

CYMRU **RYDD**
CYMRU **WERDD**
CYMRU **GYMRAEG**

A **FREE** WALES
A **GREEN** WALES
A **WELSH-SPEAKING** WALES

CYMDEITHASIAETH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Cymdeithas yr Iaith's **Manifesto**

A free Wales, a green Wales, a Welsh-speaking Wales: Cymdeithasiaeth for the 21st century

Cymdeithas yr Iaith's **Manifesto**
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Foreword

This is Cymdeithas yr Iaith's sixth manifesto, the document we have published every decade to outline our vision as a movement. It was developed over a period of months in discussion with our members, and it became clear that it would need to respond to the climate crisis and its relationship to the Welsh language.

This document therefore outlines Cymdeithas yr Iaith's analysis of the current situation for the Welsh language and our communities, as well as our political philosophy of *cymdeithasiaeth* and how it applies to Wales today. Then, it proposes ideas to ensure a Wales that is sustainable in every sense of the word, and how empowering our communities – one of the main principles of *cymdeithasiaeth* – means strengthening our language and protecting our environment too.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this manifesto's development, and to all our work over the years. Cymdeithas yr Iaith is a community of people, and we are completely reliant on the skills, ideas and dedication of our members to achieve everything we do.

We were inspired by reading Cymdeithas yr Iaith's previous manifestos which formed the basis for a radical vision over the decades, and so much action which has achieved great steps forward for our cause. Our wish is that the reader will discover in these pages too ideas that will inspire discussion, action, and possibly, hope.

There are great challenges ahead of us, but we have responded to great challenges before. So let us respond once more, with the imagination and co-operation that has always characterised our movement and our little country; to create, implement and realise a vision of another Wales, a better Wales.

A free Wales, a green Wales, a Welsh-speaking Wales.

Mabli Siriol Jones

Chair, Cymdeithas yr Iaith, 2022

Introduction – Wales in 2022

Since we were established 60 years ago, Cymdeithas yr Iaith has responded to several critical challenges for the Welsh language and Welsh communities. In 1962, the words of Saunders Lewis in *Tynged yr Iaith* predicted that Welsh would end as a living language at the beginning of the 21st century unless there was a revolution. The people of Wales rose to the challenge; this inspired decades of campaigning that has responded, time and again, to the situation of Welsh and Wales as they are, and has succeeded in securing a future for the language.

However, the challenge has not disappeared, and it is clear that we are still having to work against, in the words of *Tynged yr Iaith*, 'the political tradition of the centuries and all present-day economic tendencies' which continue to militate against the Welsh language, like all minoritised languages. Our conclusion half a century later in the 2012 Manifesto, *Tynged yr Iaith 2*, was that we were confident by then that there would be a future for the Welsh language in some form, but what kind of future?

In the Wales of 2022, the housing market is pushing people from their communities to make way for those with wealth, and the community foundations of the language are deteriorating as a result. After decades of neoliberal policies by the Westminster and Cardiff Governments, our communities are dwindling, losing essential services such as surgeries, banks, schools and community spaces. Economic centralisation is intensifying, and our communities are overly reliant on extractive industries such as tourism or large foreign corporations that offer low wages and poor terms.

In education, 80% of our children and young people continue to be deprived of the language due to the failure of our education system to grow and normalise Welsh-medium education. Children from certain social backgrounds and areas are most deprived, specifically disadvantaged communities, migrants and communities of colour. Even in areas where the language is spoken by the majority of the population, many young people lose their language skills as they go through the education system due to the failures of the ‘bilingual’ system and the assessment procedure. A substantial number of adults want to learn Welsh, but experience obstacles to doing so, such as financial and geographical barriers and inflexibility.

Despite the official bilingualism that our political establishment is so keen to boast about, the truth is that English is the norm across all areas. It is a struggle for ordinary people to be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh when engaging with day-to-day services. There is no right to use the Welsh language in the private sector or adequate planning to develop the language skills of the workforce across essential areas such as health, care and education. English dominates on digital media, and our only Welsh language television channel has seen significant cuts to its budget and lost its institutional independence. There are very few Welsh language-only spaces, where the language is used naturally in workplaces, businesses or cultural activities, and no official efforts are being made to support or increase these spaces. Our so-called leaders continue to perpetuate myths about Welsh as a language that excludes people, and lack the confidence to embrace it as the country’s language proper and ensure the right of every citizen to learn, use and enjoy it in their everyday lives.

