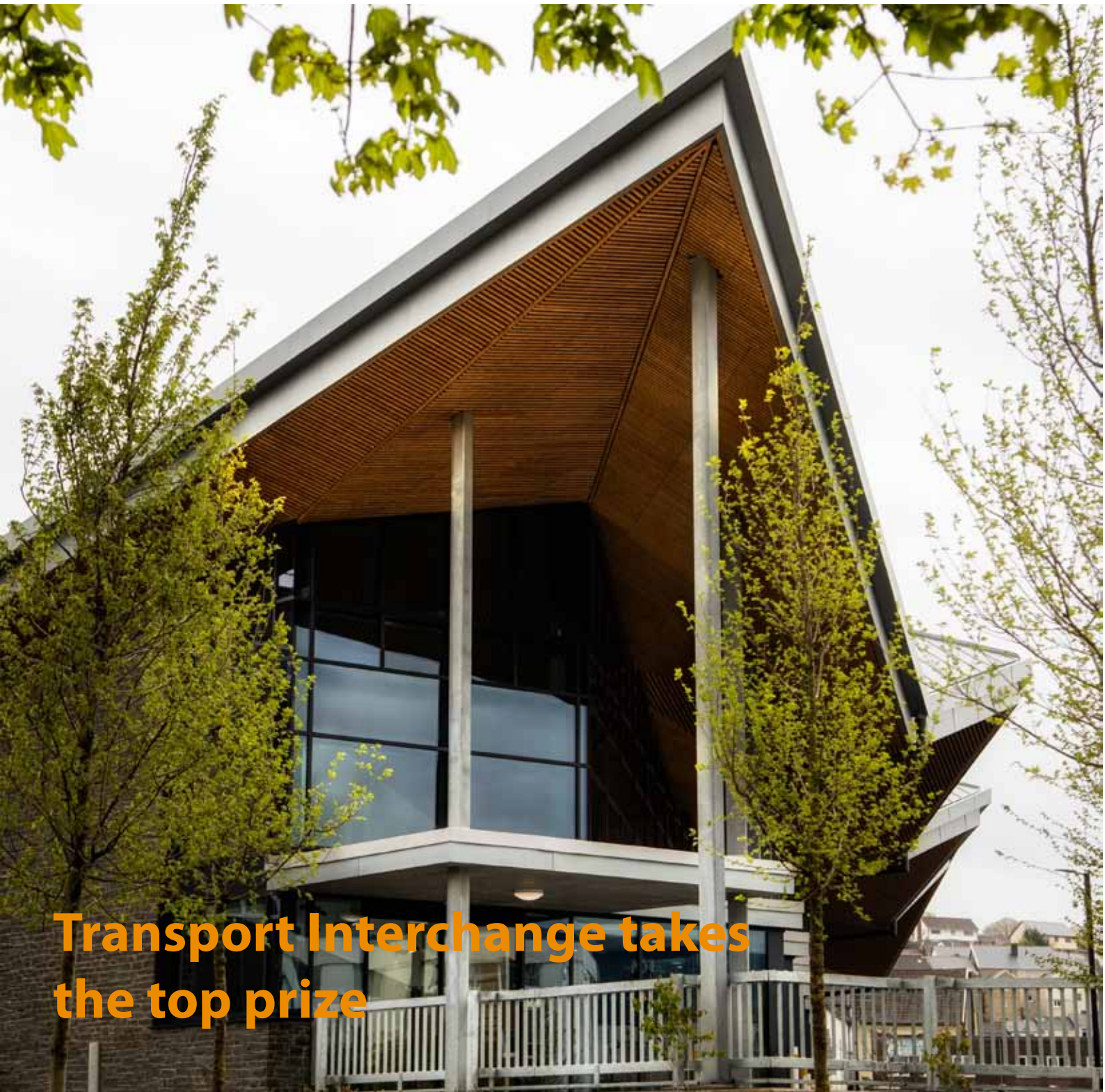


# Cynllunio

The Journal of RTPI Cymru



**Transport Interchange takes  
the top prize**

## RTPI Cymru Contacts

### Roisin Willmott

Director

Tel: 020 7929 8197

e-mail:

[roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk)

### Rhian Brimble

Policy Officer

Tel: 020 7929 9498

e-mail:

[rhian.brimble@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:rhian.brimble@rtpi.org.uk)

### Georgina Roberts

Administrative Assistant

Tel: 020 7929 8181

e-mail:

[georgina.roberts@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:georgina.roberts@rtpi.org.uk)

RTPI Cymru

Studio 107, Creative Quarter,

Morgan Arcade

Cardiff

CF10 1AF

For further information,  
please visit:

[www.rtpi.org.uk/wales](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/wales)

[@RTPICymru](https://www.facebook.com/RTPICymru)

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## Editor:

Roisin Willmott

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

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If you want to make  
contributions then get in touch  
on 020 7929 8197 or email:  
[roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk).

