

Party

**WELSH PARLIAMENT / SENEDD CYMRU
ELECTION MANIFESTO 2021**



CIEEM



The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent social and economic recovery will undoubtedly be the focus of all political parties during the forthcoming Welsh Parliament / Senedd Cymru election process. Whilst it has been a difficult time for many people, we think that taking a 'green recovery' approach is also a great opportunity for Wales to come out of the COVID-19 pandemic in a way that builds back the economy and supports jobs and communities, while also addressing the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis.

A healthy natural environment and resilient ecosystem services underpin a strong economy, as well as providing positive health and well-being benefits for society. Together they provide clean air, fresh water, healthy soils for growing food, carbon sequestration, abundant marine life and fish stocks, unpolluted seas and beaches, and recreation and relaxation opportunities.

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environment (CIEEM), the UK professional body for over 6,000 ecologists and environmental managers, is therefore, asking the *lab/LD/Plaid/Cons/UKIP* party to include an election manifesto commitment that ensures the COVID-19 recovery is achieved in a way that addresses the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis at the same time.

To that end, we would like to see the following key points be included in the manifesto:

- A commitment to the **biodiversity and climate change crisis being at the forefront** of decision making. This should include ensuring the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 continues to be embedded within the work of Ministers, in order to support carbon reduction at a national and local level and achievement of all seven well-being goals - three of which specifically reference climate change.
- A commitment to **invest in nature-based solutions and natural capital**, including supporting climate- and wildlife-friendly agriculture and restoring carbon-rich habitats such as grasslands, peatlands and native mixed woodlands.
- Better investment into nature protection and **restoration of irreplaceable habitats** (including important carbon sinks such as peatbogs), along with an introduction of targets and powerful new legislation to protect these habitats.
- Commitment to **fulfil the implementation of Area Statement ambitions** under the Environment Act 2016 and ensure these receive appropriate funding at a local level so that they can improve nature conservation in the short- and long-term.
- Continue to implement a fit-for-purpose Agriculture (Wales) Act that **sets up a new Sustainable Land Management Scheme**. This should reward farmers for non-market public goods such as biodiversity, air and water quality, healthy soils, flood prevention and mitigation, and access to nature. It should also include a commitment to reward farmers for minimising pesticide use in line with an agroecological approach to farming.

- Support the calls of the Future Generations Commissioner to **develop an economic stimulus package that leads to green job creation** and supports skills development, ensuring no one is left behind in the shift to greener technologies.
- Ensure environmental legislation and policy is **always informed by the best scientific evidence available**. The UK is a world-leader in environmental research and practice, and it is vital that the Welsh Parliament / Senedd Cymru draws on these experts.
- **Support adequate resourcing and expertise for ecological work** in public bodies and local authorities to ensure that biodiversity enhancement aspirations can actually be delivered.
- Introduce a **mandatory requirement for green infrastructure** and support the requirement for **net benefits for biodiversity** as far as possible in new developments¹.
- Commit to **further defining and providing clear guidance on how developments can meet the five measures of ecosystem resilience** within the Environment Wales Act 2016 to enable planning authorities to make decisions on whether developments meet these criteria.
- Establish a method for **assessing ecosystem resilience** which is transparent for decision makers and the public, and suitable for long-term monitoring.
- **Continue the momentum for improving air quality** set out in the Clean Air Plan² by supporting a Clean Air Act for Wales with stringent targets for particulate matter, nitrogen and ammonia.
- **Undertake impact assessments on all COVID-19 recovery investments** to ensure that Wales remains on-track regarding ambitions to enhance and restore the natural environment.

1. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/securing-biodiversity-enhancements.pdf>

2. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/clean-air-plan-for-wales-healthy-air-healthy-wales.pdf>

