



CYMDEITHAS ECOLEGOL PRYDAIN



BRITISH ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

**Welsh Policy Group**

**Vision and Strategy**

**2022 – 2025**

Ecology covers a range of disciplines. The British Ecological Society defines ecology as:

*“the study of interactions among living things and their environment. It provides new understanding of these vital systems as they are now, and how they may change in the future.”*

### **Where do we want to be in the next 3 years?**

This document is a result of a workshop held with the Core Committee in November 2021 and a review process that involved the rest of the Committee. Our vision, strategic aims and suggested activities are all in line with the BES strategic plan 2020-2023. As this is a new Committee all activities suggested will be considered experimental opportunities over the next three years. Success will be determined by trialling activities suggested to see how they work for the Committee.

## **VISION**

Ensuring policy and management in Wales is informed by appropriate ecological information and understanding

## **STRATEGIC AIMS**

1. Provide technical expertise and robust ecological evidence for policy makers and managers and advise how policy and management are impacting on ecological outcomes
2. Achieve a closer working relationship between ecological policy-makers, researchers and professionals
3. Communicate ecological knowledge and its relevance for effective policy and management to the public

## **ACTIVITIES**

**(AIM 1, 2 & 3)** Annual strategic planning and horizon scanning

This will:

- Identify gaps in current activities and knowledge and opportunities for collective working, allowing committee to discuss activities and programme of work
- Prioritise future research and evidence needs by horizon scanning the upcoming year for important consultations topics and themes.
- Invite ECRs and external experts as appropriate and can be accompanied by training.
- Be used as a baseline for evaluation at the end of the year.

**(AIM 2 & 3)** Caffi Ecology events

Hold at least 2 bilingual Caffi Ecology events a year, in person or online. In person events will be distributed around the country. These networking and knowledge exchange events bring together people who work on environmental policy. These will help to establish the Committee, build our reputation and profile, and strengthen connections and relationships between the often-separated communities of policy-makers, researchers and professionals.

### **(AIM 2 & 3) Policy Training**

Hold policy training activities for ecologists across sectors including ECRs and students. This will help build policy skills amongst ecologists, allowing them to engage more effectively in the policy making process, and help build ecological knowledge amongst policy makers. This may include in-person events, webinars and shadowing schemes.

### **(AIM 1 & 3) Consultation responses**

The Committee will prioritise and respond to relevant consultations, depending on time and resource constraints. These are normally signed by 'British Ecological Society Welsh Policy Group'. Individuals can choose to add their names if they wish. Cases of conflict of interest will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and dealing with these may include leaving names off consultations, explicitly stating that a particular person was not involved. This is covered in the WPG's conflict of interest policy.

### **(AIM 2 & 3) Policy communication tools**

Create policy communication tools, including visual, written or audio media communicating Welsh policy for ecologists and the public to increase awareness, independent engagement and understanding. Developing this conversation will help us to understand where we can provide the best value.

We will produce a horizon-scanning document aimed at emerging and potential key topics in the next five years. The process of drafting this will include looking for previous BES horizon scan documents to see accurate they were. We will disseminate this to key audiences, including academics and policy makers, and being to evaluate how effective it was after 4.5 years.

### **(AIM 1 & 2) Understand opportunities for the BES to support the work of ecological consultants**

This includes working closely with CIEEM and could include events, training, mini-conferences and other methods

**(AIM 1 & 2)** Work with BES teams and SIGs to provide advice and training to support ecologists to ensure data is discoverable using acceptable standards, can be re-used and ensure future work provides the financial support to ensure this is standard practice going forward.

This is vital for future research and includes archiving and sharing data within and between sectors

**(AIM 2 & 3)** Identify shadowing opportunities for ecological researchers (including ECRs) with relevant organisations and secondment opportunities for work in different sectors

This would entail using Committee contacts to set up shadowing and/or secondment with government, parliament and other relevant organisations. This will build policy skills amongst ecologists and expose policy makers to new and upcoming ecological research and theory. Schemes should include senior ecologists, who may have more influence on policy, as well as ECRs, to build policy skills in the next generation of ecologists.

### **(AIM 3) Interact with the media and public**

This would raise the profile of the Committee and its work. Aim to have regular articles or news items highlighting our work/impact. Run at least 1 social media account

**(AIM 1 & 2)** Connect with BES Special Interests Groups (SIGs), Committees and Staff and other relevant organisations

Explore the potential of holding joint events and developing joint initiatives with SIGs and other Committees e.g REED network, LGBTQ network, PEWG, Education Committee, Civil Servant Environment Network, EPW. These activities will facilitate cross promotion and support within the BES and WPG

**(AIM 2)** Provide forum to strengthen connections, networking, relationships, especially between the often separated communities of policy-makers, researchers, professionals, managers and NGOs.

We would like to establish deeper connections with government, parliament, ecological consultants and relevant evidence-based organisations.

**(AIM 1, 2 & 3)** Annual evaluation of activities including case studies

As this is a new Committee, we will gain experience of what activities contribute to achieving our strategic aims and which do not work as well in a Welsh context. We need to strategically review this in order to improve our practice. We will begin this process at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of each year.