

# GWANWYN GWYRDD

REPORT FROM PLAID CYMRU'S ONE DAY CONFERENCE  
ON THE ENVIRONMENT HELD ON 25 APRIL 2009



## Gwanwyn Gwyrdd

### A Plaid Cymru Policy Development Conference

# Conference Proceedings

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## Foreword

Addressing climate change and protecting our environment have always been high priorities for Plaid Cymru. Rapidly diminishing global oil stocks also mean that we will have to find alternatives to the technologies we have relied on for a century. At the same time, our communities are suffering the effects of an economic model that is unsustainable, greedy and exploitative. Current policies are not doing enough to slow down these trends and the time to rethink our approach is now.

The 'Sustainable Spring' conference aimed to reach out to individuals, organisation and members and enable a full and open debate about developing a sustainable and strong economy in Wales.

It is easy when faced with the scale of the environmental crisis and the disproportionate effect of the recession in our communities to feel that we cannot effect change. Plaid Cymru intends to challenge that notion and to map out specific steps that we can take as a party and as individuals.

We are extremely grateful for your input through panels, discussions and stalls. This document and the recommendations it makes represent our commitment to leading on sustainability in Wales and addressing the difficult issues that will arise honestly, openly and responsibly.

Thank you for taking part. We hope to see at the next Plaid Cymru one day policy conference in July 2009! If you would like to contribute feedback, questions or suggestions to Plaid Cymru, please email [lowri.jackson@plaidcymru.org](mailto:lowri.jackson@plaidcymru.org).

**Nerys Evans AM**  
Director of Policy

**Dr Myfanwy Davies**  
Director of Political Education



## Introduction

The twin challenges of the current economic downturn and a global climate crisis provided the backdrop to this one day Plaid Cymru policy development conference on sustainability, with delegates sharing ideas and possible solutions to climate change, which is now by far the most urgent crisis facing humanity.

There were one or two overriding themes of the day. It was unanimously agreed that we need a new politics to overhaul the nature of capitalist society with its materialist, consumer-driven obsession and we need new solutions to save the planet.

Leopold Kohr, who espoused the “small is beautiful” economic school of thought, influenced Plaid’s philosophical trajectory. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, he asserted that a consumerist, materialist political model had failed to meet all of people’s needs. Arguably, this breakdown in values also led to the malaise which preceded Obama’s sweeping message of change in the USA.

Here in Wales, Plaid is in an excellent position to articulate the need for a new social and economic model drawing on its tradition of radicalism. These Conference Proceedings outline the nature of the discussion honestly and include a number of key recommendations for Plaid Cymru to progress internally. These are indented and coloured green throughout the document.

All recommendations are qualified with one of the following statements:

- Develop Plaid Policy (issues which are currently not Plaid policy)
- Develop Existing Plaid Policy (issues already partially addressed by Plaid policy)
- Existing Plaid Policy (issues already covered by Plaid policy)
- Direct Action (issues which can be taken forward by Plaid politicians or staff)

Ways to develop Plaid policy include:

- Publishing a policy position paper for consultation
- Presenting a motion to Annual Conference (a party policy creating forum)
- Presenting a motion to National Council (a party policy creating forum)
- Asking a Policy Commission to submit a report (for consideration by Conference)

## Biographies

**Adam Price** is the Member of Parliament for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr. He was born in Carmarthen and was educated in the Amman Valley and the Universities of Cardiff and Saarland in Saarbrücken, Germany. Before being elected, Adam worked as the Managing Director for the Economic Development Consultancy, Newidiem. His main political interests are economic development, democracy and innovation.

**Alison Tickell** set up Julie's Bicycle in April 2007. Before that she led the music consultation for the National Skills Academy, was the Music Director at Creative and Cultural Skills (which she helped set up) and before that she spent fifteen years developing the community music sector at Community Music. Alison trained as a musician and teacher. Her advisory roles have included the Live Music Forum, Music Manifesto Steering Group, and the Music Business Forum. She is on the Board of Sound Connections. She is Associate Professor at University of Buckinghamshire and Chilterns.

**Andy Middleton** is a social entrepreneur and Founder Director of St Davids-based TYF Group, an education, leadership and adventure business who put environmental awareness and action at the heart of their operation. Andy's key role at TYF is 'talking the walk' as an advisor to business and government, helping them close the gap between knowledge and behaviour on climate change and sustainability issues.

**Arwel Lloyd** is a County Councillor for the Carmarthen Town South ward. Elected last year he is a member of the council's Leisure and Regeneration and Policy and Resources Committees. He was born in Carmarthen and was educated at Ysgol Dyffryn Teifi and The University of Wales Bangor where he gained a Masters degree. Arwel currently works as a Press Officer for Nerys Evans AM.

**Brian Walters** is a national vice chairman of the Farmers' Union of Wales, a past chairman of the union's national milk committee and a former county chairman for Carmarthenshire. He runs an organic dairy farm with his family where they keep 400 cattle including 180 milking cows. The farm extends to around 500 acres of which 50 acres is arable crops. Brian is present chairman of South Wales Ayrshire breeders club and in the past has represented dairy farmers on Milk Marque and First Milk regional boards. His hobbies are acting, compering concerts and after-dinner speaking.

**Dr Calvin Jones** is a member of the Welsh Economy Research Unit at Cardiff Business School, and holds a PhD in the economics of tourism and sport. His research interests have focused around how activities, such as tourism, culture and sport relate to and impact upon both the economy and the physical environment. His work on the development of Tourism Satellite Accounts and Tourism Environmental Accounts has been globally recognised. He is an expert attendee at the UN World Tourism Organisation's Committee for Tourism Economics and Tourism Satellite Account and a member of the British and Irish Section of the Regional Science Association International.

**Dai Davies** is the National Farmers Union Cymru President and the son of a hill farmer. Mr Davies and his wife have a 520 acre dairy farm and a small property letting business. He has had a long association with NFU Cymru having held various offices on a County level as well as being past Council Chairman for Milk Marque and Axis Milk. He is presently the Chairman of his local supply Co-op and a Member of Welsh Water. He is also a preside Magistrate and Deputy Chair of the Carmarthen Bench.

**David Jones** is one of the founders of Eco Cute Heat Pumps Ltd and Green Solutions Wales Ltd. Eco Cute will manufacture in Wales a new range of highly efficient HFC Heat pumps as well as new technology CO2 based Heat pumps. Green Solutions will analyse, train, advise and ensure compliance with energy efficiency for domestic, commercial and public properties.

**Gordon James** is the Director of Friends of the Earth Cymru. He has been actively involved in environmental campaigning for over thirty years specialising mainly in energy and climate issues. Gordon is married with two grown-up children and lives in Pembrokeshire where he is a keen supporter of Narberth RFC.

**Haf Roberts** is the Sustainability Officer for Gwalia Housing in Swansea, and has hands-on experience of building sustainable housing and the path to a zero carbon future. Before this, she was a member of the first Plaid Cymru Policy and Research Team in the Assembly, dealing with the environment portfolio before joining the WWF in Wales as a Policy Officer. She has been a member of Cynnal Cymru's Board for four years.

**Helen Mary Jones** is the Assembly Member for Llanelli. She was born in Colchester, Essex and was educated in Colchester County High School for Girls, Ysgol Uwchradd Llanfair Caereinion and University College Wales, Aberystwyth. Before her election, she worked as a special needs teacher, then as a youth and community worker. She later worked as the Deputy Director of the Equal Opportunities Commission, Wales.

**Helen Northmore** is Head of the Energy Saving Trust in Wales, responsible for working with the media, government, stakeholders, community groups, businesses and the public to encourage action on climate change by reducing energy use.

**Jake Hollyfield** is the Director of the West Wales ECO Centre, where he started working in 1996. He is responsible for the development of its core areas of renewable energy, environmental education, energy efficiency and fuel poverty across rural North, Mid and South West Wales. The ECO Centre currently employs 14 people in two offices.

**Janet Davies** was an Assembly Member for South Wales West from 1999 to 2007, retiring at the 2007 election. She was educated at Howell's School in Llandaff, Trinity College in Carmarthen and the Open University. Janet was a nurse and midwife in the 1960s before becoming a member of Taff Ely Borough Council in 1983, Leader of the Council from 1991, and Mayor between 1995 and 1996. Janet was for a time Plaid Cymru's Director of Elections and is now one of three party members put forward to enter the House of Lords as party nominees for the first time.

**Jill Evans** is a Member of the European Parliament representing the whole of Wales. She was born in Ystrad (the Rhondda). Before being elected, Jill worked as a Research Assistant at the former Polytechnic of Wales where she gained her MPhil. Jill worked for the National Federation of Women's Institutes in Wales for six years before taking up a post as Wales Regional Organiser for CHILD.

**John Dixon** is National Chair of Plaid Cymru, a post held since 2002. He served as a Councillor between 1976 and 1991. He fought Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire in the parliamentary election in 2005 and the Assembly election of 2007, when Plaid were within 250 votes of taking the seat.

**John McClintock** studied agriculture and economics before working in Africa for five years (Malawi, Ethiopia and Senegal). In 1992 he became an official of the European Commission and was posted first to Sierra Leone, then to Poland and in 2000 he was posted to the headquarters of the European Commission in Brussels. Today he is attending in a personal capacity as the author of a book which describes how global problems including climate change can be addressed only if countries share sovereignty in a limited number of areas.

**John Morlais Rowlands** is a former Geography teacher and BBC journalist who has worked for many years in communications for the Environment Agency Wales. He lives in Cardiff and stood for Plaid Cymru in Cardiff South and Penarth during the first Assembly election in 1999 and as parliamentary candidate in Cardiff North in the 2005 General Election.