The truth is that, almost a quarter of a century since devolution, the dream of Welsh democracy has not been realised. Apathy, a lack of engagement and understanding of the political process is rampant. For many people, voting is their only political act, but fewer than half the electorate voted in the 2021 Senedd elections, and in some counties fewer than a third voted in the 2022 local elections. There is a lack of education and understanding of our political structures and devolved powers generally, and people do not feel part of our democracy or feel they can make a difference. Politicians have little desire to change this situation, as it means they are not held to account.

On the whole, Wales is run by a small, narrow establishment, from a specific background which – despite its rhetoric on some issues – implements policies which do not break free from the British capitalist system that has been so harmful to our language, our communities and ordinary people. The establishment is complacent and unwilling to acknowledge the true nature of the problems we face, or to take action that will make a real difference.

Too often, rhetoric masks a lack of any action of substance. This is clear when it comes to the language, where there is broad consensus and support for the Welsh language, but not the political will to take the bold steps that are needed. The Government boasts of its commitment to the language but fails to reach its own targets time and again, and has failed to publish credible actions to reach the million Welsh speakers. Similarly, local authorities do the absolute minimum expected of them, as a box-ticking exercise rather than to serve local residents. They consider that ‘mitigation measures’ based on a

superficial language impact assessment are sufficient to show that the Welsh language is a consideration in policy-making.

The Welsh language continues to be marginalised in public policy, rather than being mainstreamed across all areas, and underneath the warm words about Welsh, language policy is seen as a matter of tweaking here and there. And as seen in the decision to give our national Senedd a bilingual name, we are far from seeing Welsh receiving official recognition as the country's language proper.

This manifesto is being developed before the full results of the 2021 census are published, and we cannot know in advance what the results will be. But whatever the results of the Census, we cannot be complacent. The Welsh language is not just a matter of figures. The true indicators will be young people leaving school speaking Welsh, the language being used naturally across all domains and viable Welsh-speaking communities.

The situation of the Welsh language must also be placed within a wider context. This manifesto was developed after two years of the COVID-19 pandemic which caused so much loss and disruption in our daily lives. An economic shock and a cost-of-living crisis have followed – a crisis that will exacerbate the problems of the housing market and the economic foundation of our communities. The effects of years of austerity continue, and poverty and inequality are on the rise, with many people struggling to meet their basic needs for shelter, food and heating. Wealth is being accumulated at the top, in the hands of a small number who have used the pandemic to increase their profits and assets. Mental health issues such as depression

and anxiety are endemic, with insufficient support available, and large numbers experiencing isolation as community bonds deteriorate.

More and more of our lives are lived online, but this is happening on private and undemocratic technology platforms, with algorithms that encourage conflict and undermine democracy and privacy. Deep social trends of prejudice and injustice such as racism, misogyny, homophobia and transphobia continue, and are promoted by politicians, the media and reactionary groups. In Britain, as in other states, we see measures to limit fundamental rights and democracy. Conflict, oppression and war are destroying lives across the world, and refugees are being turned away from asylum.

However, one challenge stands out above all, as it represents a threat to every community on the planet: the climate crisis. Humankind's impact on the planet is deepening, and we know following the assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the current decade is critical in terms of action if we want to prevent the worst forecasts from becoming reality. The result of our current course, without urgent and far-reaching action, will be disaster.

Foundations of hope

Despite all this, there is no need to despair about our situation. Yes, there are many challenges ahead, but there are foundations of hope all around us. Through determined and effective campaigning, Cymdeithas yr Iaith has ensured several steps forward for the language over the decade since our last manifesto was published. Following the disappointment of the 2011 census, Cymdeithas yr Iaith embarked on a period of

action calling on the Government to respond, as well as our successful campaign for the adoption of a target of one million Welsh speakers, which has succeeded in moving us away from accepting inevitable decline and to aim for growth instead. This is a target that has gained support across the political parties, public institutions and the public, and has changed the discourse about the Welsh language, giving language policy a clear framework and enabling us to press for the steps needed to reach the goal and hold the Government to account.