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**Front Cover:** Merthyr Tydfil Transport Interchange

## Editorial

Another year flies past. 2021 has been yet another busy year but somewhat muted with the continued requirement to keep our distance. In November, however, it was wonderful to welcome almost 100 members and guests to the Awards celebration event in Cardiff.

At this event the 2021 RTPI Cymru Awards for Planning Excellence were announced. Congratulations to all of the winners - you can read about these on page 12. We were also able to present the Student Awards and we were very pleased to be joined by a strong delegation from Cardiff University, see page 19.

Note the Awards in 2022 will be changing - we are introducing a more integrated approach between the Nations and Regions Awards with the RTPI-wide Awards. This means entries to the Wales' Awards will be invited early in 2022, so keep a look out for details.

We were pleased to be joined by RTPI President, Wei Yang, who made an impassioned and evidence-filled speech on climate action, which you can read on pages 8-9. This builds on the RTPI's delegation to COP26 in November, and I reflect on this in this edition also.

There has been a great deal happening on the planning policy and practice front and there are details throughout this edition.

This autumn we saw the new Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) organisation come into operation and we welcomed the announcement that Vicky Robinson has been announced as the first Chief Inspector for Wales. We look forward to working with Vicky and her team when she takes up her position early in 2022.

Young Planners Cymru have continued to be active and have been holding events - both virtually and in-person. They continue

to keep running excellent events and a good mix of CPD and social activities.

We will be seeing changes to RTPI Cymru in 2022 and there will be more detail on this next year.

One of the changes is that Georgina Roberts, our Administrative Assistant, has decided after a long term of service with the RTPI, that she is going to hang up her laptop and ditch the name badges and is retiring at the end of the year. She will be missed by us all and we wish her well. As a temporary measure, the Northern Ireland Administrative Assistant - Julie Sullivan - will be supporting our work in Wales.

So that just leaves me to wish you all a happy Christmas and a prosperous 2022 and we look forward to seeing you (hopefully in-person) in 2022.

*Roisin Willmott  
Editor*



## Farewell to Georgina Roberts

We say a fond farewell to Georgina Roberts, RTPI Cymru Administrative Assistant, as she leaves us at the end of the 2021.

Georgina has been with RTPI Cymru for almost 20 years and her name is well known to all our members in Wales. Georgina has looked after our Committee and been our principal communicator with members in Wales throughout - always with a smile.

We wish Georgina a happy and fulfilling retirement and thank her for her hard work and smiling greeting at events.



## Governance change ballot

In January 2022 we will be balloting members on a series of important changes to our governance structure. The proposals involve changes to the size of the Board of Trustees, a recalibration of the General Assembly and a series of changes to the Institute's bye-laws and regulations.

These changes will bring the Institute into line with current best practice guidelines issued by the Charity Commission, increasing transparency, accountability and good governance.

A smaller Board of Trustees will mean more efficient and agile decision making and that the changes will also give both the Board and the General Assembly renewed focus on the major issues that affect the profession.

The announcement of the ballot follows an independent review by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and a lengthy consultation process with members.

The ballot will be conducted by MiVoice. Members should look out for an email from MiVoice in January 2022.

The Board of Trustees and General Assembly strongly recommend that members vote in favour of the resolution.

## Congratulations to our latest Chartered Town Planners



Congratulations to our latest members elected in Wales:

### Chartered Members:

- Emily Currie, Lichfields
- Bradley Ferguson, Arcadis Ltd
- Georgina Thompson, Arcadis Ltd

### Associate Member:

- Geraint Blayney, National Resources Wales
- (Note those more recently elected will appear in the next edition of Cynllunio).*

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

[www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/assessment-of-professional-competence/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/assessment-of-professional-competence/)

## RTPI Cymru Policy Roundup

The recent publication of Welsh Government's new 'Net Zero Wales,' setting out the next steps (to 2025) to net zero by 2050 has called on "every citizen, community, group and business in Wales to embed the climate emergency in the way they think, work, play and travel."

Wales Climate Week, taking place in November, also gave us the chance to reflect and re-focus on our role(s) in tackling climate change.