**Leanne Wood** is an Assembly Member for South Wales Central. Originally from the Rhondda, Leanne was a Cardiff University lecturer prior to being elected as an AM in 2003. She has worked as a support worker for Women's Aid, and as a probation officer. She is a committed socialist and chair of Cwm Cynon Women's Aid co-ordinating committee.

**Llywelyn Rhys** is the Head of BWEA Cymru, the leading wind wave and tidal renewable energy industry body which aims to ensure that Wales successfully meets current and future renewable energy targets. His previous employment includes Principal Officer for Environment Agency Wales, Welsh Policy Developer for the Federation of Small Businesses, and two stints as a Political Officer and Policy Researcher at the National Assembly for Wales.

**Myfanwy Davies** grew up in Llanelli and returned there following periods of living abroad. She read literature at Oxford and then went on to read Social Anthropology. This took her on to a doctorate on the socio-cultural dimensions of maternity information exchanges between Arab Muslim women and London-based health workers. Myfanwy is Plaid's Parliamentary Candidate for Llanelli.

**Nerys Evans** is an Assembly Member for Mid and West Wales. She was born in Llangain, near Carmarthen. Nerys completed her studies at Manchester University. She also achieved a MSc (Welsh Politics) from Cardiff University. Nerys has worked as a Political Officer for Plaid Cymru in the National Assembly and as an Organiser for Plaid in Carmarthen East and Dinefwr.

**Patrick Holden** was brought up in London. He visited a dairy farm near Epping aged five and decided he wanted to milk cows. He studied biodynamic agriculture at Emerson College in 1972 and started a community farm in West Wales in 1973. The holding is now the longest established organic dairy farm in Wales, with a herd of 65 Ayrshire cows the milk from which is being made into an unpasteurized cheese by his son Sam. Patrick still milks his cows at weekends. He has worked for the Soil Association since 1988 and as Director since 1995. During that period income has risen from £200,000 to £10 million and sales of organic food from £50 million to £2 billion. He is a regular broadcaster/speaker and was responsible for Tony and Pat Archer's conversion in 1985 and still advises for the Archers on matters organic. He was awarded the CBE for services to organic farming in January 2005.

**Peter Harper** is the Head of Research and Innovation at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth, where he has worked for 25 years. When confronted by a problem that is physically solvable but politically impossible he usually prefers to stick with the physics.

**Robert Jolliffe** is Chair of Trustees at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. Originally from Mumbles, Swansea, Rob studied Modern History at Keble College, Oxford, graduating in 1983. He spent the next 20 years working in London and Germany within the financial services industry. More recently his focus has shifted towards the environment and education. He lives in Bath, is married and has four children.

**Stephen Tindale** is a writer and co-founder of the [www.climateanswers.info](http://www.climateanswers.info) website. He is a climate and energy consultant who has worked on climate change for the last 20 years. In the past his roles have included Executive Director of Greenpeace UK and chair of the Greenpeace European Unit, adviser to UK Environment Minister Michael Meacher, lecturer in Environmental Politics at Birkbeck College, University of London, Senior Research Fellow on environment and energy at the Institute for Public Policy Research, Policy Adviser to Shadow Environment Secretary Chris Smith and secretary of the Labour Party Policy Commission on the Environment, which produced In Trust for Tomorrow and Diplomat for the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. His current portfolio includes work for npower renewables, 2041 (the campaign to protect Antarctica). He is also a Visiting Fellow at the Policy Studies Institute.



**Vicky Moller** has had a 50 year relationship with Wales during which time she has been involved in hill farming, self-sufficiency, community living and alternative living. She has been Director of Political Education with Plaid Cymru on the National Executive and since 1998 she has been a writer on everything green. She runs popular Transition projects with her family and neighbourhood.

## Stalls

**theARCproject** (Assisted Recycling for Communities) is a micro-business operating as a not-for-profit social enterprise within the waste management and environment sector. The project seeks to support the sustainable development goals of Carmarthenshire. Established as a community interest company, theARCproject is designed to enable shared economic support, social progress and environmental improvement through communities and neighbourhoods across the towns, villages and hamlets of Carmarthenshire. For more information, please see <http://thearcproject.co.cc>.

**Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries European Marine Site (EMS)** is part of a European-wide network of areas - the Natura 2000 series - designated under the European Union's Habitats and Birds Directives to safeguard habitats and species that are important and threatened on a European scale. For more information, please see <http://www.cbeems.org.uk/>.

**The Community Development Foundation** is a leading source of intelligence, guidance and delivery on community development across the UK. CDF Wales' main role is to work with partners throughout Wales to influence, support and strengthen good community development practice and policies. For more information, please see <http://www.cdf.org.uk>.

**Eco-Schools** is an international award programme that guides schools on their sustainable journey, providing a framework to help embed these principles into the heart of school life. For more information, please see <http://www.eco-schoolswales.org.uk>.

**The Environmental Network for Pembrokeshire (TENP)** is a grouping of member organisations from the voluntary sector with the aim of participating in and contributing to the formulation and implementation of policy impacting on the environment by engaging with the statutory and business sectors on behalf of its members. For more information, please see <http://www.tenp.org.uk/>.

**Esteam (Environmental Sustainability Team)** is a not-for-profit organisation. They provide work experience, training and education to people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. Esteam is based at The Warren near Pembroke. It operates a variety of environmental projects (on and off site), and provides a wide range of Open College Network courses. For more information, please see <http://www.esteempems.co.uk/>.

**The Federation of City Farms & Gardens** exists to support, represent and promote community-managed farms and gardens across the United Kingdom. They are a registered charity which supports, represents and promotes community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other green spaces,

creating opportunities for local communities to grow. For more information, please see <http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/>.

**Green Solutions Wales** will analyse, train, advise and ensure compliance with energy efficiency for domestic, commercial and public properties, while **Eco Cute Heat Pumps Ltd** will manufacture in Wales a new range of highly efficient HFC Heat pumps as well as new technology CO2 based Heat pumps. For more information, please email David Jones on [zen110943@zen.co.uk](mailto:zen110943@zen.co.uk).

**Healthy Planet** is a UK charity which was been created to inspire, encourage and support individuals and businesses around the world to make a difference to themselves, their children and the planet. For more information, please see <http://www.healthyplanet.org/>.

**The Institute of Welsh Affairs** is an independent think-tank that promotes quality research and informed debate aimed at making Wales a better nation in which to work and live. They commission research, publish reports and policy papers, and organise events across Wales. For more information, please see <http://www.iwa.org.uk/>.

**Keep Wales Tidy** encourages other people to engage in effective action to maintain a cleaner, safer, tidier Wales. This involves encouraging people to behave in a responsible manner and encouraging people to take responsibility for their own local environment. Keep Wales Tidy seeks to identify and share good practice to ensure that it supports effective action. For more information, please see <http://www.keepwalestidy.org/>.

**Menter Cwm Gwendraeth** is an organisation working towards sustainable communities in the Gwendraeth Valley, Carmarthenshire. They are active in community regeneration, safeguarding the environment and ensuring sustainability, ensuring access to lifelong learning and education, giving children and young people the choice to contribute to their communities, improving local health and wellbeing and working to make communities safer. MCG also works as Carmarthenshire County Council's Community Development Area Ambassadors for the Gwendraeth Area. For more information, see <http://www.mentercwmgwendraeth.org/index.html>.

**Y Papur Gwyrdd** (The Green Paper) is a bi-monthly Welsh language ecological journal which is a forum for news and ideas bringing together people, community and the Earth. For more information, please see <http://www.ypapurgwyrdd.com/>.

**The Programme for Community Regeneration** at the University of Glamorgan operates in a number of fields of Community Regeneration. As well as a commitment to teaching at the University of Glamorgan, they also undertake research into issues concerning community regeneration, as well as offering

training and consultancy for community groups, voluntary organisations, statutory agencies and government. For more information, please see <http://regeneration.research.glam.ac.uk/>.

**Science Shops Wales** carries out free or very low cost research with and on behalf of local community groups. They carry out projects on topics such as the environment, health, social problems, and even history and law. They also produce a range of easy-to-use leaflets covering some of the many topics raised by their projects. For more information, please see <http://www.scienceshopsales.org.uk/>.

**Synnwyr Busnes – Business Sense** is a specialist support service on sustainable development. They work with businesses and other organisations, in Wales and beyond and are based at Bangor University, but have a network of experts located across Wales. For more information, please see <http://www.sbbs.org.uk/>.

**Sustainable Wales** is an independent charity passionate about encouraging sustainable lifestyles at a community level achievable by thinking globally while acting locally. They seek to foster behavioural change, offering practical solutions and guidance that are replicable, to support that change. For more information, please see <http://www.sustainablewales.org/>.

**Sustrans** is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity. Their vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. They working on practical, innovative ways of dealing with the transport challenges that affect us all. For more information, please see <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/>.

**Transition Cwm Gwendraeth**, as part of the ever growing Transition Town Network, aims to tackle the twin challenges of Peak Oil and Climate Change, with the view of bringing the community together once again. Transition Cwm Gwendraeth will demonstrate what skills will need to be re-learnt by all to become resilient to external pressures. For more information, please see <http://www.transitiontowns.org/>.

**WDS Environment** specialise in the provision of renewable energy and water solutions for domestic and commercial customers, using proven and innovative technology. They aim to provide efficient, environmentally friendly and cost-effective systems by working in partnership with customers. For more information, please see <http://www.wdsenvironmental.co.uk/>.

## Morning Session

Dr. Myfanwy Davies, Plaid Director of Political Education, welcomed delegates to the conference and introduced Adam Price MP, Plaid Director of Elections, to open the morning session.