Among our successes, we secured a commitment to abolish Welsh Second Language, to introduce a new Welsh Language Education Bill, to end the concept of ‘measuring the demand’ for Welsh-medium education and to provide free Welsh lessons for asylum seekers. School regulations now establish a presumption in favour of keeping small rural schools open. The Government now officially supports the devolution of powers over broadcasting and communication. Several county councils have introduced the higher council tax on second homes that we called for; soon they will also have the power to place a cap on the number of second homes and holiday accommodation in any community and to require people to request planning permission in order to change the use of a house to be a second home or holiday accommodation. The Government is also committed to regulating the holiday accommodation sector and introducing a tourism tax. We managed to prevent the Government from abolishing the Welsh Language Commissioner’s role and there is now a commitment to extend language rights to new sectors.

Support for the Welsh language and feelings of confidence in it and belonging to it are higher than ever among the people

of Wales, including people who do not speak the language, and more and more people want to learn the language and give it to their children. The language is celebrated as modern and inclusive within contemporary culture and among young people, and across areas such as sport and music. Indeed, it is the establishment that is lagging behind in terms of having the political will to act on the aspirations of the people of Wales for the language.

We have also seen a growth in people’s interest and willingness to campaign and to take direct action for things that are important to them around the world – from the Black Lives Matter movement to the climate strikes among school pupils, national independence movements, the growth in trade union activity and campaigns against sexual violence. All over the world, people understand that change is needed, and that action must be taken to secure it. There is hope in knowing that the future has not yet been decided, and our experience as a campaigning movement shows that it is possible to shape that future.

Cymdeithas yr Iaith’s response

As ever, therefore, Cymdeithas yr Iaith must respond to numerous challenges for the Welsh language and Welsh communities – some of them familiar, others more recent. This is the core part of our work as a movement and we have always done so by offering a radical vision to respond to the Wales of today and the Wales that can be.

Part of this work is to publish a manifesto every ten years which outlines our analysis of the current situation and our vision for the coming decade. This is our seventh manifesto, and it is

part of the wider programme to mark our 60th anniversary. Our manifesto is not a detailed policy document connected to any election, but a response to the challenges of our time and a wider vision to give our work a framework and inspire our members, and the people of Wales, to take action for an alternative, exciting vision of the country Wales can be.

This manifesto does not replace our other campaigns or the policy proposals we have published. It should be read in conjunction with our vision document for the Senedd elections in 2021, More than a million – Welsh language citizenship for all, which outlines our demands of the Welsh Government, and proposes how we can ensure that everyone in the country is able to learn, use and enjoy the Welsh language in a meaningful way in their everyday lives. There are detailed proposals in that document across the fields of education, the economy, language planning, the media and housing. This manifesto sets a wider framework, and looks beyond the current Senedd term and the day-to-day areas of language policy.



Cymdeithasiaeth

In publishing this document, we are building on all of our previous manifestos and publications, and further developing the ideas they contain. Our political thinking as a movement is based on *cymdeithasiaeth*¹. This idea is developed in the 1982 manifesto, and in our 1986 pamphlet, *Cymdeithasiaeth – yr ail ffrynt*, to explain the political philosophy of Cymdeithas yr Iaith which developed through our experience of campaigning. There is an explanation of *cymdeithasiaeth* in the 1982 Manifesto:

In short, Cymdeithas yr Iaith saw that the Welsh language will not survive without a continuing community of people who speak that language; this means protecting the material foundations of communities. This is true of our communities throughout Wales, from rural Welsh language communities to urban English language communities. Welsh can only be restored in the context of a living community, and the healing of Welsh will be connected to wider social, economic and political restoration. That is the reason for developing a set of policies known as cymdeithasiaeth, policies that would give communities the power to control their own destiny, as we do not believe that the whims of market interests and private capital can ever protect Welsh language communities.

As that manifesto explains, in coming to understand the nature of our society and political power through campaigning, 'the political pattern for the continuation of the language and local communities became clear. There was a realisation

¹ You can read more about the concept of *cymdeithasiaeth* in the 1982 manifesto, *Cymdeithasiaeth: yr ail ffrynt* and 'Cloriannu Cymdeithasiaeth: Syniadaeth wleidyddol Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg' by Sel Williams. The analysis found here is indebted to those essays.

that there is no way for the language to continue unless an economic and political system is established in Wales which is administered from the ground up according to the principles of Welsh socialism.'

