



Growing Mid Wales January Newsletter

Happy New Year!

2024 has arrived and we are looking forward to building upon the developments made in 2023.

Last year, we ran a survey where we asked businesses to share information on what they're doing to reduce their greenhouse emissions. We are able to share these findings with you in this edition and as a result, we will be holding a free [event](#) for businesses on the 9th of February to talk about future needs to minimise emissions and energy costs.

We hear from a local business on how they have implemented sustainable changes and advice they have for other businesses to start their own journey in becoming carbon neutral.

Continuing with Energy, we're able to update you on the Local Area Energy Plans - what the current stage Mid Wales is at and how residents can get involved with the [plans](#).

Our *Meet the Team* colleague this month is Ann Elias, our [TraCC](#) Regional Transport Plan Projects and Programmes Manager. Ann shares her experiences of seeing lots of developments in transport over the last few years and the strategies driving regional work forward.

Helping to grow opportunity in Mid Wales,

The Growing Mid Wales team

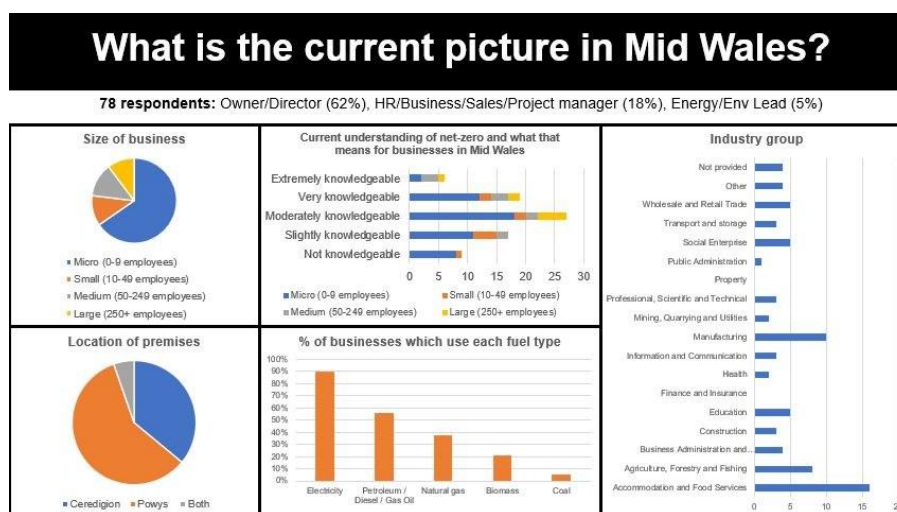
The results are in!

Growing Mid Wales, in partnership with Powys and Ceredigion County Councils, surveyed businesses across the region to understand the key opportunities and challenges they were facing to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

78 businesses took part in the survey. Here are the top 5 takeaway points from the results:

1. **Businesses recognise the benefits that the transition to net zero could unlock in the region.** Particularly the role that small-scale renewable energy projects, linking business and residential properties, could play in boosting economic growth.
2. **Lack of resources, grid capacity constraints and the green skills gap were the top three barriers stopping decarbonisation projects moving from conceptual stage to delivery.** Dr Gemma Delafield, our Regional Energy Officer, will continue to work with key stakeholders, particularly Welsh Government, the Regional Skills Partnership, and the energy networks, to address these challenges.
3. **Businesses need support to understand what options are available to them to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.** A third of businesses surveyed said they were not knowledgeable or only slightly knowledgeable about what net zero means for their business.
4. **Specific support is required to address the challenges faced by Mid Wales businesses.** Respondents highlighted it was difficult to get advice tailored towards SMEs and rural buildings. It is essential that the right incentives and support are given to ensure a just transition to net zero. Particularly given 60% of business surveyed said they do not currently have any plans to decarbonise their activities.
5. **There are opportunities to share best practice and lessons learnt across the region.** There are many forward-thinking businesses within Mid Wales who have already installed innovate technologies including: on-site solar PV, electric vehicle charging points, heat pumps, and battery storage solutions.