### Plenary: Painting the World Green

Adam Price MP welcomed delegates to the National Botanic Garden. He opened his remarks by pointing out that the economic crisis was also an environmental crisis outlining the tremendous epochal challenge that climate change poses to humanity. Referring to the US, Adam Price remarked how Barack Obama's new science advisor has emphasised that we're only six years away from the disappearance of permafrost and that the head of NASA has argued that we're only four years away from climate change. Indeed, the scale of the challenge is so large that it could lead people to feel that they couldn't do anything – it is imperative that they should not feel this way. He pointed out that the usual mantra for the environmental movement is to 'paint the world green' – however, there was a growing consensus that the world should, in fact, be painted white! The reflective effect of light on urban buildings could save carbon to displace emissions.

Research international examples of responses to climate change and consider effectiveness of proposals. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Adam Price emphasised the need for creative ideas to deal with this problem at both a local and national level in Wales. The most important outcome for this day was the need to leave re-empowered and to identify those small steps that we could take as individuals and as nations all across the world. This would be a discursive day. There would be open discussion and no-one should be afraid of sharing ideas, however unpopular they might be. Adam Price thanked the National Botanic Garden for agreeing to host the Conference and welcomed the Chair of the National Botanic Garden, Rob Jolliffe, whom he described as a creative intellectual to outline the work of the Gardens.

### Rob Jolliffe: Why Plants Matter

Rob Jolliffe began by referring to the need to fuse environmentalism with the work of the National Botanic Garden which has been in existence since 2000. Rob explained that all life forms are at their most vulnerable in their early years and that this was also true of the Garden. He went on to suggest that the Garden had struggled to make a deep impact initially partly because the word 'botanic' can sound elitist and distant. Furthermore, the vision for why Wales needed the Garden was poorly articulated in the early years. The National Botanic Garden is important to Wales as a national institution in its own right. If

England, Scotland and Ireland have National Botanic Gardens, then why shouldn't Wales?

There is also a need to protect indigenous, Welsh endangered plants here in Wales. Yet why does this matter? Why do plants matter? Well, plants are integral to human life (they feed and clothe us for instance). But, most people suffer from 'plant blindness'. That is, most people overlook the relationship between humanity and plants. But this should not be an academic exercise. There's no point in conserving plants if there is no audience to listen to why this matters. That's why the National Botanic Garden is investing more in educational programmes for children on promoting a sustainable way of living and is working very closely, for instance, with Climate Change Wales (CCW) in order to establish an interpretation centre. The interpretation centre will open up Wales' wild landscapes, its nature reserves and parks, and act as an entry point to promoting the Welsh countryside.

This all matters because educating the people of Wales about combating climate change is integral to winning the fight. We simply cannot have a sceptical public. We need science to help society to understand the threats of global warming. The aim of the National Botanic Garden is to transform the people of Wales into the most environmentally-literate in the world. Wales should be green, confident and progressive ... like the National Botanic Garden.

Establish awareness campaign around climate change and environmental literacy with emphasis on schools. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

## Panel 1: Eat Your Greens

Leanne Wood AM  
with  
Steve Garrett, Cultural Concerns  
Peter Harper, Centre for Alternative Technology  
Patrick Holden, Soil Association

Steve Garrett runs three Farmers' Markets as a social enterprise in Riverside and Roath, Cardiff and in Newport. He referred to the relevance of food to sustainability and a green economy citing Cardiff County Council's research which had shown that food is the number one contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. So, the choices about what we eat and where it comes from are particularly salient to this debate. The attractive thing about this is that these are choices that we **can** make. Steve is drawn to the practicality of something that everyone can respond to. Ordinary people can make that positive choice in terms of where they buy and what they eat. The three key things are:

1. We should *not* waste food – 30% of food is currently wasted.
2. We should eat seasonal produce – e.g. no strawberries in December.
3. We should eat less meat.

These three things, if followed, would have a 90% impact on cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Fresh local food delivers economically, environmentally and is also hedonistic! Of course, there are a number of models of delivery and a Farmers' Market is one such model. There are others such as 'Growing Communities' (a project based in urban parks in Hackney where people are growing food locally). Cuba is another such model of urban localised food production.

Research 'Growing Communities' and other models of urban food production. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Steve emphasised the need for political will in order to release local land for food production and to train people to be able to grow given that this skill set was being lost. Steve referred to the virtuous triangle (Research & Development, local grassroots organisations and government investment). This Green New Deal would promote a different kind of growth which was not predicated on risk, personalised debt, over-valued assets.

Articulate Green New Deal with emphasis on sustainability and need for capitalism to change course. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Patrick Holden began by referring to the need for change. The credit crunch could lead to a food crunch and argued that the collapse of global financial

systems can be seen as a metaphor for the vulnerability of food production. Quite simply, we've been living beyond our means. We've been treating environmental capital as income for far too long. We are not treating soil, water and minerals in a sustainable way.

Consider solutions to Food Crunch. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Four additional factors need consideration when thinking about the food crunch:

1. Climate change and the need to fundamentally change food systems.
2. Population growth and the need for more food.
3. Depletion of environmental capital (soil, water, minerals).
4. The need to build resilience into food system.

Worse still, in five to ten years things could go seriously wrong with a food crisis which could threaten civil society. Conflict over food due to peak oil could lead to major breakdown. We therefore need a strategic plan for food systems based on the proximity principle and local food production.

Prioritise strategic planning for delivery of food and local food production with prioritisation of Proximity Principle. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Patrick also talked about carbon neutrality, the move away from nitrogen fertility and the consumption of less white meat and more red meat with more beef and sheep. Food should be transported using rail as in Switzerland. There should be a change in diet – with more vegetables, priority to seasonality, re-skilling the next generation of young people coming into agriculture to ensure that a career in food and farming needs to be made attractive.

Prioritise the up-skilling of young people in agriculture. Incentivize careers in food and farming for young people. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

As long as people want to eat produce that can't be grown in Wales (coffee, bananas etc) it's important that fairly-traded produce are prioritised for non-indigenous products. That principle needs to be applied at World Trade Organisation level.

Promote and support Fair Trade Wales model. [Existing Plaid policy]

Patrick talked about a project called 'Food for Life' which promotes changing procurement policies for schools and the public sector and explained that nearly 50% of food eaten is caterer-based. There is a huge opportunity for re-localising food production. The Soil Association is trying to support farmers and to help

retailers too. He argued that change is indeed coming from the bottom-up. As a society, we need fundamentally new models as transition is going to be very challenging.

Develop and implement procurement policy. Ask Plaid Council Groups to investigate procurement policies and all other Elected Groups. [Existing Plaid policy & Direct Action]

Peter Harper began by explaining that CAT is obsessed with climate change which is tremendously urgent. The food system remains a significant percentage of the problem. How do you maintain a sustainable food system? Of course, the transition is likely to involve huge change for Wales's rural economy. The transition process is critical for land and rural landscape. Cities depend on countryside for food and energy. Energy is produced in the countryside which has a profound impact on landscape, lifestyles and patterns of living. More people will move to countryside as labour becomes a more valuable commodity. Farmers could be paid to manage carbon and rules of engagement will differ and change. CAP regulations will be transformed which will find its way to local communities.

CAP reform. Ensure current Plaid policy recognises need for food systems to change. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

We need new sustainable Jamie Olivers and a transformation at all levels (the Fife Diet was discussed – what about a Carmarthenshire Diet for example?). This change needs partnership between consumers, producers and retailers – how about a farm restaurant at the National Botanic Garden?!

Develop the Carmarthenshire Diet. [Develop Plaid policy & Direct Action]

Leanne Wood AM opened the floor to questions:

Question 1: To what extent are you aware that the sector represented by the supermarket chains are cognisant of the need for change as influential agents because they don't seem, according to your analysis, to have a future. Are they planning for it?

Answer: Supermarkets are aware of climate change and the need to reduce emissions but are NOT aware of the scale of the problem – they're probably in denial. How can supermarkets morph to adapt? Are they willing to change distribution channels? Probably not.

Question 2: There's an undisputed lack of allotment land locally – what can government do?

Answer: The 1908 Allotment Act includes an obligation to provide land for allotment use but Local Councils often don't provide land for allotments. There is a need for political action and a need to ensure people have the right to allotment land. Leanne referred to the Cuban government making land available to people – but that right comes with responsibility.

Explore the possibility of creating a right for people to have access to allotment land through Plaid Assembly Group. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Question 3: How do we return to rural living? How do we get young people back into countryside not 'theme park Wales'? Zero-carbon homes at a reasonable price must be provided in the countryside. There's a need to address this through local planning systems. Plaid is in prime position to deal with this at government level.

Recognising the importance of vibrant communities, we need to promote affordable housing and zero-carbon homes in both rural and urban Wales. [Existing Plaid policy]

Question 4: What is the future of perennial crops in local agriculture?

Research perennial crops and suitability in Wales. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Patrick Holden explained that we certainly need to shift towards perennial crops. We should eat less meat and should not be feeding cereals to animals. Permanent grassland are carbon sinks. The carbon that it sequesters counter-balances methane emission – yet an obsession with methane is too simplistic. Which perennial crops will work in Wales? Perennial crops could be a very good thing. Alternative to pasture is ungrazed pasture which turns back to woodland. Different types of woody crops which are there all the time. We should plant more fruit trees!

Question 5: There's a need for radical change from civil society on the ground and from politicians. Plaid Cymru as a political party will need to tackle the issue of whether we can achieve prosperity without growth. There is a need for political powers to set an agenda for a sustainable economy. How can Plaid do that?

Leanne Wood commented that we need to win the economic argument and that we had a job to do in Wales.

Patrick Holden retorted: “We’re not all doomed!” Political parties have to listen to the majority and so there’s a role for civil society to do a ‘hearts and minds’ campaign for the people of Wales.

Steve Garrett said that there was plenty of money for bureaucratic things. What’s needed is an accessible investment food fund to get things happening locally.

