

# Cynllunio

The Journal of RTPI Cymru



Postcard from Wales during lockdown

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Potential articles and images  
are welcome. The Editor  
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Croesawn erthyglau yn y  
Gymraeg.

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**Front Cover:** Images of Wales in lockdown. Thank you to images provided by Huw Evans, John Pearson, Charlotte Pugh and Cath Ranson.

## Editorial

When planning this edition of Cynllunio we faced a dilemma - do people need to have a break from COVID-19 or is it so important we need to speak about it? The decision was yes we need to talk about it - it's too significant not to - but other things are going on too and so there's some 'free style' included to.

At the RTPI we have made a significant attempt at keeping services for members running. All colleagues across the Institute are currently working from home and have been since March.

There have been some tweaks to services, such as no face to face meetings or events. I'm pleased to report that the RTPI's governance has continued in strength with all of our Standing Committees, the Board of Trustees and the RTPI Cymru Executive Committee continuing to be able to meet using digital platforms.

It is sad that we won't be welcoming you to the Wales Planning Conference and our party in the Morgan Arcade - they were planned the week we are publishing this edition of Cynllunio. However we are pleased to bring you an alternative in September with a week long programme of webinars on the topic of planners and climate action and the good news it will all be free to access. We'll be publishing details about this later in June.

All of the RTPI events programme has gone digital for the rest of 2020 and so this brought an opportunity that anyone, anywhere could access what we are offering. It was probably not worthwhile to travel to Edinburgh, Norwich or Belfast for an hour event, even if you thought it looked interesting - but now you can dial in. So look out for the full event programme - an ideal opportunity to top on your CPD!

It is excellent to see members based in Wales become Chartered - congratulations to you all. If you are interested in becoming Chartered there is a host of information available on the RTPI website and there is a regular programme of webinars to support you through the process too.

We are pleased to continue the Abercrombie link with Wales with an interesting article on his links with Wales and even involvement with the Eisteddfod.

The RTPI's President is having a different year to what was planned and we are pleased that Sue Manns has taken the time to share with us her thoughts on planning and the recovery post-COVID. Sue is embracing the on-line opportunities to engage with more members more often.

Wales' Young Planner of the Year - Alex Egge - was thrust into the response to the pandemic early on working on the field hospital in Cardiff

and she has provided an interesting record of her experience. I am sure many planners have had to respond to the emergency situation we have all found ourselves in and I am sure you join with me in thanking them and all of the key workers in stepping up to the mark.

We are changing how we run our nominations and elections this year, so look out for details coming soon on how to make nominations for the RTPI Cymru Executive Committee alongside the RTPI Vice President and General Assembly members.

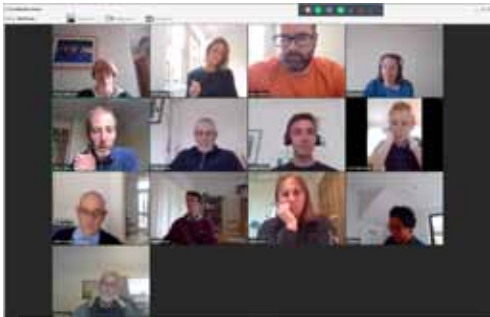
We have launched the Wales Planning Awards and also our search for the Wales Young Planner of the Year. Think about projects and schemes that are worthy of celebrating and also nudge the young talent you know to put themselves forward for the Young Planner of the Year.

Finally I would like to congratulate all the Winners, Commended and Finalists in the RTPI's Awards for Planning Excellence this year - it was good to see recognition of the excellent work taking place in Wales that was showcased with the profession globally - a significant opportunity offered by having a ceremony on-line. Wishing you all to keep safe  
*Roisin Willmott, Editor*

## The RTPI Cymru Photo Board - or a screen shot view!

Our front cover illustrates some images from across Wales during the lockdown over the past months, including an empty M4, Cardiff Central Railway station and Cardiff Queen street, all taken in the middle of the day and normally bustling places. Our leisure facilities adapted or discouraged from using and the border with England with different rules.

Our normal RTPI Cymru Photo Board, brought to give you a flavour of what has been happening over the past quarter, takes on a fairly static impression at first glance. However, with the help of technology, there's been quite a bit going on. Our Policy and Research Forum has met digitally to discuss how planners and planning should respond to the post-covid recovery in Wales. Young Planners Cymru has held an on-line digital event on One Planet Developments. I was also pleased to join a panel looking at the future of towns in Wales at a Institute of Welsh Affairs webinar in a series #RethinkingWales.



Above moving clockwise: Research & Policy Forum discussing ideas for recovery for Wales; Neil Harris presenting at the YPC webinar, followed by Simon Coop, Auriol Miller of IWA chairing the webinar on Welsh towns; and the RTPI Planning Excellence Awards.



## Congratulations to our latest Chartered Town Planners



Congratulations to our latest Chartered Planners to be elected in Wales:

- Kate Attrill
- Karla Johnson
- Ruth Jones
- Bryn Pryce
- Emmeline Reynish
- Claire Seddon
- Adam Turner

Employers recognise the high quality of skills and experience that are held by Chartered Town Planners. They know that they can rely upon the designation as a sign of professionalism.

(Note those more recently awarded Chartered status will appear in the next edition of Cynllunio).

All the information and guidance for submitting your APC (all routes) is available from: [www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/assessment-of-professional-competence/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/assessment-of-professional-competence/)

A series of webinars are planned over the coming months to provide information to guide you to becoming Chartered. If you are preparing or want to find out more, keep a look out for events on the RTPI website.



We loved this picture taken by a planning officer on a site visit in the Vale of Glamorgan - the new rush hour traffic.