These trends echo what other surveys have shown across the UK (e.g. SME Climate Hub [survey](#), Ecologi [survey](#)) and align with [calls from leading academics](#) to increase the amount of support available to SMEs.



1 - Figures from survey: Key opportunities and challenges businesses are facing to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions

What is the current picture in Mid Wales?

- 84% of business have already undertaken measures
- LED lighting & insulation been undertaken by high proportion of businesses
- Forward thinking businesses already rolled out EVs, heat pumps, battery, solar, wind etc.

Solution	No. of businesses already undertaken solution
LED lighting	57
Insulate buildings	34
On-site solar PV	28
Installed electric vehicle charging points	20
Electric fleet vehicles	19
Heat pumps	10
Battery storage	9
On-site biomass	6
Staff behavioural change	3
Other energy efficiency measures	3
On-site wind power	2
Hydrogen production / use	1
On-site hydro power	1
Reduce supply chain emissions	1
Peatland restoration	0
Heat network	0
No steps undertaken / planned	12

2 - Figures from survey: Key opportunities and challenges businesses are facing to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions

What happens next?

The insights from the survey have been used to organise the '[Sustainable business solutions](#)' event (see below for details) to continue the discussion. Insights from businesses are being used to shape future funding initiatives, inform electricity grid investments, and ensure tailored support is available to local enterprises.

EVENT

Sustainable business solutions in Mid Wales: Minimising emissions and costs

Free event for businesses

Sustainable business solutions in Mid Wales: Minimising emissions and costs

Friday, 9 February 2024
10:00-14:00
at Bargoed Farm, Llwynneclyn, Aberaeron

A solution-focused discussion around the challenges to minimising your greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs.

Speakers will include Net Zero Industry Wales and the energy networks.

A site tour and lunch will be provided.

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- Is your business trying to understand what support is available to help reduce its greenhouse gas emissions?
- Are you worried about the volatility of energy prices and want to explore solutions to future-proof your business?
- Would you like to generate your own renewable electricity but are concerned about getting a grid connection?

On Friday 9th February, Growing Mid Wales, in partnership with Powys and Ceredigion County Councils, are giving Mid Wales businesses, the opportunity to come together and talk about what they need for the future to minimise their emissions and energy costs.

Come and join us at Bargoed Farm in Ceredigion to hear from key industry representatives.

We will discuss what is being done to resolve key challenges including: accessing technical and financial support, grid capacity, and skills gaps.

This is your chance to ask questions and highlight what support is needed to encourage businesses in Mid Wales to implement sustainable solutions.

National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED), National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET), Scottish Power Energy Network (SPEN) and Wales and West Utilities (WU) are contributing towards the cost of the event.

A variety of speakers will take part including Net Zero Industry Wales, the Regional Skills Partnership, and the energy networks.

You will also get the chance to hear from Bargoed Farm's very own Geraint Thomas and have a tour around the site to see how the business has become carbon neutral.

Book your free place via Eventbrite [here](#). **Businesses will need to register to attend before 2nd February 2024.**

Case Study: Bargoed Farm



3 - Geraint and the battery storage at Bargoed Farm

[Bargoed Farm](#), near Aberaeron in Ceredigion, is a Caravan and Camping Park as well as a working farm that has made sustainability a priority with all the developments that have been made on the farm in recent years.

With loan support from the [Development Bank of Wales](#), Geraint and Christine, owners of Bargoed were able to install solar panels and electric vehicle charging points.

They've also obtained biofuel generators, electric vehicles, battery storage and a baling machine which compresses recyclable material to reduce the volume of waste created onsite.