Investigate the establishment of accessible investment food fund to support local food production projects. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

## **Panel 2: The Economy and the Environment – Two Sides of the Same Coin?**

Dr. Myfanwy Davies  
with  
Andy Middleton, TYF  
Professor Alison Tickell, Julie's Bicycle  
Dr. Calvin Jones, Cardiff University

Dr. Myfanwy Davies outlined how the economic crisis and environmental crisis are both defining issues for our generation and so there should be a dual response to crisis without sacrificing social justice and environmentalism.

Alison Tickell referred to the sector she was most familiar with: the creative industries sector. Most companies are micro and SME and therefore have double challenge: the economic disaster and sustainability practices. Companies that are interested in working out practical solutions and bringing down carbon emissions need to be encouraged far more comprehensively in the UK government budget. What would a low-carbon sector look like in industry? This needs a robust fiscal stimulus. The scale of support and resources needed must go up a gear. The government is currently offering no support to change industry to low-carbon industry and the switch will be harder after from now on in the context of an economy that's in free fall.

Andy Middleton referred to the need for business to respond to the crisis. he argued that the technology for change is largely available but that we lack the leadership required to make a difference. We need people to work together across politics, business and civil society etc. Good businesses should be measured by their lack of impact on the environment.

**Incentivise good business practices in sustainability and/or disincentivise bad business practices. [Develop existing Plaid policy]**

We must move people, planet, profit from triple bottom-line accounting to top-line planning and development. There's a need for a more joined-up approach between economists and environmentalists. Environmentalists need to take into account psychology to understand human motivation and also business and accounting so that sustainability is streamlined into business practices and vice versa.

**Develop policy so that business and accounting students do compulsory module on sustainability in curriculum so that they better deliver green, sustainable budgets. [Develop existing Plaid policy]**

Develop policy so that environmental students study marketing and psychology in order to better convey climate change challenge. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Andy Middleton referred to bio-mimicry. Bio-mimicry is the art of bringing nature to the design table. Nature makes ceramics that dissolve back into nature yet carpets and chairs last 5000 years! We must learn to turn every single resource into something that can go back to nature.

Research bio-mimicry. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Things should not go to landfill. Ecological literacy needs to be taught in schools.

Promote ecological literacy in schools. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

From business we need planning. There is a collective failure to plan for this. Budget-minded and business-minded people need to make these things happen. Andy Middleton referred to the need for a “crap plan” to be created given that any plan was better than none at all! At what stage do 40,000 Welsh public managers start managing their budgets in a sustainable way?

Consider ways of ensuring that managers start managing budgets sustainably and forward-plan with the environment in mind. How to achieve? [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Andy referred to the ‘One Million Hours’ project which is a project for young people in Wales. He recognised that this change could only come about through community action which is key to the whole debate.

Dr. Calvin Jones began by discussing the impact of the economy on the environment. Recession is a net bad thing for the environment. Many environmental plans (wind power, bio-fuel etc. are beginning to look unviable in economic terms). BP, for instance, is cutting exploration of research and development (R&D) in renewables. Given that oil is likely to plateau by 2020, the problem of peak oil is incredibly stark. R&D in renewable energy sources isn’t becoming profitable because companies want to keep the money they have and not use existing resources to fund R&D in renewable energy sources. We need to plan for next recession not this one.

Consider long-term economic planning. How to cope with the next recession? What’s the roadmap of economic recovery? [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Calvin expressed concern that the environmental movement is not making any capital out of this situation. Despite corporate social responsibility, our economy

is still all about growth and perhaps we need to investigate alternatives. Calvin used the metaphor of a Russian Doll with its various layers to highlight the integrated nature of the problem (the Environment within Society within the Economy). As a society, we need to learn from overseas and consider international best practice.

Prepare paper for consultation looking at international best practice where sustainable economies flourish. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Imagine what the economy would look like if it was a sub-set of the environment. We need to start mapping out mosaic of projects globally. The global price of carbon is one thing that will create tipping point and force the issue as well.

Dr. Myfanwy Davies opened the floor to questions:

Question 1: Would Panel agree that quality of life is being mixed up with economy and prosperity? Do you need a high-level of disposable income in order to have quality of life? Consumer-obsessed society drives quality of life at present and we need to revise that.

Consider failings of current economic model. Consider ways of how to deal with climate change's image problem. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Question 2: Wales has fantastic natural resource which could be exploited to promote economic growth BUT lack of positive support from government. Could Wales do well out of exploiting its natural resources?

Answer: Yes, Wales has a comparable advantage in terms of renewables. Renewable sector is a very small sector in Wales and isn't big enough to fill the gap from losses in call centres etc. But large-scale planning remains a Westminster issue.

Develop policy which ensures that there's more support for renewable energy policies from government at all levels. [Existing Plaid policy]

Devolve all energy policy. [Existing Plaid policy]

Question 3: What are the new core values upon which we want to build a new society and community? What are these core principles and values?

Articulate values of new society. [Existing Plaid policy]

Answer: Andy Middleton referred to Bio-mimicry. Need to ask students to have a lot more experience of pitching their ideas to politicians.

Experiment with Dragon Den-style approach to developing sustainable projects for young people (on a *Young Enterprise* model for instance) as part of apprenticeship programme. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Question 4: Denmark and Sweden are at the vanguard of both environmental and economic justice through income redistribution. How do you get a grip on income redistribution?

Answer: Myfanwy Davies argued that inequalities in income lead to inequalities in health, wellbeing and happiness. But we can't raise our taxes here in Wales.

Calvin Jones argued that the key reason that lots of people are rich is because they don't work. Rather they make their money through investment. Growth directive is based on 'something for nothing'. A more sustainable economy is more linked to direct labour.

Redistribution of wealth based on decentralised socialism. Social justice as key. [Existing Plaid policy]

Question 5: Looking at frantic lifestyle, who's going to be brave enough to slow down? 4-day week has arguably led to better quality of life because people have more time. Sustainable economy must be predicated on going slower. Should we work fewer hours in order to find time to enjoy life?

Explore *Cittaslow* movement and possibility of adopting programme in parts of Wales. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Answer: What's the nature of our civilisation? What can I do as an individual? Am I prepared to stop flying? Have I switched to green tariff electricity? People can give 1% Tax to the Planet - voluntary tax can be a positive choice.

Promote 1% tax for the Planet as voluntary choice. Also, PCHQ to look at investing 1% of its annual budget in sustainable practices (can't give money to charity by law). [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Alison referred to the need for slowing down. Living a life that reflects new values. Her industry has taken on voluntary reduction targets.

Calvin Jones is coming to the conclusion that there's a need for an international structure. A 1% climate change tax for Wales (for all companies and individuals) would cover the targets espoused in Stern Report. Political parties need to take the lead. Is Plaid bold enough?

Explore 1% tax rate for companies and/or individuals in Wales.  
[Consider developing Plaid policy]

### Panel 3: Green Technology and Natural Resources in Wales

Nerys Evans AM

with

Jake Hollyfield, West Wales ECO Centre

John Morlais Rowland, Environment Agency

Haf Roberts, Gwalia Housing

Haf explained that some issues need to be discussed: what are the frustrations of green technology development? What is our role as individuals? What is the role of government at every level?

Jake Hollyfield began by noting that all these issues are linked. His ECO Centre in West Wales is second to CAT in terms of its size and remit. It's a community, grassroots organisation advising individuals on how to cut emissions. With risk of fuel poverty, this is something which matters to people in their daily lives. Their aim is to campaign positively and not whinge in order to ameliorate local conditions. As a result of that community group, energy saving and viable alternative energy workshops and presentations are integral to the organisation's work. The ECO Centre uses a wood stove, a solar PV system, rainwater harvesting systems – practical-based organisation. It was seen as on the fringe and radical initially but now it's seen as more mainstream.

Develop policy which recognises need for national body in Wales to advise individuals and businesses on sustainability (insulation etc).  
[Develop existing Plaid policy]

It's the actual, physical outcomes that matter – access to renewable energy (solar hot water / integrating new technologies). How do we provide advise locally in the absence of a Wales-wide supporting body? There's a necessary role therefore for local organisations and lobbying work is required. There needs to be a clear commitment from government because there's a tangible gap between aspirations and delivery. Increasing levels of renewable energy take-up is difficult as there are barriers (price / planning process / lack of knowledge).

Our behaviour has got to change and so the question is: how do we incentivise that change?

Jake referred to feed-in tariffs (via the Climate Change Bill). This is important because individuals look at cost and pay-back. Benefits of feed-in tariff to Wales need to be researched and developed.

Develop policy on the benefits of Feed-in tariffs for Wales. [Existing Plaid policy]

The second recession will relate to the price of energy (as opposed to the financial sector) given finite nature of fossil fuel. The renewable energy could provide the basis for a minor recovery. There are emerging technologies – and other tools (smart metering etc.) – that need to be explored.

Develop smart metering technology policy and other possible technological tools. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Need to incentivise lower utility bills by reducing costs of baseline so that people leave heating off for less.

Develop policy on incentivising lower utility bills through less intensive usage. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Enforcement of energy efficiency rules and localisation of energy generation are integral. This situation needs radical action. The frustration in the sector is with climate change being urgent all the time but with very little action. Plaid needs to be brave in terms of electoral pledges to the people of Wales.

John Morlais Rowland explained that elements remind us of the problem as we sit here in our tent of climate change! Farmers used to have to milk cows by hand into a bucket, and have by now to think of a day when there will be no cows or sheep. The need is urgent and our mindset has to change.

He explained that he was not at the event to represent the Environment Agency. It was important to keep sight of what was happening at the Labour Spring Conference, happening the same day in Swansea. All parties must cooperate on this agenda.

Establish cross-party Climate Change Group at National Assembly for Wales. [Develop Plaid Policy and Direct Action]

1. We need to be radical.
2. We need social benefits to be felt across the world.
3. We need to take economic opportunities.

