community engagement, and wellbeing.

The refurbished theatre stands ready to enrich audiences and support the arts for many years to come – a true testament to collaborative vision and enduring commitment.

# A SPECIAL SHOUT-OUT TO TAI AR Y CYD – HOMES TOGETHER

**New for 2025 and delivered in partnership with Caerphilly County Borough Council**

**Tai ar y Cyd is an innovative initiative uniting 23 social landlords across Wales to tackle the growing need for affordable and environmentally sustainable housing.**

By developing a pioneering pattern book, the partnership has set new standards for timber-based, zero carbon homes manufactured off-site.

This collaborative model not only addresses urgent housing shortages but also places environmental responsibility at its heart, guiding member organisations in delivering energy-efficient homes that help reduce carbon emissions.

Central to the project is a commitment to strengthening local Welsh supply chains, with a particular focus on using Welsh timber to support the regional economy and uphold rigorous environmental standards. By standardising design and construction methods, Tai ar y Cyd enables partners to collectively aggregate demand and optimise delivery strategies, ultimately making sustainable living more accessible and affordable.

The initiative stands as a testament to the power of cooperation and innovation in shaping a greener, more resilient future for communities throughout Wales.

For further information visit:  
[www.taiarycyd.cymru/the-project/](http://www.taiarycyd.cymru/the-project/)

## YSTADAU CYMRU CONFERENCE 2025: CHAMPIONING COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION IN ONE PUBLIC ESTATE WALES

**Wales' public estate is undergoing rapid transformation, as highlighted at the Ystadau Cymru Conference and Awards 2025. The event celebrated a decade of progress under the Well-being of Future Generations Act, recognising estate managers for driving sustainable change – optimising resources, adopting eco-friendly practices, and protecting assets for the future. Programmes like Asset Collaboration and Transforming Towns are breathing new life into communities and championing greener, more inclusive spaces through effective placemaking.**

Keynote speakers, including Commissioner Derek Walker and Dr Netherwood, inspired delegates to take action on climate adaptation and nature recovery. The conference showcased Egni Co-op's community solar initiatives and Isle of Anglesey County Council's creative solutions for problematic buildings. These collaborative regeneration schemes are powerful examples of placemaking in action, helping Wales tackle local challenges and shape sustainable, thriving communities.

The message from the conference was clear: innovation and collaboration are key to a resilient future. By strengthening partnerships and promoting holistic place-based solutions, Wales is firmly committed to building thriving, sustainable communities that will stand the test of time.

# CHAMPIONING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE IN WALES

## Derek Walker Reflects on the Path to a Greener, Fairer Wales

**The Future Generations Commissioner was a key speaker at this year's event, highlighting the growing partnership between the Commissioner's team and Ystadau Cymru to promote sustainable management of the country's public estate. The address underscored the critical role of estate managers in advancing the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.**

The Commissioner identified the urgent challenges Wales faces, such as climate change, increased demand for public services, and declining public trust. It was noted that the cost of inaction is rising, threatening both financial resources and people's well-being. Meeting Wales' climate and nature targets must be a central ambition, with a call for increased resources and support, particularly for those managing public estates.

Attendees were encouraged to lead on sustainability by focusing on three areas: (1) decarbonisation; (2) climate resilience, and (3) nature recovery/biodiversity in their portfolios. The Commissioner highlighted

the importance of solutions that achieve multiple goals, including decarbonisation and job creation, and urged faster progress on climate risk management, green infrastructure and nature recovery which must become a core public service priority. This builds on recommendations in the Future Generations Report 2025 (p 45).

In closing, the Future Generations Commissioner called for ongoing collaboration, the sharing of best practices, and unified efforts to overcome barriers. Attendees were encouraged to utilise the office's resources and to celebrate collective achievements, with an emphasis on recommitting to Wales' well-being for present and future generations. A resource on building climate and nature resilience into land management, drawing on the discussion at the conference will be published by the Commissioner in February 2026.