Cymdeithasiaeth could therefore be considered part of the wider socialist tradition, but it also represents a distinctively Welsh and Welsh language theory. Socialism is a broad term, and in Britain, 'socialism' as espoused by some has been a theory that does not fundamentally question the British state and its imperial, capitalist and centralised nature. Unlike these trends, cymdeithasiaeth rejects the concept of top-down politics, and measures that will centralise power in the state. It analyses economic issues and their impact on the language and communities, but also gives due consideration to culture and identity and their relationship with economic structures.

Cymdeithasiaeth therefore tackles the material foundations of our situation, and their effect on the Welsh language, and proposes economic and social measures that will strengthen the language. It puts people and communities at the heart of our politics, as a real engine of change, and aims to empower communities democratically, economically and culturally. It is a unique contribution by Wales to the global radical tradition, which is consistent with the political traditions of other small nations around the world, from Ireland to central and south America.

Through our campaigning experience, we come to understand that the forces that threaten the Welsh language are the same forces that threaten all communities, exploit workers

and natural resources, and lead to violence and oppression of all kinds. Every fight against these forces is connected, and we see the need for alliances and collaboration between different movements and campaigns in order to resist them.

We believe that cymdeithasiaeth continues to offer a framework to analyse and understand our current situation and the way forward. It is not a dogma, but rather a framework for discussing and developing ways of thinking and taking action. In the words of Sel Williams, '*cymdeithasiaeth can offer a way of seeing the world as a whole and working to transform it.*'²

Freedom for Wales

Cymdeithasiaeth is useful in considering the constitutional future of Wales – a question that has become much more prominent in recent years as the constitutional foundations of the United Kingdom are shaken more than ever, with Scottish independence and the reunification of Ireland being likely prospects in the near future. There has been significant growth in support for independence here in Wales, with the question being given serious consideration in a way that has not been seen before, and discussions about different constitutional options in the mainstream of the nation's public life. We must thank the campaigners who have put independence for Wales on the agenda. As a movement, Cymdeithas yr Iaith has been part of this shift; we support self-government for Wales as an independent country on the international stage, and we are confident that this will become a reality in the coming decades. But it is clear to us that this must also be more than

² 'Cloriannu Cymdeithasiaeth: Syniadaeth wleidyddol Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg' Sel Williams

a constitutional change at a national level. We want freedom for Wales.

What then is freedom for Wales? In the words of a motion at our general meeting in 2017, which reaffirmed a position agreed at the 1996 General Meeting:

The General Meeting reaffirms Cymdeithas yr Iaith's desire to see full national freedom for Wales, so that our people can be empowered to develop our culture as a contribution to world civilization, and to develop our socio-economic systems as an example to the world. We declare our desire to see the Welsh language being fully accepted among the languages and cultures of the world, and for Wales to take its place within international organisations. We declare that it is only by taking our place in the world as Welsh people that we will gain our own freedom.

We reaffirm that gaining full national freedom for Wales means much more than just one constitutional change. As well as ensuring full powers for the Senedd and freedom for it to make international agreements, it also means liberating and empowering the local communities of Wales.

We reaffirm that full freedom means empowering the youth of Wales so that they have the responsibility and the capacity to shape the Wales of the future. It also means freedom and responsibility for employees in all sectors of the Welsh economy in terms of formulating the strategy of their enterprises. It also means empowering students at our educational institutions to contribute to what happens at those institutions, and it means developing a Welsh curriculum that empowers them

with the essential knowledge and skills to participate fully in the new Welsh democracy.

We reaffirm that no faction should be deprived of a full share in this freedom, and that everyone who wants to come and contribute to the new Wales is welcome.

Freedom, therefore, covers a much wider vision of the Wales we want to see. An independent country that will not recreate the capitalist and oppressive British state on a smaller scale, but build a very different society, based on freedom for all the country's people and communities. This, in our view, is essential. We know that constitutional independence alone will not be sufficient to ensure the future of Welsh, without its status being established as the language proper of Wales and the concept of Welsh Language Citizenship for All being embraced – rather than a new state that would declare 'official' bilingualism but see the Welsh language declining in our communities and continuing to be restricted to a minority of our citizens. A free, Welsh-speaking Wales will only be achieved through a fundamental change in our democratic, social and economic structures. This is our vision for the constitutional and social future of Wales, and we will continue to uphold and work towards this vision as part of the wider movement for independence.