We talked to Geraint about the changes on the farm to make the business reduce its carbon footprint:

1. You've made some large-scale sustainability measures at Bargoed – what initiated your green agenda? *"We all have a responsibility towards the environment and it's our aim to be carbon neutral. Also, with energy prices going upwards, there are a big savings to be made with renewable energy over a period of years."*
2. What support did you receive to make a start with your sustainability plans? *"At the start I had no support at all, I had to research as much information as I could get hold of. My local electrician has been very helpful, and eventually I had the confidence to get going installing solar panels, batteries and biofuel generators."*
3. Do you have plans for the future to make further changes? *"Yes, we have further plans for maybe wind power, Hydrogen, more batteries and definitely more solar panels."*
4. What advice would you give to other businesses in Mid Wales wanting to make changes to reduce their carbon footprint? *"Take as much advice as they can, and invest in renewables, as energy prices will escalate and it's a good way to offset carbon and help the environment!"*

At the [Sustainable business solutions in Mid Wales](#) event to be held on the 9th of February, Geraint will share Bargoed Farm's own decarbonisation journey by providing a tour around the site to see the farm's solar PV, battery storage, electric vehicle charging points, biofuel generators and baling machine for on-site recycling.



4 - See how the Development Bank supported Bargoed Farm on its journey to becoming a successful, sustainable company.



5 - Battery storage at Bargoed Farm



6 - Solar panels at Bargoed Farm

Local Area Energy Plan update

In our August 2023 newsletter we shared information on Local Area Energy plans. If you want a quick recap, view the previous edition [here](#).

What stage are Ceredigion and Powys' Local Area Energy Plans at now?

[Energy Systems Catapult](#) have identified a 7-stage process to the LAEPs (shown in Figure below). Ceredigion and Powys are both at Stage 7 – Create the plan. An exciting stage indeed! We are in the midst of identifying practical actions and enablers that will enable Mid Wales energy system to transition to net zero.

All Welsh local authorities will be publishing their LAEPs by March 2024, and these will then be used to inform the creation of a National Energy Plan for Wales, mapping out future energy demand and supply for all parts of the country.



Calling all Mid Wales residents - Energy survey

At this stage we also need to understand our residents current energy and transport use now and for the future. We are running a survey to seek to understand the general public's opinions on :

- Low carbon energy technologies
- Low carbon heating systems
- Sustainable travel options

These insights will be used to help understand the opportunities and challenges that Mid Wales face to transition to net zero. The survey results will shape the delivery of the Local Area Energy Plans.

Complete the survey with the following link: <https://bit.ly/MidWalesLAEP> **Survey ends on 10 March 2024**

Further public engagement opportunities will occur during this year. If you would like to get involved with events, please email growingmid.wales@ceredigion.gov.uk

<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/FeNhB99nweVONVVF#content=m6i3X9Ynr7MwJU>

Useful Energy links

- The [UK Business Climate Hub](#) and [SME Climate Hub](#) aim to empower companies to take climate action and build resilient businesses for the future.

- [Boiler Upgrade Scheme](#) – Small non-domestic buildings can access grants of £7,500 for a heat pump or £5,000 towards a biomass boiler.
- [Development Bank for Wales](#) – Green Business Loan Scheme provides Welsh businesses a package of support that helps reduce carbon emissions and allows businesses to save on future energy bills.
- Business Wales provides various support including:
 - [Green Growth Pledge](#)
 - [Energy efficiency support](#) is available for voluntary organisations
 - Work with you to identify energy saving opportunities. Fill in this [form](#) and the team will be in touch.
 - For more information ring Business Wales on 03000 6 03000.

If you would like to find out more on anything discussed in this newsletter, please email growingmid.wales@ceredigion.gov.uk

Mid Wales Growth Deal: Net Zero and Nature

Dr Gemma Delafield, our Regional Energy Officer, recently held a webinar for the current Mid Wales Growth Deal projects to provide an overview of the Mid Wales Growth Deal's approach to considering net zero and nature restoration in the project proposals.

It was an opportunity to discuss national strategy documents and also the [Mid Wales Regional Energy Strategy](#) which sets out priorities for the region, to decarbonise the energy system.

Gemma showed how the projects in the Growth Deal may align to the six key priorities from the Strategy and provided examples of how should projects evidence their alignment with Growing Mid Wales's strategic ambitions when developing their project business cases.