# Planning Inspectorate for Wales: Keeping on Keeping On



## The Planning Inspectorate Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

It's been a challenging time for everyone involved in the planning system since the Covid-19 related restrictions came into play. The Planning Inspectorate for Wales has been working hard to keep abreast of emerging developments, and to take all necessary measures to do our part to help prevent the spread of the virus, protect the NHS, and save lives. As an organisation, we are fortunate to have a large proportion of our work force who are used to working from home, and the equipment that allowed us to rapidly shift to a model where all staff are working from home for the majority of the time, with minimal trips to the office by one member of staff at a time when essential.

Once the 'lockdown' came into effect, we moved swiftly to cancel all arranged events and let stakeholders know that we would re-arrange events as soon as it was safe to do so. We have proactively contacted Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to try and work with them to establish whether appeal processing could continue in their areas. Each LPA will have been facing a different combination of circumstances around their IT provision, office closures, staff being redeployed to deal with provision of other vital services in the Local Authority, and staff being affected by the crisis in other ways. We tried to therefore recognise that a 'one size fits all' approach would definitely not work in these circumstances, and instead tried to liaise with LPAs over the best course of action for appeal in their area. We are keeping this under regular review, as LPAs are making adjustments and finding new ways of working all the time.

*"...ensuring we adhere to any specific legislative requirements for the type of casework in question."*

At the same time, other stakeholders such as appellants, agents, statutory consultees, community councils, Non-Governmental Organisations, and

interested parties are also impacted. We have tried to deal with requests for extensions or suspensions on a case-by-case basis, striving to keep things moving in the parts of the planning system that we are responsible for, whilst making sure that no party is unfairly disadvantaged or prevented from engaging with the process.

On 29 April the Welsh Government issued its advice to LPAs that site visits could be undertaken whilst complying with The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020; at this point the Inspectorate for Wales was also able to start re-scheduling Unaccompanied Site Visits, including visits that may require access to private land where that can be arranged without the Inspector actually being accompanied by anyone (e.g. where a gate can be left open and authorisation provided for access). We have provided some Personal Protective Equipment to Inspectors, but the key message is that physical distancing

is vital. However, as of this writing, we are not arranging visits that require the Inspector to be accompanied, and we are not arranging hearings or inquiries.

Stakeholders may have been interested to see some of the actions announced for the Inspectorate in England, including the first electronic hearing on 11 May. As there are emerging differences in the approach to the lockdown in England and in Wales, and well established legislative and policy differences between the planning regimes in the two countries, the updates relating to the actions undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate in England should not be taken as applying to our work in Wales.

However, we are carefully considering how it might be possible to explore virtual hearings or inquiries, or whether some sort of hybrid events where a small number of people attend in person with physical distancing measures in place, and others observe or interact via video or audio conferencing. There are several logistical questions that must be answered before we can proceed to use such measures on a live case. We have to ensure that we can meet our commitments under the Welsh Language Standards that we are bound by, that any implications for data security are well thought out, and that the ethos we adopt is in line with the Ways of Working established under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. All this must be borne in mind, while also ensuring we adhere to any specific legislative requirements for the type of casework in question. There may be nuances that mean that what will work for a planning appeal may not be appropriate for examining a Public Rights of Way Order, or differences between a Local Development Plan examination and that of a Developments of National Significance application.

At all times, our priority is people's health and well-being, shortly followed by our commitment to dealing with our casework in timely fashion, and a way that is consistent with our long-held values of Fairness, Openness, and Impartiality. We aim to do this by continuing to liaise closely with our stakeholders and listening when we are told that we haven't got the approach quite right to date.

Our service updates are published on the Welsh Government's website, and via the main Planning Inspectorate Twitter account (@PINSgov). [gov.wales/planning-inspectorate](https://www.gov.wales/planning-inspectorate)

We encourage people to get in touch with any queries they may have via e-mail or telephone:

[wales@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:wales@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

0303 444 5958

## RTPI Cymru Policy Update

Many of you will be aware that the RTPI have been supporting members during the current pandemic via our online Coronavirus Hub. The RTPI Coronavirus Hub can be found at: [www.rtpi.org.uk/news/coronavirus-hub/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/news/coronavirus-hub/).

Our Policy and Research Forum have been discussing the key issues for Wales, as we work our way through lockdown and out the other side. As you would expect, our discussions have been broad and wide ranging, including debating the key issues for the short to long term, covering matters such as: the need for investment in digital infrastructure, the impact on our town centres, the demand for office space in the future, the impact of green space on our lives and the need to maintain quality and standards in the industry etc.

Given current uncertainties, it is not surprising our discussions threw up many more questions than answers, such as how will the pandemic influence how we use public transport? Will the private car continue to dominate? What are the funding issues for the service generally and for infrastructure projects large and small scale?

It was clear from our discussions that we must not only learn from our experiences but we must recognise positive change and be prepared to implement that change. The planning system and planners have an important, proactive role to play as a driver of change in the future. These discussions will contribute to a position paper.

We are continuing to respond to Welsh Government consultations and are currently putting together our response to the consultation on Active Travel Guidance, which is looking to combine delivery and planning guidance with design guidance, with the intention of improving collaboration between planners and designers and reflecting best practice.

Active travel provision is likely to be a key issue for planners. We must recognise the significant change in behaviour that the pandemic has brought about in terms of the way that we use outdoor space and active travel provisions and the contribution that these now make to so many of our lives. This highlights the importance of this renewed guidance, particularly as we face a possible shift away from public transport to more dependency on the private car.