Taking action

Cymdeithas yr Iaith has published a new manifesto every ten years as we understand that we need to continue to discuss, develop and deepen our ideas as the world around us changes. And change it does. Without us responding to that change, there is a danger that the Welsh language and our communities

will be left behind. But that does not have to be limited to a publication every ten years. We want this to be a living document. This is not a finished vision or detailed, concrete proposals, but the start of a conversation, and proposals for the way forward for our country, which will evolve. We know we do not have all the answers. And of course, it is not just ideas that are important – action is also needed, and there are ideas at the end of the document about how everyone can take action to implement the vision.

The Welsh language and the climate crisis

The climate crisis is also a language crisis. Simply put – the Welsh language will not survive on a dead planet. When we consider the situation, we also see that the forces that threaten the Welsh language are the same forces that threaten our natural environment. That is, global capitalism and governments that are addicted to ‘free’ market ideology over the wellbeing of communities, people and the planet. Climate disaster can only be prevented by transforming our economic system, and ensuring a strong future for our communities and the Welsh language.

This is a crisis that will affect Wales like every other country, and our communities are vulnerable as a result of climate change. Rising sea levels and coastal erosion will threaten large parts of the country, especially our coastal communities. We have already seen an increase in flooding, with communities in the valleys, the north and the west all experiencing catastrophic flooding over the last few years – flooding that will get worse and occur more and more frequently. If current trends continue, parts of Wales will be under water by 2050, including large parts of the capital city. Cardiff is one of the cities most vulnerable globally to the effects of climate change.

Soil erosion, an increase in plant and animal diseases, extreme weather, and crop failure will make farming more difficult and affect the economy of rural communities and the availability of high-quality local food. The country’s landscape and natural resources will also deteriorate as the nature crisis intensifies. We will lose native plants and animals, and ancient Welsh language vocabulary will disappear with them.

The climate crisis is also a language crisis as many things that are harmful to the environment are also harmful to the

language and the community. For example, when a community loses a school, families are forced to travel further to school by car instead of walking. Young families are less likely to live in the village, and more of the houses become second homes, or houses for retirees. Community bonds deteriorate, as less and less village life takes place locally, leading to less use of Welsh as a living language. If we consider another example, agriculture is an industry that supports rural communities, and 40% of those who work in the sector speak Welsh. The decline of local and family farming will therefore have a detrimental effect on the Welsh language at grassroots level.

Beyond Wales, we see that climate change and environmental decline lead to the decline of minority languages and cultures around the world. From the Amazon to the Arctic, indigenous peoples are often on the frontline suffering the effects of climate change and habitat loss, and as they are forced from their homes and their way of life, their languages are also lost.

The sustainability of language, community and the environment are all connected. Action that could protect the environment could also strengthen our communities and the Welsh language, and we outline our proposals on this in the next section.

It is clear that action must be taken. But it is also important to protect against certain types of ‘environmentalism’ that will not be beneficial to our communities, our language or ordinary people. We are talking about top-down corporate environmentalism that does not care about ordinary people or the Welsh language. At its worst, this is the greenwashing environmentalism that buys land in Wales and uses it to plant trees in order to ‘offset’ the carbon emissions of large corporations. As a result, land that could be used by the community is lost, and the local ecosystem is changed to do

something that does little for the planet. Consistent with this is the phenomenon we see where people in communities in the African continent and the Indian subcontinent are evicted from their homes and exiled from their communities so that western charities can introduce their version of re-wilding, totally against the wishes of the communities in question.

We need to respond to the climate crisis in a way that also strengthens the Welsh language and communities. A just response that puts power in the hands of ordinary people and gives them control over land, natural resources and local decisions, and improves their lives in real ways. A response that rebuilds our communities, shares wealth and eradicates inequality. This can be done, and this is our vision, what we mean by a free, green, Welsh-speaking Wales.

Wales was at the heart of the industrial revolution which initiated the processes that have caused climate change. We know from our history the harmful effect those extractive industries have had on workers, our natural resources, and our communities. Industries that have created great wealth for some, but not for our communities or ordinary people, or countries beyond the West. Now, some of the world’s poorest countries, least responsible for causing climate change, are suffering its worst effects and are being ignored by richer and more powerful countries. A large number of people from those countries will be forced from their homes as climate change refugees – how will western countries treat them?