**Find the Commission's latest updates in their newsletter.**

**Our Newsletters – Future Generations Wales**  
**[www.futuregenerations.wales/resources/our-newsletters/](http://www.futuregenerations.wales/resources/our-newsletters/)**



# LAND, LEADERSHIP, AND LEGACY: BUILDING CLIMATE AND NATURE RESILIENCE INTO LAND MANAGEMENT



**In Autumn 2025, Dr. Alan Netherwood, Netherwood Sustainable Futures was commissioned by the Office for the Future Generations Commissioner to input into the Ystadau Cymru conference with a presentation Land, Leadership, and Legacy: Building Climate and Nature Resilience into Land Management. This has now been developed into an expanded think piece, to help to stimulate dialogue between OFGC with asset and property managers across Wales. The think piece focuses on the following themes:**

- » managing land asset diversity for future generations
- » adopting progressive approaches to land management
- » factoring in climate resilience to existing systems and processes used by land managers
- » achieving land carbon outcomes through asset management
- » pursuing opportunities for nutrient management through development
- » improving nature recovery through land management farming and rural development
- » adopting a whole organisation approach to achieve climate resilience and nature recovery outcomes

The work draws on Alan's 13-year career in the public sector and 17 years as a consultant supporting public bodies and others on sustainable development, climate risk, biodiversity and decarbonisation across Wales.

The author's view is that progress can be made given the expertise available within Wales' public sector and in partner organisations, despite funding constraints. For the asset management profession, Alan highlights the importance of developing strategic and institutional approaches to support this – enabling better connection between experts, giving asset managers licence and 'permission' to adopt different lenses for asset management planning and delivery.

The paper is available in pdf format from either Dr. Alan Netherwood, Netherwood Sustainable Futures [alan.netherwood@gmail.com](mailto:alan.netherwood@gmail.com) or Helen Nelson, Director – Strategic Planning and Climate & Nature, Office of the Future Generations Commissioner [helen.nelson@futuregenerations.wales](mailto:helen.nelson@futuregenerations.wales)



# PEMBROKESHIRE'S NET ZERO DRIVE POWERED BY COMMUNITY ENERGY

## Innovative Solar Project Delivers Educational and Environmental Gains Across County's Schools and Leisure Centres

**Pembrokeshire is lighting the way for a greener future thanks to an ambitious Community Energy Collaboration project, which is transforming public buildings into eco-friendly powerhouses while engaging students and saving money for the county.**

This pioneering project was highlighted as one of the key sessions at the Ystadau Cymru conference, drawing significant attention from attendees and sparking vibrant discussions about the future of sustainable energy in public sectors.

- » The initiative is now in its second phase, having already equipped sixteen Pembrokeshire County Council buildings with photovoltaic (PV) solar systems.
- » Nearly 1MW of clean energy has been installed so far, with plans to double the capacity to 2MW across schools and leisure centres.
- » The Council entered into a Power Purchase Agreement with Egni Co op for the renewable energy generated by the rooftop solar panels. The associated procurement was undertaken via the Sell2Wales platform, in line with established public sector requirements for transparency, competition, and value for money. The scheme delivers substantial carbon

reductions and is financed by Egni and grants, meaning no upfront costs for the council.

- » The project also engages with Schools, and the Energy Warriors project is raising awareness in classrooms, putting students at the centre of energy engagement through workshops on energy consumption, natural materials, food waste, and fast fashion. Collaboration with local universities and industry partners ensures all Pembrokeshire County Council schools have free access to these educational experiences, valued at £14,000 per year.

Of course, no pioneering scheme is without its challenges. Issues with grid connections and some resistance to change have tested the project team's resolve. However, key to overcoming these hurdles is strong collaboration with passionate non-profit partners, a laser focus on shared benefits, and—crucially—effective communication. Engaging schools early and maintaining momentum has proved vital.