Our current research into Measuring Planning Outcomes continues to progress well and pilots and focus groups are now being held to test the draft toolkit that aims to help local authorities and national Governments to go beyond simple metrics when measuring planning outcomes. For further information visit: [www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2019/february/measuring-planning-outcomes/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2019/february/measuring-planning-outcomes/).

If you are interested in our research projects or are able to contribute views or evidence, then please get in touch with us at [walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk). Members' views on consultations are always welcome and should be submitted to [walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk).

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*Rhian Brimble*

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## Town planning and the UN Sustainable Development Goals



The RTPI has launched a new module to its RTPI Learn programme.

This new online training gives an introduction to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for town planners. It outlines what the goals and targets are and through case studies focuses on what planners can do and the tools and techniques they can use.

It is a free, interactive and takes one-hour to complete. Access it here: [www.rtpi.org.uk/events-training-and-awards/rtpi-training/rtpi-learn/bitesized-modules/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/events-training-and-awards/rtpi-training/rtpi-learn/bitesized-modules/). A summary is also available here: [www.rtpi.org.uk/find-your-rtpi/rtpi-nations/international/international-agreements-and-planning/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/find-your-rtpi/rtpi-nations/international/international-agreements-and-planning/).



## Sir Patrick Abercrombie and the Welsh connection

**B**orn in Cheshire in 1879 and trained as an architect, his career changed direction in 1907 when the head of the Liverpool University School of Architecture offered him a post as junior lecturer and studio instructor. By 1909 he was 'Lecturer and Research Fellow in Civic Design'. The Department was located in the Bluecoat Chambers, a location often used today by the Liverpool Welsh.

His planning career took off when in 1914 the 'Civics Institute of Ireland' promoted an open competition for a plan for 'Greater Dublin'. The winners in 1916 of the £500 prize, out of 8 competitors, were Patrick Abercrombie together with Sydney and Arthur Kelly, 'Surveyors'. The winning plan was published in 1922 by the University Press of Liverpool, together with the adjudication - which reads like an eisteddfod adjudication of that era. The title was 'Dublin of the Future. The new Town Plan, Being the Scheme Awarded the First Prize in The International Competition'. Abercrombie must have travelled by train across Ynys Gybi many times during the period 1914 - 1916. Did he visit Rhoscolyn on one or more of such journeys?

He became Professor of Civic Design at the University of Liverpool in 1915. In that year he moved to a semi-detached villa in Oxtan on the Wirral, which had Welsh slate on the roof. It was listed in 1974 and carries a 'Blue Plaque' about the Abercrombie connection. Coincidentally it is today round the corner from the 'Caernarvon (sic) Castle' public house.

Following a lecture in Llangefni in 1918 he wrote 'Mona Nova: the future development of Anglesey, with special reference to Housing after the War' for the Welsh Housing & Development Association. His four themes were 'the house itself, its exterior and garden, the village and the island'. He noted that a joint housing committee of all the island's local authorities was undertaking a survey for a report on housing conditions and future needs. He advocated a comprehensive regional survey of the island.

At the National Eisteddfod in Mold in 1923 he addressed "The Cymmrodorion Section" on 'Wales: A Study in the contrast of country and town'. To him the Welsh village was untidy and undistinguished. Rhosneigr had destroyed its surrounding beauty, while Telford's road enhanced the island. He wished to see a school of Town Planning and Architecture in Wales, a National Plan for Wales and a series of regional plans covering all of Wales based on a regional and civic survey which involved local groups.

The National Eisteddfod was in Holyhead in 1927. He spoke to "The Cymmrodorion Section" on 'The preservation of rural Wales'. Clough Williams Ellis was present. Abercrombie wanted to curtail 'rural outrages', such as petrol stations, through establishing a League for the Preservation of Wales. A body independent of the CPRE in England was needed due to dispersed nature of Welsh rural settlements which contrasted with the nuclear nature of English settlement. This body saw light of day as the embryonic CPRW in 1928 and Abercrombie



served on its committee. He urged a series of regional plans to cover all of Wales.

By 1926 he was developing a home at Borth Arian, Rhoscolyn, near Holyhead which he designed himself. It was reviewed in 'Country Life' on April 16th 1927.

Researching on another subject in the Gwynedd Archives I came across a file on regional planning in north Wales. 'Planning' acts had been passed in 1919, 1929 and 1932. In 1932 the North Wales Regional Joint Town Planning Committee was set up for the area along the coast from Bangor to Prestatyn and inland to include Nant Ffrancon, Betws-y-Coed, Cerrigydrudion and the Clwydian hills. Conway Municipal Borough Council's surveyor appears to have a leading role. The North Wales Regional Planning Scheme was published in 1933 with an input by Clough Williams Ellis.

In 1935 Abercrombie was appointed Professor of Town Planning at University College, London. He moved to live in the south of England. In the same year he was officially appointed consultant to the Regional Committee. One of its proposals was a national park extending from the Porthmadog to Penygroes road in Caernarvonshire eastwards to include all the uplands and rural valleys as far as and including the Clwydian hills. It would not extend south into Merionethshire.

In 1936 the Caernarvonshire Joint Planning Committee was established. This included the remainder of the County to the west of the North Wales Committee's area with Patrick Abercrombie and Clough Williams-Ellis as consultants. It was basically an addition to the North Wales Scheme of 1933. There are references in the file to Abercrombie claiming expenses from London whereas he had 'another address' on Anglesey! The plan envisaged a large scale expansion of granite quarrying at Trefor, near Pwllheli. To widen terraced streets one side was to be demolished. Sites were allocated for new housing. Part was built. If you look down on the village from the summit of Yr Eifl you will see a cul de sac of bungalows. Their red tile roofs stand out from the grey Welsh slate everywhere else. Further west the villages of Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn were to expand into a large seaside resort.