Our vision for Mid Wales is:

To achieve a net zero-carbon energy system that delivers social and economic benefits, eliminates fuel poverty, better connects Mid Wales to the rest of the UK, and contributes to wider UK decarbonisation.

Our priorities for achieving this vision are to:

1. Drive forward the decarbonisation of the region's housing and building stock
2. Work proactively to ensure that electricity and gas grids in the region are suitable for a 100% decarbonised future
3. Boost the use of renewable energy through new generation and storage
4. Accelerate the shift to zero carbon transport and improve connectivity
5. Develop and harness the potential of agriculture to contribute to zero carbon goals
6. Harness innovation to support decarbonisation and clean growth



7 - Excerpt from the [Mid Wales Regional Energy Strategy](#).

Meet the Team

Ann Elias - TraCC Regional Transport Plan Projects and Programmes Manager



8 - Ann next to the electronic information screens in Aberystwyth

When did you start with the team?

I joined Mid Wales Transportation/Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru ([TraCC](#)) in 2008 to deliver the Regional Transport Plan and deliver the infrastructure programme. I was one of the founder officers of the concept of Growing Mid Wales following the successes of the transport partnership TraCC. I was seconded over from Ceredigion highways in 2014 to work with economic development to explore how best to form an inclusive economic partnership to work with partners to identify what Mid Wales needed to grow its economy.

Can you tell us more about your role?

I'm part of the regional engagement and lead on strategic transport for Growing Mid Wales. This involves seeking out opportunities to support strategic transport following the publication of the Mid Wales Transportation/Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru (TraCC) joint Local Transport Plan in 2014.

By highlighting the needs for a safer, faster, more resilient, and better-connected transport network, both across Mid Wales as well cross border in order to support business, access services and tourism.

This involves working with both Welsh Government, UK Government and our neighbouring local authorities both here in Wales as well in the Marches and West Midlands. This has provided the opportunity to produce a joint cross-border freight strategy, and strategic corridor assessments for both road and rail. Both of which highlight how important the infrastructure is and that investment is required to affect change.

My role also involves project and programme management. One particular project I've been involved with over the past four years is a multi-authority programme delivery for a new bus infrastructure to provide better accessibility and public information for buses. You may have seen the new bus shelters going in, but you may not have realised that they now provide safe level boarding and electronic information screens connected to the Wales network. They allow up-to-date information to the passengers and support the National TrawsCymru Bus network. The real time information part of these will now go live from April this year, telling customers if the services are running late.

What are your current priorities?

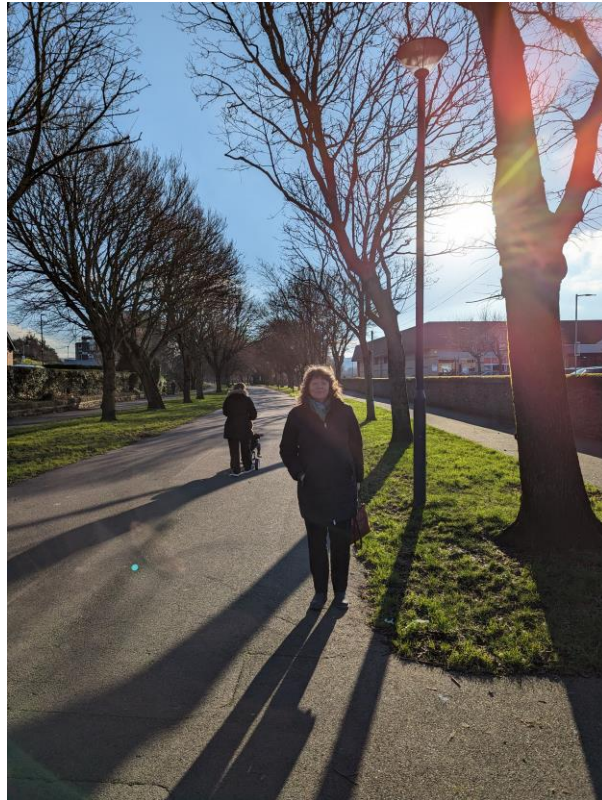
- Support the Growing Mid Wales Team by highlighting the role that transport has in ensuring a successful delivery of all their projects and programmes.
- Continue to work with both the Welsh Government and UK Government to highlight the needs for both the rail network and the Strategic Road Network.
- Bid for funding and deliver the next phase of the TrawsCymru Bus Infrastructure Project.
- Work with the new Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee to assist them with the delivery of the new Regional Transport Plan.
- Seek out further opportunities to assist in the transformation to a net zero transport network.