Welsh scientists, together with scientists from Scandinavia, discovered the acid rain problem a quarter of a century ago. Very rapid deterioration in insect life, etc., as a result of airborne chemicals. Acid rain rather than climate change was the major problem then. Technology was put into the coal-fired power stations to seek to alleviate the problem of acid rain. Continues to be a problem. Lime is put into rivers. The timescale is much shorter in regards to climate change. It's as if we were on a sinking ship.

How radical do we have to be? 'Save the world from capitalism' (Evo Morales, Bolivia, coming from the indigenous tradition). Have to fight against much larger forces in order to achieve social change. Need for self-government. We need to look to South America. A need to campaign for self-determination on the type of energy policy we need. We need to have the right, NOT a 50 megawatt threshold. We are a mature society and it would be good if we would have to make a decision to force the issue. River Severn (discussion for another time).

Change and social welfare. Sustainable development for the world. Green movements and faith movements co-operate. What are neglected when moving towards sustainability are principles and the type of principles we need. In respect of sustainable energy, research shows that sea-based wind energy is the most profitable. This is the most obvious practical contribution that Wales has to make. Carbon capture is not possible in Wales because of our geology. Aberthaw will have to close sooner or later.

WylfaB turning into WylfaC? Renewable energy has not had the necessary investment or support. A partnership is needed between government and the private sector. The private sector in itself is not sufficient.

Create jobs through the wind energy industry. Airbus (6000 posts on Deeside). The industry already has the expertise to manufacture windmills (the skills needed are the same). Need for international co-operation.

Map out potential for renewable-energy jobs in Wales based on existing infrastructure. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

"Only after the last tree is cut down.....only then will you see that you cannot eat money"

Haf Roberts: innovation within the social housing sector in regard to dealing with fuel poverty. Tai Gwalia.

An opportunity here today to take advantage of the party's radicalism. With the economy in recession, Plaid has an opportunity to decide which path to follow.

Wales has very rich natural resources  
The technology is NOT new (CAT etc). Gwalia have been using solar panels for nearly 20 years. They are new to most of us. Heat pumps are the new technology. There should be no further delay.

Develop policy with regard to new technology such as Heat Pumps. [Existing Plaid policy]

Green technology is relevant to housing (regarding the Sustainable Homes Code):

1. Zero Carbon Houses: green technology must be looked at for any house on level 6. Insulation (green technology – district heating).
2. Recommendation / Appeal – working in an Energy Services Company: use business in order to have community management).

#### Forum for Exchanging Ideas

Awareness Raising Programme concerning the challenges ahead of us. Obviously there is interest in the areas. Plaid and its Councillors have a responsibility, e.g., to support local applications. Skills necessary as the demand for new technology increases. Opinion is that enough young people will need to be skilled in the area (installation of solar panel).

Existing housing stock – renovation of existing houses makes the aim very difficult.

Nerys Evans AM opened the floor to questions:

Question 1: Has a new Sustainable Energy Plant been turned down as part of planning policy? (Coed Bach is going to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate at the Assembly).

**Nerys Evans AM to investigate. [Direct Action]**

Question 2: Knee-jerk opposition in green sector e.g. bio-technology (many advances in this sector in Wales). GM-free? Where is the voice of independent assessment that can speak into government?

**Need for independent scientific advisor to Welsh government. [Existing Plaid policy]**

John commented on the lack of R&D capacity in Wales as a peripheral economy. The system is currently too London-centric and there is a need for more leadership. Academic sector is very important, but it's only happening on a small scale in Wales.

**Explore possibility of Climate Change Champion within government? [Develop existing Plaid policy]**

Haf added that there was certainly a need for an independent voice. Currently, there's lack of perspective following the death of Phil Williams AM. He leaves a legacy for Plaid. Micro and macro considerations. Where does bio-mass fit in?

Mix of technology. Need mix of small-scale and large-scale. Need rapid move towards deployment of new technologies.

Jake noted how persuading people to take-up renewables is difficult at any level.

Nerys Evans argued that there should be a better cross-portfolio look at need to think about thinking outside the portfolio silo.

Question 3: Paul Sambrook explained that he was pleased to see Plaid being challenged. Working in the heritage area. No double glazing in Conservation Areas, and no solar panels either. Plaid could change this. You cannot preserve the past without safeguarding the future!

Need to change planning policy in favour of measures that mitigate climate change as opposed to prioritising conservation. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Haf Roberts pointed out that there is an obvious tension between visual conservation and reducing emissions. Technology has provided the answer because it is possible to have new windows which fit into existing windows. Technology has been able to move on.

We have a responsibility to weigh up the subject under discussion. There is a tension between the visual aesthetic and renewable technology.

John Morlais Rowlands explained that Plaid AMs need to do more work in scrutinising some of these regulations. Necessary because of global warming. Need to look at the barriers. Westminster laws have not changed for 400 years!

Jake noted how there was a disconnect between the planning imperative in conservation and people's desire to lower carbon emissions. There is a need for a robust planning process that can keep up with the modern exigencies of daily life. The wheels of government are turning too slowly.

There's a need for streamlining sustainability. Procurement and sustainability. School Buses in Caerphilly are a positive example of this. Saving money and cleaner in terms of emissions. Price, quality and sustainability.

Ensure that public fleet of buses, vans, lorries etc are low-carbon emitting. [Existing Plaid policy]

Question 3: People are keen to adopt micro hydro systems but there are huge Environmental Impact Assessment costs that act as a disincentive. This acts as a barrier to people adopting. How can these barriers be overcome?

John gave an insight into the Environment Agency's thinking (although he wasn't there on behalf of EA). The LNG example underlined how any public body needs to operate within guidelines laid down in primary legislation. This is a decision that has by-passed the planning process. There's also the danger of appeal – decisions are scrutinised carefully and so processes need to be robust.

Nerys Evans AM noted the need for momentum, urgency and funding streams to match policy. There's also a need change to planning procedures. For Plaid, the fact that Wales doesn't have the powers to determine proposals over 50 megawatt was clearly problematic.

## Afternoon Session

Nerys Evans AM welcomed delegates and speakers back from lunch and invited Cllr. Arwel Lloyd to introduce the first afternoon panel.

### Panel 4: Local Action, Green Results

Cllr. Arwel Lloyd

with

Helen Northmore, Energy Agency Brian Walters, Farmers' Union of Wales

Gordon James, Friends of the Earth Cymru

Councillor Arwel Lloyd extended a welcome. Referred to the discussions at this morning's session. He referred to the need to act locally as communities: save energy, waste less, support local producers. He went on to say that "Think Globally, Act Locally" was the mantra of the founder of Friends of the Earth.

Helen Northmore emphasised the need for local green Action on the council level in Wales and the need for individual action at a local level too. Everyone needs to live more sustainably and change the way they live their lives. So what can councils do to lead that approach?

There needs to be a strategic approach to service delivery – councils must use their community leadership role with climate change at the centre of everything they do (reducing carbon emissions / reducing waste / setting action plans). Carbon emission reductions need to be taken seriously in County Hall.

Councils are also social landlords. How do they improve their housing stock? 25% of all emissions come from homes. 80% reduction target by 2050 must be achieved.<sup>2</sup> Councils are currently discussing their Local Development Plans which impacts on the Wales Spatial Plan.

People need to be encouraged, where possible, to live close to where they work. Being able to walk to work and reducing car-use is critical. Educational role through councils – working with children is a priority (environmental awareness needs to become natural behaviour before they're at an age to own their own home).

**Encourage Walk to Work programmes. [Develop existing Plaid policy]**

Community leadership is perhaps the most difficult issue. The conundrum is with the "I will if you will" principle. Why should an individual make changes if their Local Authority won't make the change? Governments need to promote change by behaviour. Some are doing innovative work. Lots of best practice example which needs to be communicated to people.

Ensure that Councils undertake energy audit / carbon mapping in order to assess need for change. [Existing Plaid policy]

The planning system needs to be developed for sustainable, integrated transport. Public transport if an option should always be prioritised (but it isn't always an option e.g. rural Wales. Further, the road system needs to encourage people to drive efficiently.

Council responsibilities: leisure centres / schools etc. 'The Carbon Trust' wants to see Local Authority Carbon Management Programmes in place. This should yield more resources for Councils and more money could be spent on frontline services if not wasted (e.g. council staff switching computers off at night and council procurement policy). In sum therefore, Local Authorities have a very important role in encouraging community action.

Gordon James began by thanking Plaid Cymru for the opportunity. He remarked that Friends of the Earth Cymru and Plaid don't always agree but they do agree a lot of the time. The current situation is frightening. Economy, education and health are prioritised but there can be nothing more important than the natural environment and we're degrading it at the rate of knots: wildlife is being diminished / air pollution is at a high / deforestation is happening on a large scale. So the biggest threat of all to humanity is climate change.

We need to get real about the issue. We need to confront the issue. We have five years to react. Climate change was first made public 21 years ago by Margaret Thatcher (advised by John Horton). There are grave implications for future generations. There can be nothing more important than having children. Can we bring children into the world? The film 'The Age of Stupid' encapsulates the challenge that we face. The Stern Report provides an answer: one percent of GDP to provide our children with a bright future.

Watch 'Age of Stupid' in Plaid Cymru Conference. [Direct Action]

Technologies do already exist. People need to stop flying. People need to use public transport. Plaid should therefore organise conferences which are accessible by public transport! There should be less meat. Plastic bags should be banned.

Impose Plastic Bag Tax. [Existing Plaid policy]

There's a need to get political. There's a need to influence politicians. Everyone should meet their Councillors, AMs, MPs, MEPs and challenge them on climate change.

Gordon James articulated his opposition to nuclear energy, arguing that it diverts valuable funding and resources away from renewables. Nor should there be investment in coal. He defended wind power, referring to the impeccable record of former Plaid Cymru AM, Cynog Dafis. He urged MPs to support EDM 845 for a Bill to Parliament. He noted that change in the dairy and meat industry was inevitable.