The Second World War and its aftermath saw bigger fish to attract Abercrombie. His work at London, Plymouth, Hull, Bournemouth, Bath, Edinburgh and the Clyde Valley is far better known. Did he ever work again in north Wales?

He died suddenly in 1957 in the upper Thames valley. His body was interned, together with his wife's who had died in 1942, in St. Gwenfaen's churchyard at Rhoscolyn. The gravestone reads 'Here rest Patrick Abercrombie Kt Architect and Town Planner, 1879-1957 and his wife Emily Maud 1886-1942'.

In 1958 Borth Arian was sold to a family friend and it remains in the possession of that same family, currently being a holiday let. While a rear extension was built to provide two additional bedrooms, comparison of the pictures in 'Country Life' and on the letting agency's website show that there have been few changes to the original building.

*Clive James, FRTPi (rtd), Caernarfon*

# Electric vehicles: A step into the unknown?

The majority of us have been forced to embrace alternatives to our usual travel habits due to the current coronavirus lockdown. We are switching to Google Earth for site visits and grappling with varying broadband speeds and new platforms for meetings and committees.

When we are able to resume normal travel practises, it is essential that we re-focus our minds on the key role that electric vehicles (EVs) will play. But have the consequences for planning been properly thought through? The current lockdown presents a great opportunity to pause for thought on better ways of working.

Although, the policy direction has moved considerably quicker than the practical reality of replacing all petrol and diesel cars by 2035, planning itself has not yet been part of the practical reality.

## Centralised charging points

The grid is not ready for centralised charging points, Electricity District Network Operators (DNOs) are not investing sufficient time and resources to bring forward a complete new infrastructure for charging hubs, and the townscape and landscape implications of vast numbers of charging points and associated grid connections needed for this new way of driving have not been thoroughly thought through. Are we all investing now for a 2035 deadline?

In Wales there are some great charging points that give pointers to a future way forward:

- Cletwr Community Café near Borth offers a fast charge with an adjoining café
- Pale Hall Hotel near Bala provides a fast charge from an onsite hydro-powered scheme and a walk around the landscaped garden while you charge
- And Swansea City provides a good example of a local authority being on the front foot to getting better infrastructure, alongside engagement with key stakeholders.

*“... planning has an important role in facilitating appropriate change to townscape, landscape and better connectivity.”*

The Welsh Government is keen to provide strategy and a small infrastructure

fund. Perhaps post-coronavirus, greater priority may be given to public transport and to reducing the need for travel, but an electric transport world by 2035 needs a lot more practical thinking.

Within that, planning has an important role in facilitating appropriate change to townscape, landscape and better connectivity.

## Urgent need for more joined-up thinking

There is also an urgent need for more joined-up thinking between Planning, Highways and Street Lighting Teams in local authorities. There is an important role for proactive policies on charging hubs and undergrounding low voltage cables in the next round of Local Development Plan (LDP) updates in Wales.

Other unanswered questions include:

- How do we bring forward connectivity to some of our challenging terraced streets with limited off-road parking without street clutter?



Above: John Pearson

- How do we ensure business charging locations satisfy the envisaged future demands for workplace charging?
- Are we putting infrastructure within existing and new build parking?
- How do planners help bring forward rapid charging hubs?

At the National Trust we are doing what we can in all new and existing car park locations to facilitate and encourage electric vehicles.

The RTPi identified the need in 2019<sup>1</sup> for some form of strategic energy plan which could potentially cover the LDP area, surely there are vested interests within the DNOs to fund these plans as part of LDP evidence papers?

There has been great progress in hot spots including Swindon, Bristol and Bala and, across the UK, pilot projects such as those seen below are also emerging:

- New Rapid Charging Hubs in Bristol complete with new toilets, food and drink kiosk
- New Electric Car sharing Clubs in the Lake District and West of England.

But can planning help by moving forward a few gears to faster progress? Could business parks and workplaces provide charge points and open them to public use? Could all local authority fleets help stimulate the market demand for EV by opening up charging points for public use?

The policy for EV is a big step into the unknown. 2035 is within the reach of most LDP review policies in Wales and will direct investment to plan for a smarter future. But lots of questions remain unanswered.

Planning and planners have a crucial role in helping to create this smarter energy future and delivering creative answers to some of the more difficult questions.

*John Pearson MRTPI, Planning Adviser, National Trust*

Other RTPi Blogs can be found at: [www.rtpi.org.uk/briefing-room/rtpi-blog/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/briefing-room/rtpi-blog/)

<sup>1</sup> Planning for a Smart Energy Future, RTPi Research Paper: [www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1435/planning-for-a-smart-energy-future.pdf](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1435/planning-for-a-smart-energy-future.pdf)

## Planning in a Pandemic:

### *One Planner's Experience at the Dragon's Heart Hospital*

In late March as many people throughout the UK adjusted to the 'new normal' of lockdown and social distancing, I found myself adjusting to life on a building site. Not just any building site however; I was working in the iconic Principality Stadium at the second-largest emergency field hospital in the UK, Ysbyty Calon y Ddraig / Dragon's Heart Hospital. Everything about this project happened at a breakneck speed, from the initial planning and mobilisation by Cardiff and Vale NHS and the formation of the team of consultants in less than a week, to my own involvement which gave me just 25 hours between expressing my interest and arriving for my first morning on site.

