



CLILC • WLGA

WLGA
Rural Wales
MANIFESTO
Thriving communities for the future



WLGA Rural Wales MANIFESTO

Thriving communities for the future

We want a Wales with sustainable rural communities at its heart, where even the most remote areas thrive and are valued by the nation.

We envision a balanced society rooted in vibrant, well connected villages and towns that are appealing to young families, where homes and good jobs are attainable, and wealth is generated and retained locally.

We see innovative, enterprising farming communities safeguarding our environment whilst sustainably producing food as part of an industry integrated within the broader economy.

We picture dynamic places where those who live there and visit them value their culture and are powerhouses of a Welsh language revival.

Our Policy Proposals and Key Asks Are for a

THRIVING RURAL WALES

THRIVING PEOPLE

A targeted rural youth programme to invest, upskill, retain and attract bright and talented young people in rural communities.

Invest in a workforce with higher value skills targeted at growth sectors such as Food Science, Advanced Manufacturing and Circular Economy.

Tailored housing policies to support the needs of rural communities, so young people can live and work in the places.

THRIVING PLACES

A Smart Towns Initiative to develop data-driven marketing and visitor strategies; with capital investment in employment sites, and support for Banc Cambria to enable banking facilities.

A sustainable tourism economy that supports local communities, businesses, and people. Refine the sector to rebalance the impacts of tourism and invest in higher value activities that extend the traditional season.

THRIVING ECONOMY

Diversifying the Economic base with a circular economy approach to natural rural products.

Adding value to rural infrastructure, including investment in digital connectivity, grid capacity and transport to enable a 21st century economy.

Explore Community Wealth Building by recognising the role of the public sector within the economy. Create opportunities for local investment to grow businesses within key sectors.



We call upon the next **WELSH GOVERNMENT** to

1. Enable **adequate and fair funding** for the delivery of public services and rural development across all parts of Wales.
2. Ensure a successor **Rural Development Programme** post-EU transition period with simple, easy to access interventions to invest in rural businesses and communities.
3. **Recognise the potential for social and economic regeneration in rural areas**, and to ensure that the burden of decarbonisation does not fall disproportionately on rural communities.
4. **Provide a dedicated focus on rural matters** within the Senedd to ensure these issues are fully considered across all aspects of Welsh Government.
5. **Work with local authorities to explore, develop and implement the proposals for rural wales set out in this Manifesto.**

The WLGA's 7 Key Asks for Rural Areas include:

1. **Diversifying the economic base with a circular economy approach to natural rural products**

Improving the productivity of rural areas provides opportunities for high quality employment, safeguarding the welsh language and retaining young people.

2. **A targeted rural youth programme to invest, upskill, attract and retain bright and talented young people in rural communities**

This includes establishing STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Money) Centres of Excellence within Further Education institutes focused on key economic sectors; developing entrepreneurial skills and training and recruiting health professionals to work in rural Wales.

3. **Adding Value to Rural Infrastructure**

A commitment to the universal provision of digital infrastructure; improvements to rural road infrastructure; innovative demand-led public transport in rural areas; investment in grid capacity and preparing for a Zero-Carbon future.

4. **Sustainable tourism supporting local communities, businesses and people**

Policies to rebalance the impacts of tourism in rural areas and strategic investment in higher value activities to extend the season and promote alternative destinations.

5. **Housing to reflect local community needs**

Tailored housing policies to support the needs of rural communities to stimulate local economies and retain a younger demographic, with capital subsidies to build affordable homes across a range of tenures. Identify opportunities to explore cooperative housing in empty community properties.

6. **Smart and Thriving Rural Towns**

A smart town initiative to equip market towns with digital infrastructure; capital investment in modern employment sites; establishing creative hubs and support for the Banc Cambria initiative.

7. **Community Wealth Building and addressing the Missing Middle**

Recognise the role of the public sector as anchor institutions in the rural economy and streamline growth for businesses operating in the foundation sector, with government backed local investment schemes and a peer-to-peer rural lending scheme.





This Rural Manifesto has been developed by the WLGA's Rural Forum, consisting of the nine leaders of the rural local authorities in Wales and a representative for the National Park Authorities in Wales, including:

Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn, Leader of Gwynedd County Council and Co-Chair of the WLGA Rural Forum
Cllr Rosemarie Harris, Leader of Powys County Council and Co-Chair of the WLGA Rural Forum
Cllr Llinos Medi Huws, Leader of Anglesey County Council
Cllr Hugh Evans, Leader of Denbighshire County Council
Cllr Sam Rowlands, Leader of Conwy County Council
Cllr Ellen ap Gwynn, Leader of Ceredigion County Council
Cllr Emlyn Dole, Leader of Carmarthenshire County Council
Cllr Peter Fox, Leader of Monmouthshire County Council
Cllr David Simpson, Leader of Pembrokeshire County Council
Cllr Paul Harries, on behalf of National Parks Wales

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