A just response to the climate crisis means recognising this history and the injustice that continues across the world. It means standing in solidarity with people suffering the effects of climate change now and in the future, and working to support them while also preventing further disasters. Global

A free Wales, a green Wales, a Welsh-speaking Wales

capitalism is to blame for climate change, not ordinary people, and certainly not the poorest. Our aim should be to create a planet where all the peoples and communities of the world can live in peace together and in harmony with nature.

The decline of the language is the result of political decisions and our economic system, and the same is true of the threat to the planet. The climate crisis is not a natural crisis, and neither is the crisis of our communities; they are crises created by humankind. And it is therefore possible to change them. By campaigning, and bringing our struggles together, we can change the decisions of politicians and our economic system to serve people and the planet. Just as a revolution was needed to save the Welsh language, a revolution is needed today to save the planet – and again, success is only possible through revolutionary methods. No fight for justice, rights and freedoms in this world has ever been won without the efforts of ordinary people coming together. That is what we must remember when looking to the future, and see that the struggle for the Welsh language is connected to a wider, global struggle. Working towards a free, green, Welsh-speaking Wales will be our contribution to that struggle.

The way forward

Cymdeithasiaeth starts with the community, and understands that if we can empower communities to control their own destiny and to develop the measures that will strengthen them, our whole society will be transformed and there will be a much stronger basis for justice and freedoms of all kinds. People and communities know best what they need and they have the ability to achieve that; what is missing is the power, in the face of remote and overpowering economic and political systems.

If we start at the community level, and give it the resources to flourish and meet its own needs, the language will flourish with it, and the environment will also be protected. The measures we can take to benefit our communities and the language will also protect our environment, and will therefore create a Wales that is truly sustainable in every sense of the word. That is what we mean by a free, green, Welsh-speaking Wales.

Of course, that vision cannot be realised overnight, or through a combination of specific policies by the Welsh Government under the current system. Ultimately, only struggle, action and collaboration by movements, workers, communities and individuals will realise that. But in order to reach the goal, practical actions are needed on the journey. Here are some steps we can take over the coming years that will move our country closer to delivering the vision of a free, green, Welsh-speaking Wales.

Housing, land and planning

- Introduce a Property Act to give communities democratic control over housing and planning in order to ensure a home for everyone, and strong Welsh language communities in every part of the country.
- Return the social housing stock to public hands, return underutilised stock to public hands, and ensure that a significant proportion of new housing is in public hands.
- Introduce a national programme to insulate houses across the country and make them carbon-neutral, and bring empty houses into public hands in order to upgrade them as green social housing for the use of local people.
- Introduce new taxes on tourism, holiday accommodation such as AirBnB, landlord profits and second homes, and invest the profits in housing and services for local communities.
- Legislate more firmly and clearly on undertaking language impact assessments on new developments, and devolve planning powers, including the setting of housing targets, to the most local appropriate level. Make language planning compulsory in order to ensure that developments have a positive rather than a negative impact on the language.
- Legislate and raise awareness among the public to protect Welsh language house, land and place names.
- Put an end to 'greenwashing' practices by regulating the practices of corporations of buying land to use to offset carbon emissions.

Property Act

We call for the introduction of a Property Act which, among other measures, will:

1) Secure the right to a home locally

Place a duty on local authorities to take action on a request by local people for a home to buy, rent or via a hybrid scheme, within reasonable reach and time.

2) Plan for local needs

Place a duty on local authorities to co-produce a regular community assessment in every area of the county with communities as equal partners. These would form the basis of land use and housing policies as well as public policies such as transport and education.

3) Empower communities

Strengthen communities' rights of ownership and control over housing, land and key community assets through community-led groups. Place a duty on public bodies to dispose of or lease land and property to community-owned social enterprises.

4) Prioritise local people

Intervene in the private market to create a housing and property system that meets local needs and protects communities from the effects of the free market; place conditions on ownership and sales that give first rights to local people or community-led groups to buy or rent houses and to buy land and property in accordance with the community assessments.

5) Control the rental sector

Control rent levels, housing standards and tenancy conditions to ensure high-quality affordable homes in the private rental sector and the social housing sector.

6) Ensure sustainable homes

Ensure that the existing housing stock and new homes are affordable, meet high standards of energy performance, reduce carbon and are compatible with community needs – starting with the existing stock.

7) Invest in communities

Enable communities to exercise their rights to own houses, land and community assets through a Community Wealth Fund that will be available to local authorities – through a community bank – to offer loans and grants to individuals and community-led groups.