*"... a tribute to the hard work of the planners who came together in this crisis to do something truly unique."*

My role was as the Lead Designer for Transport and Logistics, but as with most people on site I found myself wearing multiple hats (including the occasional hard hat). This was particularly the case when the Project Director learned about my background as a Planner

and I was charged with the task of coordinating the submission of the Change of Use Application for the project in only 4 days! Fortunately, I had an excellent network of offsite colleagues to call upon who worked tirelessly to complete supporting technical reports and to make countless phone calls to Cardiff Council, while I ran around site to gather information and write the application. As with every aspect of this project, completing the Planning Application was a true team effort where everyone went above and beyond to meet unprecedented timescales.

In keeping with the unpredictability of these current times, we awoke on the morning of the 10th of April to find that, mere hours before we planned to submit our application, Order 2020 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Amendment) (Wales) came into effect which granted the NHS permitted development rights to change the use of a building to an emergency hospital. Our application was no longer necessary. Our relief at seeing this news and the camaraderie of the team both



on- and off-site meant that we all took this development in stride. The pace of the project meant that within moments of learning this news everyone was already moving on to our next tasks, in my case designing the ambulance access routes and decontamination infrastructure.

My work on the Dragon's Heart Hospital covered a wide range of topics; from coordinating delivery access for an 80 tonne liquid oxygen tank to arranging the patient postal system. I sometimes find myself thinking back to the completed planning application which we never submitted, now frozen in amber. I think of it as a tribute to the hard work of the planners who came together in this crisis to do something truly unique. I joked with my colleagues that it's not often that people look for a town planner in an emergency situation, but my experience showed how every single member of the team was crucial to delivering the hospital. Our

resilience to change and adaptability meant that no effort was wasted and we were always able to bring our lessons-learned forward to the next tasks. It was this resilience, team-working and dedication which allowed us to deliver the hospital, protect the NHS and save lives.

*Alex Egge, Transport Planner, Mott Macdonald  
Wales Young Planner of the Year 2019*







# RTPI Cymru Award for Planning Excellence - *entries to the 2020 Awards invited*

The RTPI Cymru Planning Excellence Award champions the very best examples of planning and planners in Wales. It demonstrates the positive impact that planning has on our quality of life and celebrates professional expertise. The Awards are open to all planners, both members and non-members and to all other built environment professions. Entry to our Awards is free.

**Closing date for entries is 15 July 2020**

**Further information on how to enter is available from our website: [www.rtpi.org.uk/wales](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/wales)**

# Wales Young Planner of the Year

Could you be the Wales Young Planner of the Year? Or do you know someone it could be?

To qualify the entrant must be in the first ten years of their planning career, post qualification and must be an RTPI member (any class). Entrants should be living or working in Wales and actively contributing to planning within Wales.

**Further information is available from: [www.rtpi.org.uk/wales](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/wales)**



## Planning and the Post COVID 19 Recovery; *some personal thoughts and reflections*

The origins of our planning system lie in the need to tackle the poor public health and housing conditions of the 19th century. The cholera epidemics had brought about an understanding of the need for clean water supplies and sewage systems, the link between quality of the environment, living conditions and labour productivity were increasingly recognised, whilst the 1909 Housing, Town Planning etc Act (the first piece of legislation to use the term 'planning') banned the building of back-to-back housing which were seen as unhealthy and allowed local authorities to prepare schemes of town planning. The role and importance of 'planning' as central to tackling public health challenges of the day cannot be underestimated; our response to COVID-19 should be no different.



In the short term our focus has been to ensure that the planning system continues to function through this difficult period. In achieving this, planners have shown themselves to be innovative, adaptable and resilient. Ways of working were transformed almost overnight, with cultural and technological obstacles quickly overcome. It's an extraordinary thing that technology has allowed us to keep the planning system running, given the fact that most people are doing it from their homes.

Looking forward, we need to ensure that, as we gradually return 'normality', we do not lose sight of the lessons that we have learned from this pandemic about the way we live, work and use our homes, our local places and spaces. What will change, why and how does that impact on planning?

Many of us have, over the past two months, experienced life in a very different way. Life has become more local, we have spent more time in and around our homes and our local areas – this is all we had. As a result the strengths and the weaknesses of each have become increasingly evident. The suitability of our homes as places to live, work and home school, 24/7, has for many of us been a real challenge. My heart goes out to those who live in cramped conditions, with no access to outdoor space, no access to local shops where essential supplies can be purchased, poor or no internet connectivity, or who are isolated from family and friends.

*“The COVID-19 crisis has given added emphasis to the importance of investing in the future, reinforcing the legitimacy of public investment in health and social care.”*

There is little doubt that the High Street has been severely impacted by the crisis; but if there's one thing the High Street is good at, it's evolving. So, how can we breathe new life back into our high streets and shopping centres, making them places that people want to visit once again; it may be that this requires a different way of thinking about the role of our town centres?

With 60% of the UK's adult population currently working from home, the Chief Executive of Barclays, Jes Staley, recently commented that “the notion of putting 7,000 people in a building may be a thing of the past”. How will this affect the

demand for, size and location of office space going forward and what will be the 'knock-on' impacts on 'spend' in those centres where people were based?

How will the need for social distancing change travel behaviour and will those changes be long-term? The capacity restrictions on our buses and trains has reduced occupancy to around 20% of pre COVID-19 levels and, aside from walking and cycling, the private car is seen by many as the safest form of transport. Reductions in travel, especially by air and private car, are already having a marked positive impact on carbon emissions and air quality, with the latter having clear associated health benefits. There is growing public pressure to ensure that these do not return to a pre COVID-19 level.

And what of our parks, green and open spaces? Their role in improving health and well-being has been well known since Victorian times. The quality of our spaces and places matters. We need to ensure that high quality, accessible green space / outdoor space is an integral part of all new development – it is not only good for mental and physical wellbeing, but also has a key role to play in mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Digital connectivity is the golden thread that is keeping society and families connected. But in places, especially rural areas, speeds are still painfully slow and connections at best 'flaky'. From remote schooling to home working and video conferencing, many of us have relied on digital technology to keep in touch with friends and family. Going forward, the importance of digital infrastructure and ensuring that the whole community is connected must feature prominently.