### Support Early Day Motion 845. [Direct Action]

Gordon James mentioned that the best example of local individual action was the Climate Change Action Bill. But there was still a need to watch politicians like hawks.

Brian Walters observed the audience looked rather depressed by now! No cows! 4-day week! What are farmers going to do? Where are you going to buy milk from? Europe? China? Need local food production and need support for local producers.

### Support local food production. [Existing Plaid policy]

Brian Walters, representing the Farmers' Union of Wales, uses 500,000 gallons of slurry on his farm. He's now going back to organic methodology as the system that he's chosen. He also makes use of clover. Concerned about movement of food and drink across the world.

- 1) Local produce campaign launched at the Show – need to make use of this regularly. Increase the percentage of locally produced foods.
- 2) Local Purchasing/ Procurement Policy. Use of barley to brew local beer.
- 3) Fair Trade: lauched at the Winter Show at Builth. Emphasis on buying local produce, and if this is not available, then use Fair Trade.

The international situation for farmers is in crisis, and certainly worse in some countries as compared with Wales.

Only 19% of the MOD's lamb comes from the UK.

Farmers are ready for change ... if there's the need and if there's money in it! They also need political leadership. He referred to the role of multinational companies and their profit-motivation. Farmers have had to change already. Brian Walters finished by noting that "finding a new way of doing an old job is progress".

Cllr Arwel Lloyd opened the floor to questions:

Question 1 : Shouldn't we support small-scale farming? People need to be fed. How do you do that by not ploughing fields?

Answer: Gordon James said he was referring to intensive mass farming of certain crops such as soya in South America (not your local Wales-based family farm).

Develop policy which demotes the serving of intensely-produced produce, such as soya from South America, in Welsh public sector. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Question 2: 50% of journeys by car are less than 2 miles. There is therefore little need for either cars or public transport. How can we further develop cycle tracks in order to promote cycling?

Encourage more cycle tracks. [Existing Plaid policy]

Helen Northmore alluded to the travel hierarchy which should be available to all. This consisted of:

1. Walking / cycling (most important)
- ↓
2. Public transport
- ↓
3. Cars (as a last resort)

There should be more money spent on developing green cars. There is a need to make behavioural changes so that alternative choices became easier and more attractive to people.

Encourage Green Cars and the consider the merits of the Scrappage scheme. [Existing Plaid policy]

Question 3: Can you give an example of being the change you want to see?

Brian Walters said that not using fertiliser on his farm was one positive change that he'd made.

Helen Northmore had a list of changes ranging from changing her car to a low-carbon emitting car to taking showers not baths to putting lights off and noted how she was also financially motivated to do this. She would also be going on holiday to Pembrokeshire!

Gordon James had changed his behaviour fundamentally. He was going to Spain by train and ship. He used to drive a gas-powered car (even if it broke down all the time!). He urged the audience to stop flying.

## Panel 5: A Sustainable Wales

Helen Mary Jones AM, Plaid Director of Communications  
with  
David Jones, Green Solutions  
Vicky Moller, environmentalist  
Stephen Tindale, climate consultant

Helen Mary Jones AM welcomed everybody to the debate and introduced an interesting panel. She explained that we need answers on a Welsh level to deal with the challenges we face.

Vicky Moller began by explaining that while technology and oil had helped us to advance as a society, now was the time to move to a simpler way of life. She spoke about painting buildings white, solar panels in the Sahara Desert and not breeding livestock intensively.

There is a need to use people's own ingenuity, living simply and not being driven by consumerism. Examples cited were growing our own food, producing our own energy and allowing children to play freely. There are some technical improvements which can also be advanced (a lightweight scythe instead of strimming for instance)! Invention is critical. Sometimes we need to remove regulatory barriers. We're a planning not-spot! Vicky finished by referring to the inevitability of political action: right politicians making the right decisions

Promote Innovation in Technology by having a National Climate Change Centre. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Stephen Tindale opened his observations by saying that climate change is the greatest threat to bio-diversity, landscape, the environment and human survival itself. So, what are the solutions to climate change?

Low-carbon electricity – we should not be trying to choose between different options – we should be using everything available to us. It's all these things.

Energy efficiency; renewables; both on-shore and off-shore wind installations; we need to address the lack of a National Grid in mid Wales; biomass; combined heat and power developments – and more controversially, nuclear energy.

Devolution of energy decisions to Wales is critical. These big schemes need to be devolved in order to be consented. Hydro is important – the Welsh Government needs to look into river energy production (as in Scotland).

Possibility of river dams needs to be explored. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

The Severn Barrage is very expensive and while something needs to happen in the Severn Estuary, the barrage is possibly not the best option. The RSPB supports tidal reefs which are less damaging to bio-diversity. These concrete islands could have windmills on them instead of a motorway. Nuclear has to be part of the option – it's a necessary evil. Yes, it's expensive but it's low carbon. The greatest threat is that of nuclear weapons 'proliferation. Carbon capture and storage should be developed. Plaid Cymru should campaign against Trident. Stephen was certain that with action by 2040, the globe could be 100% renewable. However, we need 'bridge technologies' to get us from here to there.

David Jones began by saying that Wales has not been sustainable in economic and environmental terms for some years. Need to grasp the nettle in terms of action. The UK is behind the rest of the world in terms of renewable technology development. We need a diversity of sources. Wales must be sustainable in terms of food production but of course, it isn't. Wales is not self-sufficient in economic and food production.

David emphasised the need not for globalisation but localisation of food production. Also, in manufacturing, there are technologies that most politicians haven't heard of – Japan is way ahead of the game. Heat pumps is one but example. Of course, it's not all doom and gloom. Public expenditure will be squeezed. PFI schemes are drying up. National Infrastructure Bank is needed. Plaid Cymru could push for this. We own most of the banks anyway!

**Establish National Investment / Infrastructure Bank for Wales. [Existing Plaid policy]**

Helen Mary Jones opened the floor to questions:

Question 1: What action would you like to see the Welsh government take?

David Jones would prioritise micro-generation because Wales is behind England in terms of wind and solar. He would also insist that land for development is environmentally assessed before developers are encouraged to establish businesses there.

Stephen Tindale would build the grid in mid Wales. He would also encourage support of large-scale projects in renewables e.g. Gwynt y Mor arguing that although these should be devolved, they should not be resisted in the interim. Finally, he wouldn't wish to see any further expansion of airports.

**Develop Grid in Mid Wales. [Develop existing Plaid policy]**

Vicky Moller would want to see politicians working with experts in all fields and networking and to see issues around planning consent resolved in Wales.

## Panel 6: Working with Westminster

Janet Davies, former Plaid Cymru AM  
with  
Llywelyn Rhys, British Wind Energy Association  
Adam Price MP, Plaid Director of Elections  
Dr. Myfanwy Davies, Plaid Director of Political Education

Janet Davies welcomed the panel and said that she hoped the workshop would be practical in its outcomes. Whilst Westminster has taxation and fiscal powers, it would be important for Plaid to outline its policies with regard to economic powers and large-scale energy generation. So whatever we think of Westminster we must surely recognise its influence. Janet Davies argued that the Westminster government wasn't doing enough and the 2009 budget wasn't sufficiently green).

Myfanwy Davies: the need for a sustainable economy has been one of the cornerstones of Plaid policy for decades. The British parties have been responsible for widening the gap between rich and poor. Decisions relating to power stations have been taken out of the hands of local people. Need to localise the economy, e.g., small shops. Producers are squeezed as regards producing goods and resources.

Myfanwy remarked that the average person travels 900 miles to source food. The Plaid Westminster Group has always punched above its weight addressing unhealthy concentration of power by supermarkets for instance. She called for a mandatory code of conduct for supermarkets.

[Mandatory code for supermarkets. \[Existing Plaid policy\]](#)

Myfanwy said that the Inland Revenue should release SME businesses for streamlining sustainability principles into their work planning.

[Look at tax incentives for SMEs. \[Existing Plaid policy\]](#)

Food retail planning and procurement need to be identified as priorities. There needs to be local input into decision-making with a mix of alternative energies (marine / fuel cell etc.) and the devolution of energy planning. The window of time for action is vanishing. Sustainability is now not a priority for Westminster government and our hands are tied at a Westminster level.

Adam Price MP opened his remarks by making a plea for politics and for political parties. Single-issue campaigning is vital but they will not defeat the problems of climate change and the need for broad-based political action e.g. President Obama and the environmental lobby in the US. There therefore needs to be a

broad-based movement for political change. Adam Price challenged delegates to join a political party. Democracy means winning and losing battles. If you are political, join a political party. If you don't like any of the political parties, form your own!

The saying "Houston, we have a problem!" comes to mind. Existing policies are clearly not working. What will happen in Copenhagen later on this year is crucial. This is what we can describe as an extinction event. Hundreds of millions will die. James Henson says we have 4 years left, Gordon James says we have 5 years and John Holdren says we have 6 years left. Whoever's right, we clearly don't have long. In this context, there's a need for all options to be on the table. If carbon reduction is not going to happen, then should we be looking at other ideas? What are these ideas?

One such idea is that of air scrubbing which entails taking carbon out of the atmosphere. This isn't a solution but it is a temporary, quick fix to buy more time.

Another is solar radiation management – global dimming (those areas that are most polluting are experiencing cooling): if we didn't have pollution as a result of coal-fire generation then world would be even warmer again. Putting sulphate into stratosphere to buy time to mimic volcanic movements. When aviation stopped for a few days at the time of 9/11, global temperatures went up a degree. Why is that?

Another innovative idea is bio-char which is a process of soil enrichment which brings other fringe benefits according to James Lovelock.

Consider bio-char as means of soil enrichment. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

So the potential of these geo-engineering proposals are very exciting and deserve further exploration.

