

A Position Statement on Climate Change and Nature Recovery

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The issue

We, the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, agree that the evidence for human-induced global warming, leading to a changing climate, is indisputable¹. The world must respond to the impacts of climate change, manifested most obviously through changing weather patterns and seasonal variations, forcing nature to adapt, constraining water supplies, and adversely affecting human and animal health and the sustainability and resilience of rural life.

The evidence

We demand action in response to:

- **the UK Climate Change Committee's 2019 report²** on achieving net zero emissions in the drive to limit human-generated greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to levels that will limit the Earth's average annual temperature (land and sea) to 1.5°C above 1990 levels
- **the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' report³ (May 2019)**, on the need to achieve rapid and transformative change to the global and local economy and cultures to reverse the catastrophic decline in nature, with less than 11 years within which we must achieve this reversal
- **the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's report (IPCC) on Climate Change and Land⁴** on the need for significant changes to land management and to personal behaviours affecting land, if the GHG limitations target is to be met.

We applaud the Welsh Government's declaration of a climate emergency in Wales⁵ and we challenge the Welsh Government to follow this up with transformative action across all sectors, now. We will stand shoulder to shoulder to achieve this transformative change.

We applaud the 21 county, county borough and town councils in Wales that so far have declared a climate emergency. With the imminent requirement for National Park Authorities in Wales to pursue the sustainable management of natural resources in exercising their functions⁶, we consider that this places the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority under a similar obligation to act; in short, we need actions not just words.

We take confidence from the individuals, organisations and movements that have worked tirelessly to bring climate change to the world's attention. It is our responsibility, not the next generation's, to ensure that we stay on the right side of history.

Our analysis

¹ https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf

² <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-technical-report/>

³ https://www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/ipbes_7_10_add-1-advance_0.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=35245

⁴ <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/srccl/>

⁵ <https://gov.wales/welsh-government-makes-climate-emergency-declaration>

⁶ <http://bit.do/e8Nd6>

Responding to the impacts of climate change and the equally challenging nature emergency are somewhat inter-related. Whereas wildlife evolved without interference, humans now force it to adapt in a world fragmented by our exploitation of land, water and other natural resources. Climate change exacerbates this, leaving less space and time for wildlife to adapt and thrive.

There are, however a range of actions that are distinct for climate change and for achieving nature recovery; action for one emergency will not be sufficient to solve the other. We will, therefore, act on both fronts, simultaneously, and with great vigour, over a sustained period.

We are confident that together, the organisations and individuals living, working and operating within the Brecon Beacons National Park, can make an important contribution to ameliorating Wales' climate and biodiversity emergencies. But in spite of what we have achieved so far (Appendices) we must do more and we must act now.

Actions needed for effective responses to the climate and nature emergencies

Transformative change is required now. We and people living, working and operating in the Brecon Beacons National Park need to significantly and rapidly:

- increase the Park's capacity to retain and store atmospheric carbon
- increase the landscape's water-holding capacity (to mitigate water shortages and to reduce flood risk)
- reduce and eliminate waste and pollution
- maximise zero carbon living and renewable energy, and
- help nature to recover.

To these ends we will:

1. Be advocates for transformative actions within all sectors to mitigate the causes and adapt to the consequences of global warming.
2. Explain and defend why action is so important and so urgent.
3. Educate, advise and empower people.
4. Be exemplars for zero carbon, waste and pollution minimisation, elimination of land-derived GHG emissions, soil and water conservation, renewable energy, and nature recovery.
5. Champion a strong focus for the land management sector - agriculture, forestry, water management and nature recovery – to deliver de-intensification and community-led local food production, habitat restoration, renewable energy maximisation and pollution prevention and control that make direct and indirect contributions to reversing greenhouse gas emissions whilst delivering restoration and expansion for peatlands, woodlands and wetlands.
6. Champion a strong focus in the Park for maximising appropriate renewable energy production in harmony with nature and the landscape.
7. Encourage and support local and regional supply chains for food, drink and services in order to minimise these sectors' contribution to waste, ecological footprints and GHG emissions.
8. Champion and make full and effective use of our planning policies to minimise GHG emissions and waste and maximise the requirements for renewable energy, local supply

chains, new community orchards, allotments and woodlands, soil and water conservation and nature recovery.

9. Argue at every opportunity to strengthen our planning policies to maximise these benefits.
10. Champion the safeguarding and restoration of the Park's peatlands to prevent further GHG emissions, increase carbon sequestration potentials and help nature to recover.
11. Be a catalyst for staff, Members, communities, visitors and businesses to participate in nature recovery and climate mitigation and adaptation projects, programmes and actions, and to scale-up their actions.
12. Be a catalyst for staff and Members to achieve the cultural and lifestyle transition required to be leaders for climate change action and awareness raising and nature recovery. For example:
 - a. Furthering a staff conversation on sustainable living and working and the affordability of this
 - b. Enabling further significant reduction in the staff commuting footprint
 - c. Eliminating and banning all use of single use plastic food and drink containers, including milk bottles
 - d. Raising awareness of the ecological and carbon footprint of food, drink, energy, travel, leisure and clothing.
13. Minimise and wherever possible eliminate adverse environmental impacts through our procurement policies.
14. Review our need to travel and maximise energy efficiency, irrespective of cost, when and where we do need to travel.