



Cynulliad Hinsawdd
Climate Assembly

Expert Witness Template

Fen Turner, Senior People & Places Officer,
Natural Resources Wales

What is your passion / specialism / position on solutions to the climate crisis?

My name is Fen Turner. I have worked in the environment sector for the past 16 years. Working in the public sector as an environmental regulator and partnerships officer in South East Wales for the past 12 years with Natural Resources Wales (and its predecessor) and as an outdoor instructor in Pembrokeshire before that.

I am also a Co-Convenor of the Climate Ready Gwent Network which aims to facilitate Climate Action on the regional scale. This growing network is made up of several different practitioners from a diverse range of public sector organisations in Gwent who are committed to tackling climate change and enhancing community resilience.

None of that is why you should listen to me. I understand the science of climate change and am passionate about protecting our natural environment for my children and future generations. But that isn't why you should listen to me either. I would like you to listen to me because the natural world promises an abundant future for you, your loved ones and your communities. I will be talking to you today about a simple idea that is... We are part of nature, nature is us, we are reliant upon it, nature is under threat by us, nature and our management of it is also part of the solution to the question of how we tackle the climate crisis in a way that is fair and improves standards of living for everyone.

So, what could nature offer? A lot. Let's realise it.

References:

For more information about Climate Ready Gwent see this film:

<https://vimeo.com/buffoonmedia/download/475180482/db51900835> (password nrw)

[HEADLINE FINDINGS \(metoffice.gov.uk\)](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/news/2017/02/28/headline-findings) Met Office predictions anticipate that by summer 2050, daily maximum temperatures are projected to increase by 3.4°C. Rainfall is projected to increase in winter by an average of 14% and decrease in summer by an average of 16%. Sea levels around Wales are predicted to rise by approximately 22cm

[UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 - Urgent priorities for the UK - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

During an extended period of hot weather in 2018, Gwent experienced several wildfires. The impact and damage to habitats and species was devastating and the scars still linger on the landscape. February 2020 brought us a succession of storms which broke records of



rainfall and river flow, these events tested public sector services and operations to the limit, placing a significant burden on colleagues in the emergency services and on the public sector purse. A List of risks specific to the Gwent Region can be found here:

[Natural Resources Wales / Climate Ready Gwent](#)

[SoNaRR2020 Aim 1 assessment \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](#) the majority of habitat and species features on some of our “best sites” (internationally and nationally designated) are considered to be in unfavourable condition a trend which is mirrored globally where the loss of biodiversity is accelerating at an unprecedented rate with around 1 million animal and plant species now threatened with extinction, many within the next few decades

This Story map gives some insight into what is special and significant about the natural areas in this landscape: [SE Valleys Landscape Panel \(arcgis.com\)](#)

Thinking about critics and/or alternative views to that which you have put forward above – what would others say about your perspective and idea?

The Climate Action story is often associated with a “giving up”. If we begin to see Nature as the solution to the Climate Crisis, then the narrative instead becomes one of unlimited abundance. Yes, we may have to live differently, but by placing nature at the heart of these changes we stand to benefit long into the future. Nature gives us more, not less.

There is an argument that Nature Based Solutions are expensive and need a lot of money to maintain. Perhaps in the short term this is the case but as a long-term investment we really can't afford not to as the risks are so great. Just because the benefits aren't always returned in cash terms doesn't make them any less valuable. E.g. Water is cheaper than diamonds. We can live without one, but not the other.