What is the Westminster Government doing to develop these new technologies? What are we spending on this per annum as a Westminster government? Only £3 million has been allocated to researching and developing these technologies! In fact, we should be spending £100 million. If nothing else, it will buy us time.

Increase Research & Development spend on new ideas to buy time. [Existing Plaid policy]

Another option given the relationship between transport and emissions is the potential for free public transport. This is the model in other countries and is perhaps the only means of persuading more people to travel by bus and rail as opposed to the car.

### Adopt a policy of free public transport. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Human-generated behaviour has got us to this point. Emergency measures and grand ideas need developing. Lifestyle changes aren't coming through and we haven't got time. There's a need for radical ideas!

Llewelyn Rhys intends to look at current legislation relevant to his area in order to bring together the ideas we have heard today and link these to measures now going through the House of Commons. The first is the Maritime Bill. This was originally a conservation measure, but has evolved more into a Spatial Plan for the Sea. Conservationists need to bear in mind that what they seek to conserve is being threatened by climate change. Sustainable development is core to all this. The Maritime Bill creates a new tier of the civil service, namely the Marine Management Organisation. How many resources and how much expertise will the MMO have in Wales? Resources are bound to be very limited. This will be a very small unit in Cathays Park, and the Welsh government must influence it through a strong civil service.

### Consider MMO implications for Wales. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

Another relevant act is the controversial Planning Act. There are implications for renewable energy resources. But also, the nature of the decision will be taken out of the hands of people, and there might be a reduced role for the Welsh government. (The closing date for the consultation is in June). The input of the Welsh government needs to be strengthened in this respect (several ideas : sub-committee, etc.)

The Conservatives claim that they would abolish the IPC if they came to power, and although Llewelyn Rhys doubted this, though the IPC might have an advisory rather than a decision-making role.

It is essential to ask for the devolution of energy projects of over 50 mw, and there is cross-party commitment to this. It is fair enough to campaign for the right and power for Wales to decide on such projects, but if the Assembly government were controlled by Plaid only, would they have been brave enough to permit the Gwynt y Môr wind farm?

Janet Davies opened the floor to questions:

Question 1: Is Plaid prepared to stick to obligations and duties as far as conservation is concerned as well as climate change?

Answer: Political parties must have courage not to continue with growth economy. Plaid is nearest to making that commitment. We need all political parties to work together and need to be challenged as consumers.

Adam Price pointed out that the public is worried about climate change but there's a tendency for people to switch off with the number of wars, climate change disasters and droughts on TV. This difficult message of the climate crisis is difficult to relay. Added to this is the rift in environmental movement between conservation and energy production. Can those anti-wind energy people be dismissed out of hand? There's undoubtedly some NIMBYism but there's also genuine concern about local communities. Part of problem we're facing is that there's a saturation point in some communities. They want burden of wind farms to be spread across Wales and not just in TAN8 areas. Why does the MOD have exemption on vast tracts of land just because it wants low-flying? Is this fair?

Adam Price referred to thinker Leopold Kohr who espoused the "small is beautiful" mantra as part of Plaid's philosophical identity. Plaid believes that a consumer materialist model has failed to meet all of people's needs. People have material needs and that's true of those in the developing world too and who are we to say that they can't have iPods? We need to recognise that there's more to life than materialist consumerism.

Myfanwy Davies remarked that we needed to remember all this in the context of people losing jobs. There's something very sterile about only telling people what it is they want to hear (as political parties). Climate change can't be used as an excuse for exploitative developments.

## **Panel 7: Wales in a Green Europe**

John Dixon, Chair of Plaid Cymru  
with  
Jill Evans MEP  
John McClintock, European Commission  
Dai Davies, National Farmers' Union Wales

John McClintock who works for the European Commission remarked that he was here in a personal capacity. He studied economics and agriculture at Reading. Climate change is a great problem but is it not also an opportunity to provide prosperity for the entire world and justice between nations, bringing peace to the whole world? Wales could play a leading role and could provide an example of living sustainably and taking political initiative.

Climate change is the quintessential collective action problem: there's no point in one individual acting on their own. Every country has to act together. This calls for action at a personal and collective level in terms of expenditure and changing livelihoods.

There needs to be a global solution to the problem. Why should Mr. Walters sacrifice his herd of dairy cows if we just end up buying milk from another country? Why should we in Europe insulate our homes if Russia continues to pump out greenhouse gases? All the countries of the world have to act in unison and present solutions – the Kyoto protocol has failed.

John McClintock suggested that we should create a global union of countries in which they should share political sovereignty in limited areas. 27 countries of the world already pool sovereignty in the EU. The EU is not perfect as we know but it has brought inestimable benefit to its citizens. Europe is a prosperous place to live which has brought peace to those nations. The EU is living proof that nations can share sovereignty to solve 'Collective Action Problems'. A global union could be created to resolve climate change and other global problems, migration, war, poverty, pandemics and terrorism.

Jill Evans MEP began by saying that she was less optimistic now than she was 10 years ago when she was first elected to the European Parliament. Despite the fact that the climate package is the first package to limit global emissions, it doesn't go far enough. The 2020 targets don't go far enough. Emission trading systems are required.

Jill is sceptical, not opposed, about the effectiveness of the development of technology for carbon capture and storage. One current problem is the tremendous pressure on the EU to finance massive scale projects as opposed to micro projects. An emissions' limit standard could be placed upon any new power

plant. There's a 20% renewable energy target by 2020. This isn't high enough. So a lot has been done but things haven't happened quickly enough. Jill is a member of the Environment Committee and climate change is the backdrop to all the European Parliament does. There's therefore a need for a binding, international agreement post-Kyoto in 2012.

[Campaign for post-Kyoto binding agreement. \[Develop Plaid policy & Direct Action\]](#)

If it hadn't been for the EU's intervention, then Kyoto would never have happened at all. There's a need for sufficient funding for mitigation and climate change adaptation. The Budget issue is fundamental. Big political groups in the European Parliament – Labour and Conservative – calling for strategies based on Lisbon Strategy with its emphasis on competitiveness, big business i.e. the same type of economic strategy which has brought us to where we are today economically. £4 billion has been earmarked for renewable R&D projects but it has to be spent in one year. Instead, the EFA / Greens group (of which Plaid Cymru is a member) asked for money to be spent on local micro projects (SmartCity projects) to be implemented at the local level.

[Look at budgetary considerations for smaller-scale projects. \[Existing Plaid policy\]](#)

We need to be very active in relation to public services because 30% of jobs across the EU are in the public sector. As far as lobbying goes at an European Parliamentary level, there's a hugely well-organised lobby from all sectors of industry. When a recent proposal concerning chemicals was being discussed there were 100 lobbyists there on behalf of the chemicals' industry while NGOs campaigning against had 1 lobbyist. How do we start restricting lobbyists' influence?

[Mandatory Register for lobbyists at all levels. \[Develop existing Plaid policy\]](#)

A register of lobbyists could help MEPs to judge various viewpoints being presented to them. Big groups in the European Parliament have opposed a mandatory register and called for a voluntary register of lobbyists which clearly isn't good enough. There's also a need for vigilance on the narrative of jobs Vs climate change i.e. need to try to counter the accusation that jobs are being lost or threatened. Jill has always prioritized fighting climate change at the European Parliament following her signature of the Climate Change pledge some years ago. The more pressure we can put on the European Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament, the better. The urgency now is the need for an international agreement post-Kyoto.

Dai Davies: opportunities for Welsh farmers to cope with the change of environment. The beauty and variety of the countryside has come about as the result of the work of Welsh farmers. It is essential therefore to support Welsh family farms for the future. Agriculture in Wales has suffered, and rural depopulation is a cause for concern, as is the loss of skills and crafts (landscape management / dry stone walling, etc.) Quality agriculture goes hand in hand with quality conservation. This must be sustainable in economic, environmental and social terms. Tir Gofal and Tir Cynnal, also the organic scheme. All these schemes have been very popular in Wales.

However, one of the most pertinent factors is the pitifully low portion of the European rural development budget allocated , which totals only about 3%. Compared with many other EU member states, the UK has had a very poor bargain. Formula for placing work in Europe. EU contributions should recognise the work of counteracting the climate change challenge and agricultural conservation work.

Help farmers to manage the effects of climate change. [Existing Plaid policy]

In terms of climate change, as with all industries, we must rise to the challenge. Flooding problems in 2007 / bluetongue disease also. Despite this, the agricultural industry can rise to the challenge. Energy generation on farms (water / wind / bio digesters). Government grants for local energy producers, and the support of the planning authorities.

Give government support payments and planning authority support to those who produce local energy. [Existing Plaid policy]

Soil is a very important carbon store. Soil carbon needs to be safeguarded. Dangers if the soil of Wales degenerates by 1% per annum.

Protect soil. [Develop existing Plaid policy]

The agricultural sector is very well placed to help by planting forests, crops, etc. The sector creates methane and other gases, and the industry is seeking to cut back on the sector's contribution. Need to create a formula which will reduce levels of methane released by animals.

Develop methane-reducing formula for agricultural sector. [Develop Plaid policy]

Summary of Wales in a Green Europe: Wales needs a fair share of EU resources and funding / role of the Assembly Government in promoting local produce / investing in local R&D / environment is an international issue. Farms need to be

respected. Producing food for export is bad news from a green standpoint because it is a priority here in Wales.

[We need more R&D based in Wales. \[Existing Plaid policy\]](#)

John Dixon opened the floor to questions:

Question 1: Micro vs. macro approaches to Sustainable Development: how can smaller, grassroots organisations based in Carmarthenshire access structural funds from the European Union?

[Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM to help. \[Direct Action\]](#)

Question 2: Under the shadow of climate change, food security will dwarf energy issue. Should there be a Food Security budget?