As Pembrokeshire continues its journey towards a net zero public sector, this local authority and Community Energy collaboration stands as a shining example of how innovation, partnership, and education can deliver lasting benefits for people and planet alike.





## ANGLESEY'S REGENERATION: BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO TOWN CENTRES

### Collaborative Vision for Sustainable Communities

**Dewi G Lloyd, Regeneration Manager at Anglesey County Council, shared an inspiring update on the island's ambitious regeneration journey at the conference. The presentation featured a wide range of projects and plans to revitalise the Island's main towns and build a sustainable and thriving future for the area.**

The new Anglesey Council Plan and related Strategy for Improving Anglesey Town Centres are guiding this transformation, with a strong focus on developing a clear vision and ensuring that improvements are both strategic and impactful. They also aim to ensure that local communities and businesses are suitably informed and involved in shaping plans and initiatives that are tailored to each town's unique needs.

- » Several vacant and dilapidated urban properties have been transformed by the Council to provide community hubs or social housing, including the historic listed Market Hall, Plas Alltran buildings in Holyhead, and the derelict social club site in Beaumaris.
- » Important regeneration projects led by local delivery partners have been supported, including the Empire Cinema and Play Centre in Holyhead, Canolfan Glanhwfa in Llangefni, and the innovative pilot facelift scheme led by Mon Communities Forward to improve over 100 high street premises across three town centres.

- » Over 30 new modern business units have recently been built by the Council in Holyhead and Llangefni with further units now planned in Amlwch, mostly on brownfield sites, creating new opportunities for local enterprises and economic growth.
- » The Council's existing estate of various business and industrial units are now subject to surveys and plans to consider their condition and energy efficiency to ensure their long-term suitability and sustainability.

These projects have been resourced through a number of different funding sources including various grants, with some involving innovative joint-ventures or loans. The regeneration process is regularly reviewed to ensure authentic, long-term progress and close alignment to strategic plans.

Central to all these achievements is the spirit of collaboration. Success relies on effective working between public organisations, with private businesses, and the third sector, combining skills and ideas to fuel innovative and practically deliverable solutions. With a clear vision, broad engagement, and a collective commitment to positive change, Anglesey's regeneration efforts are more than just plans on paper – they are a movement to create places where everyone can take pride.

# NEW HANDBOOK ON EMPTY PROPERTIES PUBLISHED

On 5 December 2025, Jayne Bryant MS, Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, announced the publication of the Handbook on Empty Properties in Wales. This comprehensive guide is designed to help local authorities, property owners, community groups, and partners tackle the challenge of vacant residential and commercial properties across Wales.

The handbook brings together **best practice**, **real-world case studies**, and **financial tools** to support efforts in:

- » **Revitalising Communities** – Turning empty properties into vibrant spaces that benefit local areas.
- » **Meeting Housing Needs** – Making the most of existing buildings to provide much-needed homes.
- » **Driving Collaboration** – Encouraging joint working between councils, owners, and community organisations.
- » **Unlocking Funding Opportunities** – Practical advice on grants, loans, and financial mechanisms to support projects.

This resource is a key step towards reducing the number of empty properties and ensuring they contribute positively to local economies and neighbourhoods.



**Take Action:** Share this handbook widely within your organisation and networks, and start using it today to bring empty properties back into beneficial use.

## Access the handbook here:

Empty Properties in Wales: handbook  
[www.gov.wales/empty-properties-wales-handbook](http://www.gov.wales/empty-properties-wales-handbook)

## CASE STUDY SUBMISSIONS NEEDED!

The Ystadau Cymru team has been collaborating with partners to create a collection of case studies for our website. We've already featured some great projects on subjects like collaborative asset management, community asset transfers and decarbonisation, but we're looking for more examples.

If you have a project you'd like to share, please contact us at [YstadauCymru@gov.wales](mailto:YstadauCymru@gov.wales) or visit [www.gov.wales/ystadau-cymru](http://www.gov.wales/ystadau-cymru)