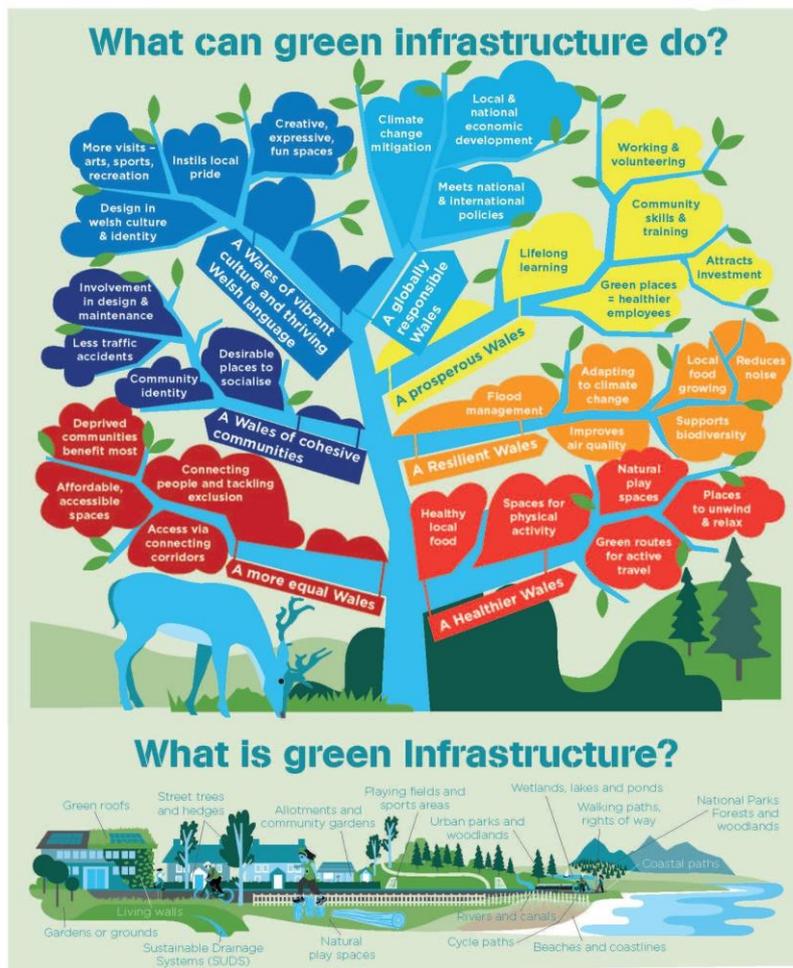
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Use this final part of your presentation to help Assembly members better understand your position in relation to others and what that means for addressing the question that they have been set.

How could Nature help us prepare for a Climate Ready Future?



Green Infrastructure
and Well-being



If you would like this information in an alternative format, please contact us: **Phone: 0300 065 3000** (9am - 5pm Monday to Friday)
Email: enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk



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References:

Every bit of green infrastructure provides multiple benefits and can also save us money by:

- Soaking up rainwater and reducing the risk of flooding (see [Sustainable Drainage Wales](#))
- Keeping towns and cities cool during heat waves (see [URBAN HEAT ISLANDS \(UHIs\)](#))
- Filtering pollution from the air (see [BBC Two - Trust Me, I'm a Doctor, Series 1 - The big air pollution experiment](#))
- Dampening noise pollution (see 'Environmental noise' on the [Home | GOV.WALES](#))
- Reducing stress and promoting mental well-being (see [Green spaces have lasting positive effect on well-being - BBC News'](#))
- Providing us with attractive places to keep fit
- Stimulating our children to do better at school (see the [Children and Nature Network. Helping Children Thrive - Outside | C&NN](#))
- Supporting all kinds of wildlife, including bees and other pollinators ([Nature Isn't Neat - Monmouthshire](#))

Local Opportunities and best practice:

Local Woodland habitats:

Nature-based climate interventions, like maintaining and increasing the amount of green space, can bring many benefits for the people living in surrounding communities too.

[Coed Lleol](#) are an organisation that know and understand the improvements to health & wellbeing that people can feel in the outdoors. They help to improve the health & wellbeing of people across Wales though running woodland and nature based activities – [even virtually during Covid-19!](#) One of their key aims is to “provide healthy sustainable woodlands that benefit their owners, the environment and wider society”, and this involves working with partners and communities to realise the multiple benefits of trees and woodlands, both for health & wellbeing *and* climate resilience outcomes.

If you're interested in Coed Lleol's work in Gwent, please get in touch with Laura George at: laurageorge@smallwoods.org.uk”

Local Upland Habitats:

[South East Wales Resilient Uplands Project](#): Torfaen, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent's Upland areas face a number of challenges: landscape crime, loss of habitats and key species declining farm incomes poor infrastructure and fragmented communities. SEWRU is a collaborative project to address these challenges. One of the aims is to manage land to improve soils, water quality & regulation, grazing, biodiversity, & carbon storage.

Peat stores are Upland Carbon Banks. Upland peats are UKs single largest carbon store. Peatlands release carbon if they dry out, are exposed, over-grazed, or over-burnt.



Restoring drained peats stores more carbon, and also benefits flood control and biodiversity. Appropriate grazing levels also helps maintain heathland habitats and reduce wild-fire risks. Mynydd Maen and WaunafonBog captures 46,000tC and 59,000tC respectively. To store this much carbon in trees, you'd need to plant millions of tree seedlings and wait for 10 years!