[Consider Food Security budgets. \[Develop existing Plaid policy\]](#)

We are privileged to be in this position with our bellies full. We need to make sure that we have a balanced approach.

Jill Evans answered by saying that this is an important question. We've seen the way in which Welsh farmers have shown the way on GM crops and how the EU has provided support to Welsh farmers. We need to adopt policies on financial support to farmers' markets and local food procurement policies. By way of example, Jill referred to the R&D work done in Bangor University (in bio-digestion). The rest of the EU is following Wales's lead. We really excel in this field and this should continue.

## **Conclusions**

Nerys Evans AM, Plaid Director of Policy, took the stand as the last speaker of the day. She began by thanking all those who'd taken part, whether expert panellists, organisation representatives, delegates or Plaid members.

She explained that it was important for Plaid Cymru to develop policy coherently, to challenge our existing thinking and to evolve party policies. This one-day conference on sustainability had proved useful as an alternative means of developing and influencing Plaid policy.

Nerys concluded that the main themes to emerge were:

### **Food:**

including planning policy, allotment policy, role of supermarkets, procurement policy, local food production, seasonal produce.

### **Economy:**

including the tension between economic growth and environmental sustainability, quality-of-life issues / carbon-omics / the need for a cross-portfolio approach to solutions between economists and environmentalists.

### **Advances in green technology:**

including renewable energies, the importance of research and development (R&D), planning policy, lack of power in Wales, political will and leadership.

### **Individual Action:**

including personal responsibility, community organisations lobbying and influencing politicians, power dynamic, personal empowerment, ecological literacy.

## **Gwanwyn Gwyrdd**

### **A Plaid Cymru Policy Development Conference**

## **Follow Up Action**

Once again, thank you to everybody who came to Plaid Cymru's first one day policy development conference and made it such a great success. We hope you have enjoyed looking over our Conference Proceedings and on the following pages you will find follow up action points and a Plaid Response to some of the themes which emerged.

- Publish Conference Proceedings and an initial Plaid Response
- Publish key recommendations to be progressed internally with Plaid
- Keep dialogue and keep interaction in order to develop our manifesto
- Produce a published vision statement document on sustainability for the Plaid Cymru Annual Conference in September 2009

## **A Plaid Response**

### Introduction

Here we have put together a few thoughts about some policy issues which arose during the Sustainable Spring policy development conference. In some areas, perhaps Plaid Cymru needs to look at in filling policy gaps or revising existing policies. Please be aware that this response does not represent an official line, but that it is instead a brief look at some of the issues raised. An official response will follow with the publication of a Plaid Cymru policy paper in Autumn 2009.

### Alarmism

Even though we know that this crisis is human-made, we really don't know how long we have got to stop doing those things which may lead to runaway climate change. A variety of speakers at the conference were suggesting that the timescale is of the order of 4 - 6 years. If that is really the case, then given the apparent complete inability of the world to respond coherently and cohesively to the situation then "we're all doomed". There is a danger that alarmism creates the impression that there is nothing that can be done, whilst there is equally a danger that failing to fully articulate the scale of the challenge facing us may lead to complacency. The question that emerges is: where does the balance lie between these two things?

### Economics

The Stern report suggested that climate change is the ultimate market failure. Something everybody needs to think about in the light of the current economic crisis and the pending environmental crisis is to what extent our current economic system is sustainable. It does seem at times that the priority of governments (including the government in Wales) is to get back to business as usual as it was prior to the economic crash. While this is not realistically sustainable, nobody has so far articulated a workable, practical, alternative economic model.

One of the things that Plaid definitely needs to address is the extent to which we solve or attempt to solve some of the problems by providing cash incentives for 'good' behaviour and the extent to which we actually penalise 'bad' behaviour. Politically it is always easier to suggest a subsidy or incentive payments to reward good behaviour, and of course given the limited powers of the Assembly Government particularly over tax raising there is very limited scope for financial penalties for bad behaviour. However, continued subsidies for good behaviour inevitably mean an increasing demand on tax revenues. We surely need to look at the regulatory framework and some sort of financial penalties rather than assuming that we can solve the problems by providing ever larger subsidies to a range of companies and activities. Bearing in mind the cuts in funding for the

Assembly Government, an approach to dealing with climate change which relies primarily on subsidies and handouts is simply not workable.

A further aspect of the economic side of this is the question of the compatibility or otherwise of continued economic growth and sustainability. It was quite clear that at least one speaker from the floor believed that zero growth is the only possible policy in economic terms, whereas others were arguing that some sort of growth might still be possible. However, it is possible that economic growth may still be feasible provided it uses resources in a way which does not deplete them. It means 'living on the interest' rather than the capital. Certainly economic growth on a compound basis for the foreseeable future is totally unsustainable; yet that seems to underpin current economic policy!

We cannot escape the fact that people are seeking an increase in their personal prosperity and this is compounded by the huge discrepancy in prosperity between different parts of the world. It is politically impossible to tell the developing world that they should not aspire to the standard of living which we enjoy in the developed world. It's just as hard telling those in the developed world that they may not continue to aspire to a higher standard of living. But we have to recognise the standard of living enjoyed by those of us in the developed world is not sustainable within the resources of the planet as it currently stands.

Fundamental to the whole existence and purpose of capitalism is the idea that competition is the main driver – including competition for resources. One of the consequences of this is that if cleaning up our act is left to the competitive market, then the result will be that someone will see an opportunity to exploit the niche left behind. In short, there is a danger that as some industries or countries move towards a more sustainable mode of production and distribution, then other companies and industries will see an opportunity to obtain a greater share of resources for themselves by behaving in a less environmentally acceptable fashion. The consequence of this is that action in one country or in one legislative regime may be seen to disadvantage the people of that country, and the net result is that action taken is often inadequate and timid. Of course, this challenges the whole basis of international capitalism, but at present, the competitive economic model is incompatible with moving to a sustainable economic system, and the competitive economic model needs to be replaced by a co-operative one. The main driver for human economic activity should not be competition for a greater share of wealth, but serving the needs of humanity as a whole.

### Agriculture

Although there were different views expressed during the conference, one common thread was that current approaches to agriculture are unsustainable. There is scope for debate over the extent to which livestock rearing can still

continue to play a part in a sustainable agriculture system, but clearly we cannot carry on as things are. Plaid needs to look radically at our policy on agriculture to determine what changes in policy at government level would be needed to make the industry more sustainable.

We had two very different views as to the future of meat production. Whilst Patrick Holden from the Soil Association argued in favour of increased red meat production and reduced white meat production, I had the impression that another speaker was actually arguing for more white meat and less red meat, whilst a third was arguing very clearly that we must all become vegetarians. This is a classic example of the way in which the experts in this and many other fields of environmental policy give different and often conflicting views, and it is difficult for policymakers to define the way forward.

### Food

One thing which is quite inevitable in any more sustainable system of food production is that food prices are likely to be higher than it is currently the case. No political party is currently articulating the argument that sustainably produced food is likely to cost more, both in relative terms to people's income and in absolute terms. A deliberate policy which leads to food taking a higher proportion of disposable income is hardly likely to be politically popular, but it does seem dishonest to pretend that there will not be an upward movement in food prices.

### Left-hands and right-hands

Policy must become more joined up. One classic example of this for instance is that in response to the economic crisis the Assembly Government has been urging more local procurement. This is right not just in terms of a response to the current economic crisis, but also in terms of moving towards a more sustainable and localised economic model. However whilst one part in the Assembly Government is urging that approach, another arm of the same government is encouraging local authorities to join together in ever larger consortia to jointly purchase goods and services. The result of the former is to move towards a more localised economy; the result of the latter is to encourage the trend towards globalisation. How can these positions be made compatible?

Another example of possibly conflicting thinking is the question of seeking new housing development to be both zero carbon and affordable. Whilst zero carbon housing will be cheaper over its entire lifetime, there seems little doubt that the capital cost of construction will be higher than the cost of a wasteful building. The result of this is that specifying ever higher standards in eliminating the use of carbon in the building and running of homes may well be incompatible with our desire to see more affordable housing. How can our policy response address the

problems inherent in making the purchase of a home affordable whilst recognising that the purchase price is higher for an environmentally friendly project?

### Energy policy

Plaid now recognises that we need a comprehensive energy policy which includes a regime of decision taking which enables that policy to be fully implemented. We need to be much sharper and more focused in presenting a comprehensive and cohesive energy policy.

The whole economic system is currently based on a fairly cheap supply of energy, and that will not continue into the future. What is our response to a more expensive energy pricing climate, something which is surely inevitable? Higher pricing may also be desirable as a means of forcing a reduction in energy usage, since a reduction in energy usage is probably the single most important thing that we can do to reduce emissions. Yet, currently, we seem to be advocating a more populist approach of reducing energy prices. Are we, both out of government and in government, prepared to say no to the wrong developments?

### Reusability

One of the issues which causes our current style of living to be expensive in terms of the earth's resources is the sheer durability of some of the products which we produce. Because they take so long to decay – if they decay at all – we end up burying materials which we should be recycling. If all goods produced were recyclable in their entirety at the end of their lives then we would not forever be continuing to deplete the earth's natural resources in order to renew and replace them.

### Conclusion

This Plaid response is by no means a comprehensive review of the issues raised during Sustainable Spring. However, this response, combined with the issues raised throughout the Conference Proceedings and marked in green will feed into Plaid Cymru sustainable living policy development over the next few months.

This one day policy conference has provided Plaid Cymru's politicians and its Policy Unit with a great deal of food for thought.

We will be taking these conclusions and recommendations and moving towards a more comprehensive policy statement dealing with sustainability, energy policy and solutions to the climate crisis.

Thank you to everybody who has contributed evidence, feedback and time to this project so far. Hopefully this document has proved useful; please do get in touch if you would like to know more.

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