

NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN OF WALES



Senedd Election 2026

WALES: A WORLD LEADER IN NATURE

We are calling on the next Welsh Government to invest and facilitate collaborations and partnerships on Wales' natural heritage — protecting our unique flora, tackling biodiversity loss, investing in green jobs and skills and unlocking the power of nature for communities' wellbeing across the nation.

About Us

The National Botanic Garden of Wales is a national institution providing public value on behalf of Wales. The Garden is a major visitor destination and one of the jewels in Wales' visitor economy. Furthermore, as an education and scientific institution, it is committed to Wales' response to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) and the climate and nature emergency, declared by the Senedd in 2021.

26

years at the
forefront of Welsh
conservation

360+

Welsh plant species
conserved in the National
Seed Bank for future use
in restoration

26,000+

herbarium specimens
digitised to provide
global access to data
for climate change and
biodiversity research

200,000+

visitors welcomed
each year

42,000

visits for health and
wellbeing every year

Working
alongside

250

community
volunteers

Employing up to

100

people in rural
Carmarthenshire

Purchasing from

185

Welsh suppliers and
spending over

£1.2 million

locally every year

We are calling on the next Welsh Government to commit to three priorities:

- 1 Foundational Support:** Enabling multistakeholder collaborations to secure the future of nature and people through the provision of multi-year funding, aligned to Wales' priority outcomes.
- 2 The Green Economy and Communities:** Invest in green skills and training for future workforce needs in conservation, land restoration, climate adaptation and grow green social prescribing to improve wellbeing across Wales.
- 3 Climate Leadership:** Position Wales as a world leader in nature-based solutions to climate change.

Our requests are focused, evidence-based, and ready to deliver real impact for people and nature across Wales.



Wales is facing a nature emergency. The National Botanic Garden of Wales has a unique and critical role to play — as a place of science, conservation, knowledge sharing and community connections. We need the next Welsh Government to be an ambitious partner in this work.

Dr Lucy A. Sutherland, Director NBGW



Why Wales Needs Nature Now

Wales is facing significant and accelerating biodiversity challenges. Native species are disappearing, habitats are shrinking, and the natural systems that underpin healthy communities, clean water, and a stable climate are under unprecedented pressure. Government targets — including the commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 — require dedicated action and trusted partners ready to deliver at scale.



The National Botanic Garden of Wales is uniquely placed to respond. As a custodian of the *Waun Las National Nature Reserve* and its ecosystem services, and a national centre for biodiversity science, conservation, nature education, Welsh heritage and community partnerships, we have spent over two decades building the expertise, relationships and infrastructure needed to make a measurable difference. We partner with Welsh Government, universities, third sector organisations, local authorities, schools and communities to safeguard Wales' natural heritage for future generations.

At a time of political change and tightening budgets, the case for investing in nature and collaborating has never been stronger — or more urgent. The requests in this document are proven, cost-effective and ready to scale.

1 in 6

species in Wales are at risk of extinction nationally

77%

want to see more nature thriving in their green spaces*

80%

say time spent in nature is important to their wellbeing*

76%

Over three quarters of respondents wanted to see current and future governments take more action to tackle the loss of nature.

*RSPB Cymru survey

1

Foundational Support

Securing the future of Welsh nature conservation



The National Botanic Garden of Wales is a national asset and it plays a crucial, unique role in delivering nature policy for Welsh Government. The Garden brings world-class science, conservation expertise, and community reach to the challenge of nature recovery — and we are ready to do more. The *Waun Las National Nature Reserve*, within the Garden estate, is an exemplar in landscape restoration and biodiversity conservation, enabling access to inspire

and educate. The *National Seed Bank* acts as a safety net against climate change, habitat loss, and pollution, providing essential material for ecological restoration, scientific research, and reintroducing threatened species in Wales. We are delivering long-term, multi-generational outcomes for Wales on short-term, unpredictable funding. This is not sustainable — and it puts Wales' natural heritage at further risk.

We are calling on the next Welsh Government to:

Provide multi-year core funding to the National Botanic Garden of Wales to:

Support the Garden as a National Centre for Biodiversity Science, Conservation and Public Engagement enabling public benefit and its role as a trusted national partner in contributing to the achievement of the 30x30 commitment and the Environment (Wales) Act's nature recovery goals through:

- 🌿 delivering Wales' biodiversity targets through a sustained National Seed Bank programme to protect native plant species and safeguard genetic diversity against extinction and climate change — ensuring these living resources are available for future use in restoration works across Wales.
- 🌿 harnessing the Garden's unique and accessible botanical landscape, which integrates living collections, *Waun Las National Nature Reserve* and an organic farm, as a national platform to communicate and innovate on plant conservation, biodiversity recovery and sustainable food systems.
- 🌿 supporting the Garden's internationally recognised expertise in Welsh flora and beyond.