The economy and infrastructure

- Establish a duty on the Government to spread investment and prosperity throughout the country and promote strong local economies in every area.
- Increase the investment in Welsh-medium apprenticeships and target key industries, such as the media, health, early years and technology.
- Upgrade the broadband network in every part of the country in order to support small businesses and enable people in every area to work locally.
- Create thousands of green jobs across the country through investment and a strategic programme to improve infrastructure; insulate and upgrade existing houses and create hundreds of community renewable energy projects.

- Ban any new coal, oil or gas developments, urgently ending the use of fossil fuels. End the use of nuclear energy and ban new developments in the future. Ensure the transfer of workers in these sectors to the green energy industry, through a programme to develop skills and protect all jobs.
- Re-open the Aberystwyth to Carmarthen and Bangor to Porthmadog railway lines.
- Collaborate with small farmers and communities to hold an open discussion and develop a sustainable strategy for the future of agriculture that will benefit the environment and communities.

Public services

- Devolve hundreds of Government and public sector jobs from Cardiff to other parts of the country, including making the most of community spaces and new working from home practices.
- Establish new bodies outside Cardiff whose internal administration would be in Welsh, including the *Menter Ddigidol Gymraeg* and a National Communications Council in the West, and a national green energy company in Ynys Môn.
- Develop a national strategy to upgrade the language skills of the workforce in key areas including education, early years, health, care, leisure and local government.
- End policy practices of centralising services, and establish community rights to basic services including surgeries, hospitals, schools and post offices.
- Make public transport free for all, and establish a national duty to provide accessible and high-quality public transport to every community.
- Abolish tuition fees for those studying in Wales and invest

in high-quality lifelong education that is free of charge for all.

- Work with unions to improve the pay and conditions of public service workers, in order to reverse the problems in terms of recruiting and retaining workers in key services such as education, health and care.

Welsh Language Education for All Act

We call for the introduction of a Welsh Language Education for All Act which, among other measures, will:

- Set a statutory goal to move towards complete Welsh-medium education for all children by a specific date.
- Abolish the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans system and in its place establish a new system to plan and fund Welsh-medium education at local and national levels, with statutory targets.
- Facilitate the process of moving individual schools up the language continuum to become Welsh-medium schools.
- Establish statutory targets for the recruitment and training of the Welsh language education workforce.
- Set targets for increasing the number and percentage of subjects taught through the medium of Welsh in schools that currently teach mainly through English.
- Strengthen the legal presumption in favour of keeping small schools open and strengthen the rights of communities in the process of deciding on a school's future.

You can read our full proposals for the Welsh Language Education for All Act at cymdeithas.cymru/achosdeddfaddysg

Community ownership and control

- Empower communities across the country to start up and maintain collaborative initiatives, with specific support and financial incentives to encourage the use of Welsh.
- Legislate to strengthen the rights of communities to buy and run community assets and support them to do so through new funds, advice and networks.
- Invest on a large scale in encouraging and supporting community green energy projects, where renewable energy is produced and owned by the community for the benefit of the community.
- Legislate to strengthen the rights of workers to buy and run companies, and ensure that workers are represented on the management board of every company and organisation.
- Encourage and support local projects for food production and sharing, enabling communities to run community gardens, allotments and pantries in order to tackle poverty and food waste, while also increasing the use of local produce.

More than a million

- Make Welsh lessons free for everyone, of all ages, and establish the right for all employees to learn Welsh through the workplace.
- Set a national target of creating a thousand new spaces where Welsh is the main language, including geographical communities, workplaces, businesses, leisure clubs and schools.
- Introduce a new Welsh Language Bill establishing basic rights for the Welsh language on the face of the legislation, extend language rights to the private sector and

strengthen the regulatory powers of the Welsh Language Commissioner.

- Establish a Menter Ddigidol Gymraeg to increase Welsh language content online.
- Adopt the *Welsh Language Citizenship for All* agenda, including an access to the language fund and a duty on public bodies to extend the language to groups that are currently excluded from it, including people on low incomes, migrants and communities of colour.
- Commit to spend at least 1% of the Government's annual budget on projects to promote the use of Welsh, including a Menter Ddigidol Gymraeg, a Welsh language film fund and the development of Shwmae Su'mae Day.