What developments have you seen over the years?

Working with TraCC, we have seen the delivery of some major infrastructure improvements which our Regional Transport Plan in 2009 highlighted such as:-

- A487 Dyfi Bends, and now the Dyfi Bridge replacement Scheme
- Newtown Bypass
- Ceredigion Link Road
- State of the art electronic railway signing system (ERTMS)
- Pont Briwet Road/Rail Bridge
- Bow Street Railway Station
- Bus interchanges, Brecon, Newtown, Aberystwyth
- A number of large river crossing cycling bridges, active travel routes.

Yes, it's been 15 years since the Regional Transport Plan was published; which shows it can be a very lengthy process to drive forward change and key developments, from the initial strategic planning stage through to completion. A new Regional Transport Plan is in the pipeline. It will outline the key challenges the region is currently facing and identify priority areas we need to tackle collectively.



What's been your biggest achievement?

Keeping the Mid Wales Transport Partnership working together to achieve a collective, strong voice for change and improvements to benefit the people and businesses of Mid Wales.

In 2018, transport was responsible for 17% of Welsh greenhouse gas emissions – 62% from private car use, 19% from Light Goods Vehicles and 16% from bus and Heavy Goods Vehicles. Transportation is in transition, because we must change to achieve net zero by 2050. To achieve this, Welsh Government has identified that we will need to meet a 63% reduction by 2030 and an 89% reduction by 2040.

This change is challenging for the region, because many of the interventions are most affective in urban areas and rural solutions will need to have a bespoke approach with an option of choices which are likely to be delivered slowly because of the dependency upon major long-term investment. Because of the distance and remote nature of rural Wales, government accepts cars will continue to be the main way they make many journeys. The change will need to consider sustainable freight practice to provide heavy goods vehicle fuelling and charging stations for emerging zero carbon forms of road freight.

Working with the Growing Mid Wales Partnership will provide the opportunities to tackle these challenges together and influence and attract long term investment to the region, to help make these changes.

One word that sums up the Growing Mid Wales Team:

Exceptional

Other News

Nearly £2m awarded to 10 'green' projects in Powys

Ten projects that will help Powys play its part in tackling the climate crisis have received nearly £2 million in funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

The projects that have received funding include one that will help to protect homes and businesses from flood damage (£825,000), another that will help companies cut their fuel bills and CO2 emissions (£403,392), and a third that will support growing vegetables and fruit through community sites and social enterprises (£204,910).

Read the full article [here](#).

Supporting local communities and businesses in Ceredigion

The Cynnal y Cardi Community Development and Support Fund fund will re-open for a second round of applications on 01 February 2024.

The aim of this fund is to strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems and support businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.

Small Business Grant of £1,000 - £10,000 and Business Development Grant of £10,001 - £50,000 are available (Larger bids will not be excluded but a robust rationale will be required).

Read the full article [here](#).

Keep up to Date

Need to catch up on what's been discussed in our meetings? Here's a reminder of where you can find the minutes for the following meetings:

- All minutes relating to the Growing Mid Wales Board are hosted on Powys County Council [website](#).
- Papers relating to the Growing Mid Wales Partnership can be found on our [website](#).

Keep up to date with Growing Mid Wales news, developments on activity and organisations we support by following our Twitter and Linked In pages:

<https://twitter.com/growingmidwales>

www.linkedin.com/company/growing-mid-wales

We're eager to reach out to as many organisations and businesses across Mid Wales as possible. You can make this possible by following, liking and sharing our pages.

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