I am personally amazed and heartened by the rapid uptake of technology by the older generation, many of whom had until very recently sought to avoid it. And also by how much they are enjoying their new connectivity! The greater use of technology opens up real opportunities for better community engagement and debate in and about planning. As an early advocate of public speaking at planning committee, I was so pleased to see how some 'virtual' planning committees

# RTPI Research: Planning's Response to COVID-19

are seeing increased attendance by members of the public.

The COVID-19 crisis has given added emphasis to the importance of investing in the future, reinforcing the legitimacy of public investment in health and social care. However if we are to see lasting change for the better we also need to invest in good quality, well designed homes, spaces and places. There is much to reflect upon in the coming months and in doing so we must not lose sight of these and the many other important challenges, such as tackling climate change, that we were working on beforehand – these have not gone away! Planning must be centre stage in shaping our post COVID-19 future; and it must be properly resourced to deliver this. Planners have the skills and indeed the responsibility to lead the debate and it is vital that they are at the 'top table' when this happens.

*Sue Manns FRTPi, RTPI President*

The RTPI has published two reports in relation to responses by planning services across the UK and Ireland.

## Pragmatic and Prepared for the recovery

More than 1,000 RTPI members responded to the RTPI's online survey on COVID-19 in March and April 2020.

This paper gives the survey findings on how planning departments have been responding to this unprecedented situation as of May 2020.

The report aims to contribute to the immediate need for guidance on how to maintain effective planning services in a much changed environment and will inform the RTPI's continuing work with governments across the UK and Ireland.

It reviews early lessons and starts to assess how the profession can prepare to support the delivery of a sustainable economic recovery.

The report can be downloaded from the RTPI's [website](#).



## Wider insights from the Profession - The planning profession's rapid response to Covid-19

The RTPI has been collecting experiences of the immediate response to Covid-19 by planners from across every sector and part of the UK and Ireland.

In addition to publishing findings from our survey and other analysis, we are using this paper to amplify some of the leading voices in the private and third sectors.

The contributors to this paper have particular expertise in various areas of the response and have kindly provided us their views and analysis on this evolving situation.

The publication of these views does not imply RTPI endorsement for the positions described.

The report can be downloaded from the RTPI's [website](#).

## Coronavirus Hub

The RTPI website features a site where we have collated all the published information from governments across the UK and Ireland relating to planning. To access the hub go to: [www.rtpi.org.uk/news/coronavirus-hub/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/news/coronavirus-hub/).



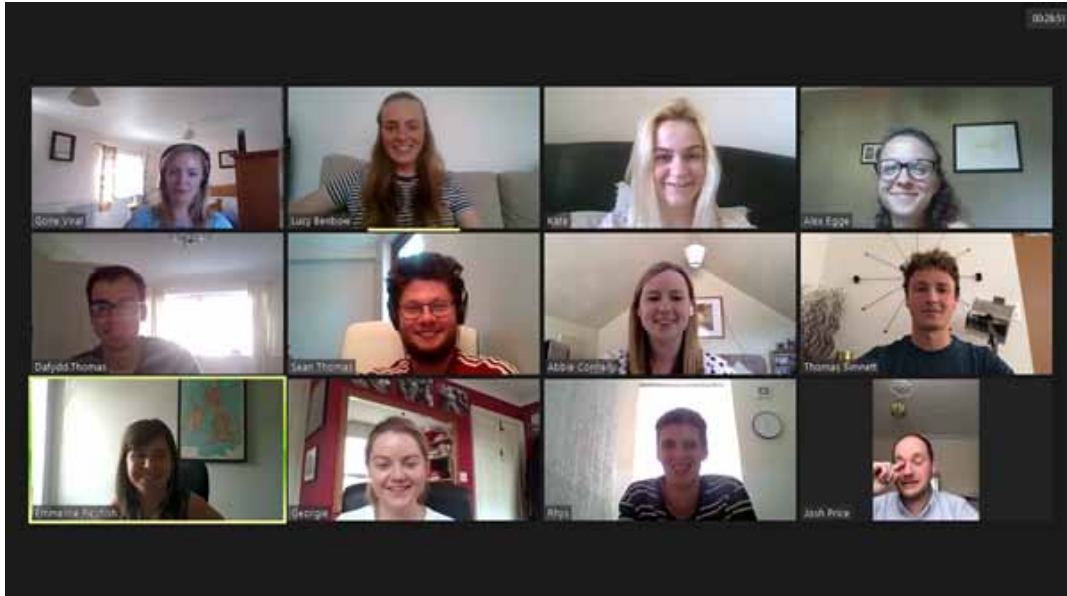
# Young Planners Powering Through

On behalf of the Young Planners Cymru (YPC) Steering Group, we hope you are all keeping well and staying safe during this time.



Despite this unpredictable and unsettling time, YPC has been as active as ever by adapting as a committee to provide solutions to the new normal. In light of the challenges, YPC has decided to hold our events online for the moment.

The success of transitioning our events onto a virtual platform can be seen through YPC's 'One Planet Development' (OPD) webinar. This took place on Tuesday the 19th May 2020, following Neil Harris and Allan Archer's blog on 'OPD: the opportunities and challenges of a living countryside', published within Cynllunio's Spring 2020 edition.