Constitutional and international matters

- Hold a referendum on independence for Wales when there is a democratic mandate to do so, and encourage a truly democratic and open public discussion with the people of Wales about the country's future immediately.
- As a matter of priority in the meantime, demand the devolution of powers over broadcasting and the media, criminal justice, the welfare state, rights and equality, together with other priority areas.
- Strengthen Welsh democracy by expanding the Senedd and reforming the electoral system, and devolve power to the most local appropriate level. Increase engagement in the democratic process by embedding political education in the curriculum and making voting easier through measures such as automatic registration.
- Declare that the only official name of the Senedd will be its Welsh name.
- End the support for the arms industry, the armed forces and

NATO in Wales, including banning armed forces recruitment in schools and returning land used by the armed forces to local communities.

- Advocate and collaborate with other small countries across the world in favour of minoritised languages and cultures, peace and economic, social and climate justice.

Further information

You can read more about Cymdeithas yr Iaith's detailed policies in different areas in the following documents:

- *More than a Million – Welsh Language Citizenship for All*
- *The Case for a Welsh Language Education for All Act*
- *Language and Work – Cymdeithas yr Iaith's Economic Strategy*
- *The Case for the Devolution of Broadcasting to Wales*

Conclusion

In 1957, Islwyn Ffowc Elis's novel *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd* was published, showing two very different visions of Wales in 2033. In one version of the future, Wales is an independent, prosperous, peaceful country, where the Welsh language flourishes. In another version, the Welsh language is dying, Wales is a region of England, communities have been lost to outside industries, and violence and oppression are rampant. The central message of the novel, which is conveyed to the main character, Ifan Powel, at the end, is that both futures are possible, and that the actions of Welsh people today will decide which one will be realised.

In the real world, it is likely that elements of both versions of 2033 experienced by Ifan Powel will be seen in 2033. But what will Wales be like in 2053, or 2063? As ever, there are various possibilities ahead of us, and it is up to the people of Wales which path we will take. In one possible version of the future, extreme weather will be a feature of everyday life, many of our communities will be uninhabitable, and many others will be playgrounds for the rich, the retired and holidaymakers. The Welsh language will be available on official documents, and will continue to be taught in schools, but only a minority will speak it, and there will not be a single community left where Welsh is the language of everyday life.

In another possible version of the future, Wales is an independent country and Welsh the official language of the new nation-state. Thanks to action taken in the 2020s, the worst of the climate crisis has been avoided, and the country benefits from a strong renewable energy sector that uses all of our natural resources, with communities owning local projects.

No one is homeless, and people live in their local communities and have a variety of work across the country. Communities make the decisions on the use of local resources, planning and public services, and do so democratically. Every single child in the country leaves school fluent in Welsh, and the language is used naturally in every aspect of life.

Every element of these two visions is possible. The first is not a nightmare and the second is not an unattainable dream; rather, these are two visions that could come true, depending on what we do.

What future do we want to see? And what steps are we prepared to take to make it happen?

What you can do

We don't want this manifesto to be a document that sits on a shelf; we want it to inspire discussion, and action.

If you are inspired by the vision in this manifesto, and wish to see a free, green, Welsh-speaking Wales, here are some ideas on ways you can take action to help make the vision a reality:

1. Become a member of Cymdeithas yr Iaith by going to cymdeithas.cymru/ymaelodi.
2. Get involved in one of our campaign groups on the themes that interest you: education, communities, digital, language rights or health and well-being, or take action on local issues in your local cell or region.
3. Join other groups that share the vision and encourage collaboration between radical groups for a better Wales.
4. Ask your Senedd Members and county councillors to take action in favour of the demands and the vision.
5. If you are a member of a political party, arrange for your party to adopt policies that will take us closer to the vision.
6. Stand for election yourself as a town or community councillor, a county councillor, a Member of the Senedd or a Westminster MP, or to represent your community and the vision in local organisations such as boards of governors.
7. Work with others to set up a community enterprise in your area. You can start a community energy project, restore a resource to the community such as a pub, shop or centre, or start a co-operative.
8. Work with others to organise Welsh language events and activities in your community, such as gigs, lessons and activities for learners, discussions and leisure activities.

9. If you have the resources to do so, invest money in community and environmental projects, and ask your employer to ensure that your pension is not invested in harmful industries.
10. Take direct and non-violent action for the Welsh language, the communities of Wales and the future of our planet.

Cymdeithas yr Iaith, 2022
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