2

The Green Economy and Communities

Upskilling and connecting people and nature for lifelong opportunities and wellbeing



The National Botanic Garden of Wales estate is a hub for green skills development through apprenticeships for school leavers and career changers, student placements, postgraduate studies and volunteering. Our ongoing commitment and legacy to a green skills revolution in horticulture, research, conservation and restoration would synergise with a visionary national strategy for green skills and training in Wales.

There are around 549,000 children and young people across Wales (*Office of National Statistics, 2023*) — with one third living in poverty (*Children’s Commissioner for Wales 2024*). They have shared their desire to have greater opportunities for quality work experience and careers advice in school and further education and positive role models in the world of work and self-employment (*Welsh Government 2024:19*). In 2025, the Garden launched its ‘*Every Child in Wales*’ initiative to enable children and young people to build a connection with its inspirational staff, who are positive role models, and expand their view of the value of nature, the role of STEM and what opportunities are available to work in green jobs in Wales.

The Garden is a place where people of all ages and backgrounds gather and connect with plants and the natural world. Around 40% of visitors are motivated to visit for specific health and well-being benefits. The National Botanic Garden of Wales can further develop as an active hub for community life and wellbeing and forge meaningful connections with communities across Wales. It can assist Welsh Government in shaping collective futures and help the community to navigate uncertainty and how to live with the challenges of climate change, such as helping through urban greening and community gardening.



We are calling on the next Welsh Government to:

- 🌿 **Expand green social prescribing across Wales**, recognising the Garden as a national delivery partner through its National Nature Reserve and botanic garden.
- 🌿 **Invest in STEM and nature-based education programmes for schools** and support the Garden's **Every Child in Wales** outreach initiative to benefit isolated communities.
- 🌿 **Facilitate and support partnerships for expanding green apprenticeships, reskilling programmes and adult education**, focused on roles like conservation and habitat restoration, sustainable farming, renewable energy, and more.
- 🌿 **Champion cultural opportunities through nature and heritage**, recognising the Garden and other attractions in their role supporting the use of Welsh language, promoting access to arts, culture and heritage for communities and connecting people with the landscape, history and identity that makes Wales unique.



“

Nature is not a luxury — it is a public health asset. Investing in green social prescribing and nature-based education delivers measurable returns: reduced NHS pressure, strengthens communities and enables a generation equipped to lead Wales' green future.

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3 Climate Leadership

Positioning Wales as a world leader – ambitious in resolving challenges

The changing climate and the nature emergency are inseparable and action needs to be embedded in every decision. Plants and ecosystems are the foundation of our response – capturing carbon, cooling cities, protecting water supplies and supporting food security. Wales has the science, the landscape and the institutions to lead and collaborate. The National Botanic Garden of Wales is ready to be a flagship for that ambition.



We are calling on the next Welsh Government to:

-  **Work with the Garden as Wales' National Centre for Biodiversity Science, Conservation and Public Engagement**, with a dedicated commitment to biodiversity based climate research and to national and international partnerships.
-  **Develop a national strategy for land use and management**, with the Garden supporting and collaborating on skills development, demonstration and knowledge-sharing across the sector.
-  **Integrate botanical expertise into Wales' Nature-Based Solutions and finance**, ensuring that plant science informs habitat restoration, carbon sequestration and flood risk management.
-  **Build partnerships to champion Wales on the international stage** as a world leader in tackling climate challenges.

SUMMARY:

Trusted, Proven and Ready to Deliver

The National Botanic Garden of Wales has spent over two decades building the expertise, partnerships and public trust needed to deliver for people and nature. We are not asking for something new — we are asking for the sustained commitment to nature that will allow proven, cost-effective programmes to grow and scale across Wales.

The next Welsh Government has an opportunity to be bold: to invest in practical plans for a cleaner, greener, healthier Wales where we collaborate across sectors and every community has access to nature, where Wales' unique natural heritage is protected for future generations, and where our world-class botanical science drives climate solutions at home and abroad.

We would welcome the opportunity to work in close partnership with the next Welsh Government to realise this shared vision.



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