Above: YPC Steering Group meeting on-line

Originally, YPC organised a breakfast seminar with Neil Harris to discuss his recent work alongside Simon Coop, a Planning Director from Lichfields, who would discuss the topic from a private sector planning consultancy perspective - including his thoughts on the possibility of OPD being introduced at volume. (Un)fortunately, due to COVID-19, the breakfast seminar was moved online as a webinar.

Despite the lack of croissants available, the webinar attracted an audience of 58 attendees from a range of backgrounds and a variety of locations both nationally and internationally. Feedback

from the event has been overwhelmingly positive, with attendees praising the topics discussed and the format of the event, including its accessibility to a wider audience.

Following on from the webinar's success, we have plans to host a OPD follow-up webinar on Tuesday 21st July 2pm-3pm. David Thorpe (The Founder of the One Planet Council) and James Shorten (The Author of the One Planet Development Practice Guidance for Welsh Government) will be presenting the webinar – we will announce the date shortly. This will be a follow-up event to address some of the open-ended questions raised within our previous OPD event. These include: the potential for OPD to be introduced within larger scale developments; how OPD could become more appealing to consumers; and is it enough to focus the efforts of OPD on new development schemes or is there scope to work on reducing the footprint of the existing housing stock as well. Limited places will be available, so we recommend registering as soon as possible at: [www.rtpi.org.uk/OPDWales](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/OPDWales) to secure yourself a place.

Furthermore, we have plans to host a series of CPD webinars throughout the upcoming months which will cover a range of disciplines of those working within the planning and construction sector - dates will be announced soon.

If you're interested in YPC and have any suggestions for virtual events you would like to see from us, please get in touch! We will discuss any suggestions we receive at our virtual Steering Group meetings, and your help can shape YPC during this uncertain time.

We hope the continued presence of YPC can provide a much-needed distraction and focus, particularly for those within their final year at university and who are feeling unsure of times ahead.

To find out more, including information on upcoming events and how you can get involved, please visit the RTPI website or follow us on social media:

Twitter: @YPCymru

Facebook: Young Planners Cymru

LinkedIn: RTPI Young Planners Cymru

# Welsh planning excellence recognised at RTPI Awards 2020



Projects and teams from across Wales were celebrated at the RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence 2020.

This year we rolled out the virtual red carpet as we came together online to celebrate the RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence 2020.

Many congratulations to all of our winners and commended entries; especially to Marmalade Lane (submitted by TOWN & Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service) who won not only two project categories, but also the much coveted Silver Jubilee Cup.

It was good to see a number of entries for Wales selected as Finalists for this year and we are pleased that of these there was a winner and a commended entry.

Atriarc Planning, based in St. Clears, Carmarthenshire was selected by the judges as Winner in the Small Planning Consultancy of the Year (sponsored by Optimis Consulting).

**“The judges were extremely impressed by Atriarc Planning who, as a sole practitioner, outshone several larger firms. They felt that not only did the submission give the best description of work on a project in terms of the planning process, but outcomes too. The judges were impressed by the flexible approach, willingness to learn and the drive to see projects through to implementation. This entry showed a great deal of passion and dedication to projects and clients evidenced by the comprehensive service offered.”**

Thanks to everyone who joined us to celebrate the best in planning online this year. Continue the conversation on Twitter using #RTPIAwards.

The other Finalists from Wales in this year’s RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence are:

- Swansea Local Development Plan, submitted by Swansea Council (Plan Making Practice)
- Holyhead Market Hall Revitalisation, submitted by Isle of Anglesey County Council (Heritage and Culture)
- Alex Egge, Mott Macdonald (Young Planner of the Year)



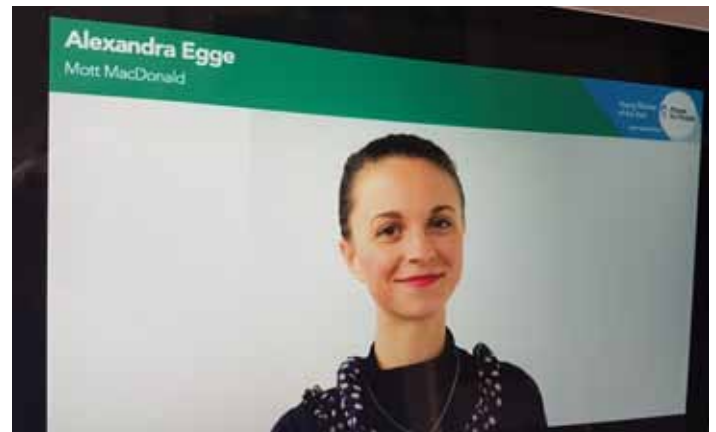
Above: Wayne Reynolds, Director of Atriarc Planning

Planning Aid Wales was Commended in the In-house Planning Team of the Year (sponsored by Savills).

**“The judges commended Planning Aid Wales for performing well across all entry criteria and were impressed by their digital facilitation and engagement process. They provided good examples of inclusivity and the judges admired the spirit of their work.”**

For more details on our finalists, commended and winners have a look at our winners’ brochure at: [www.rtpi.org.uk/media/5126/rtpi\\_a4\\_ape\\_20\\_winners\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/5126/rtpi_a4_ape_20_winners_brochure.pdf).

To relive the excitement, the ceremony can be viewed here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBm0V\\_O7HA8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBm0V_O7HA8)



# Events

In response to the need for social distancing and lockdown measures, the RTPI has moved its 2020 event programme on-line.

This is a wonderful opportunity to enable access to our content from all over the UK and internationally. To present you with the best and broadest opportunity for keeping up to date with the latest thinking or sharing best practice and maintaining your CPD, all RTPI online events will be free of charge during the lockdown period, under the unified brand RTPI Online Events. Here you can access all RTPI online events hosted by all our teams across the UK, whatever RTPI Region or Nation you are in. These events will stand apart from RTPI Training Masterclasses which will remain chargeable and are focused on deeper learning. Masterclasses are normally available in a face-to-face format but the Training team are also piloting some paid Masterclasses online, ensuring integration with RTPI Learn for a more blended learning approach (see next page).

## Marine and Coastal Planning in Wales

25 November 2020, 10:00am - 4:00pm

Online. Free

This event will address marine and coastal planning in Wales. 2019 saw the first Marine Plan adopted for Wales and work continues to develop coastal planning, and 2020 will see a new edition of TAN 15, merging technical advice for flooding and coastal planning.

Further information and to book a place go to: [www.rtpi.org.uk/marineplanningwales](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/marineplanningwales)

## The Planner Live Online

A week of digital disruption including webinars and video debates on the theme Planning in a post COVID-19 World during the week of 29 June to 3 July. Launching with the Presidential address at 10.30am on Monday 29 June, we will then be hosting a series of five webinars, one per day each looking at a particular aspect of planning's vital role in the art of the possible as the world recovers from this pandemic. We have invited a stellar cast of thought leaders and experts to discuss the issues and opportunities that the pandemic has created; how does place influence health and well-being – more important now than we could ever have imagined, what is the future of our commercial centres now? Lessons learned to inform new transport and infrastructure policies, climate action and the environment, and finally how will planning play its part in the socio-economic recovery, a debate that will be chaired by our President, Sue Manns. In addition to these daily webinars we will be taking over the virtual world with a mix of video debates including the UK Nation's Chief Planners, and the England Planning Inspectorate and webinars from across the UK.

The Planner Live Online is an evolving real time week-long event and we will be continuing to add sessions to it – please visit our [website](#) to find out more and watch the YouTube premieres and webinars that interest you, free of charge, and follow us on social media #plannerlive for updates.



## Wales' events

Our Spring Conference had been moved to November but it now looks as though we will still be social distancing at that time, so we will be holding this event free on-line - see left for details.

The Wales Planning Conference will now be held in the week of 21st September and will also be held on line but will be webinars held throughout the week. The theme, as advertised in the Spring Cynllunio, will continue to be **Planners Take Climate Action**. We will be announcing the programme later in June.

We will also be continuing with the Wales Enforcement Conference in October but this will be held on-line and will also be free to attend.

Do look out for other events during the year on our website and the regular member e-bulletin.



# Training



## Planning and community engagement

9 June 2020 at 9.30am to 12.30pm  
Online. Prices from £99

Community engagement is at the heart of planning and the more effective it is, the better the outcome for everyone. In this online masterclass, you will explore lessons learnt from experience to date and how to engage with groups effectively to achieve good planning outcomes.

Through a combination of expert trainer input, discussion and group work, you will:

- Understand the importance of community engagement has part of the planning process;
- Discover a range of tools and techniques for effective working with communities;
- Evaluate a variety of approaches to community engagement to select the most appropriate one for your projects.

This masterclass will be delivered through an interactive three hour webinar. There will also be a dedicated learning area for this masterclass inside RTPI Learn. It will be open for three months for structured, reflective activities with your trainer and other delegates before, during and after the live webinar.

Further information and to book a place go to: [www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2020/may/online-cpd-planning-and-community-engagement/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2020/may/online-cpd-planning-and-community-engagement/)

## Business Skills for planners

16 June 2020 at 1.30pm to 4.30pm  
Online. Prices from £99

This online masterclass focuses on the business skills planners need to succeed in both the private and public sectors.

Through a combination of expert trainer input, discussion and group work, you will:

- Use a range of tools and techniques for customer/client liaison
- Learn how to demonstrate the value of planning to clients, elected members and the community
- Gain insight into service planning and the management of planning teams

This masterclass will be delivered through an interactive three hour webinar. There will also be a dedicated learning area for this masterclass inside RTPI Learn. It will be open for three months for structured, reflective activities with your trainer and other delegates before, during and after the live webinar.

Further information and to book a place go to: [www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2020/may/online-cpd-business-skills-for-planners/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2020/may/online-cpd-business-skills-for-planners/)

## Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)

9 July 2020 at 9.30am to 12.30pm  
Online. Prices from £99

This online masterclass is built around the procedural steps a LPA undertakes in enabling and reviewing the EIA process. It will enable you to identify which developments need EIA, the topics to be scoped and covered, and will teach you how to identify and assess significant environmental effects of the proposals.

Through a combination of expert trainer input, discussion and group work, you will:

- Build your confidence across the EIA process
- Enhance your understanding of the EIA Regulations and the formal screening and scoping stages
- Gain valuable hints and tips around the Environmental Statement and decision notice
- Recognise the need for proportionate assessment and mitigation practice

This masterclass will be delivered through an interactive three hour webinar. There will also be a dedicated learning area for this masterclass inside RTPI Learn. It will be open for three months for structured, reflective activities with your trainer and other delegates before, during and after the live webinar.

Further information and to book a place go to: [www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2020/june/online-cpd-environmental-impact-assessments/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2020/june/online-cpd-environmental-impact-assessments/)



**RTPI**

Royal Town Planning Institute

# RTPI Online Events 2020

Access our online  
events from  
wherever you are:  
[rtpi.org.uk/online-  
events2020](https://rtpi.org.uk/online-events2020)

In a series of FREE weekly online events we will help planners navigate the current crisis, keep up their CPD and explore planning in a post-pandemic world.

- Webinars
- Online talks and discussions
- Virtual conferences

Members can also access free modules on a wide range of planning topics on [RTPI Learn](#).

[#RTPIOnlineEvents](#)