These are issues that are certainly at the forefront of RTPI Cymru's policy and research work. The Senedd's Finance Committee is currently seeking information to inform the scrutiny of Welsh Government's 2022-23 Draft Budget proposals. Climate change will form an important part of RTPI Cymru's response to the Senedd Committee. We expect the Draft Budget to be significantly impacted by the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. However, while we recognise the impact of the pandemic and the need for a balanced recovery, we believe that there are equally many issues and challenges that must not be overlooked, such as long-term sustainability goals, including climate change. RTPI Cymru believes that alongside responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, these issues must remain priorities and at the forefront of planning for the future in Wales. We need to recognise the importance for our economic future in responding to the environmental challenges represented by the climate emergency. Aligning with other policies on this key area of concern for our future is of equally critical importance. The positive behavioural changes adopted as a result of the pandemic by the public, including more walking and cycling and an appreciation of green space and biodiversity, must influence the way that we approach climate change adaptation, mitigation and investment. In our response to the Senedd Committee, we will urge Welsh Government to be bold in its approach to integrating responses to climate change into its budget and policy frameworks addressing the recovery.

Welsh Government's 'Net Zero Wales' is available on the Welsh Government website: [gov.wales/net-zero-wales-carbon-budget-2-2021-2025](https://gov.wales/net-zero-wales-carbon-budget-2-2021-2025)

The Draft Budget Timetable 2022-23 is available on the Senedd website: [research.senedd.wales/financial-scrutiny/welsh-government-draft-budget-2022-23/](https://research.senedd.wales/financial-scrutiny/welsh-government-draft-budget-2022-23/)

*Rhian is Policy Officer for RTPI Cymru  
and can be contacted by e-mail: [rhian.brimble@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:rhian.brimble@rtpi.org.uk)*



## Chief Planners of Tomorrow

The RTPI's Chief Planners of Tomorrow scheme is now open for RTPI Young Planners to apply.

Chief Planners of Tomorrow is a work-shadowing scheme offering RTPI Young Planners the chance to step into the shoes of a Chief Planning Officer for the day.

The aim is to give participants opportunity to:

- Learn from the best - those who currently hold senior leadership roles in Local Authorities
- Understand what it's like to be 'at the top table' – the challenges and opportunities
- See how strategic decision making processes are made at top level

The initiative builds on work undertaken by the RTPI to champion good leadership in Planning and to provide our Chief Planners of the future with development opportunities.

To apply follow this link [www.rtpi.org.uk/find-your-rtpi/networks/rtpi-young-planners/chief-planners-of-tomorrow/](https://www.rtpi.org.uk/find-your-rtpi/networks/rtpi-young-planners/chief-planners-of-tomorrow/) or contact: [chiefplanners@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:chiefplanners@rtpi.org.uk)



As I write it's almost 4 weeks since the birth of Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW). It feels like an age away but at the same time I'm wondering where that month went!

Although all our staff transferred and our role has not changed we have a new case work system to get used to, as well as all the usual induction newbies need to go through to get bedded in to a new organisation. We're getting there, we've been made very welcome and everyone in Welsh Government has been friendly and helpful.

By friendly, I mean as anyone would hopefully be welcoming new colleagues. The need for us to remain independent and impartial is recognised and appreciated and governance is in place to ensure that.

Our first decision as PEDW was issued on 11 October, site visits recommenced on 18 October and virtual Hearings and Inquiries in the week of 25 October. In order to facilitate the transfer of casework documents in to our new system (around 130,000) we had to stop registering new cases in mid-September. We also had to stop inputting statements, representations etc on existing cases. We are working our way through these now and no one will be prejudiced or disadvantaged as a result.

What has changed? We have a new name, logo and contact details (see below) and a new portal but we have the same staff and functions and appeals and examinations will continue to be processed and decisions and recommendations made in accordance with Welsh policy and regulations. If I can be forgiven for plagiarising the lyrics of Won't get Fooled Again; 'Meet the new Inspector, Same as the old Inspector'.

*Tony Thickett*

*Deputy Chief Planning Inspector*

### Contact details

Appeal Casework / General Queries e-mail: [PEDW.GwaithAchos@llyw.cymru](mailto:PEDW.GwaithAchos@llyw.cymru) / [PEDW.Casework@gov.wales](mailto:PEDW.Casework@gov.wales)

Developments of National Significance / Offshore applications under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 e-mail: [PEDW.Seilwaith@llyw.cymru](mailto:PEDW.Seilwaith@llyw.cymru) / [PEDW.Infrastructure@gov.wales](mailto:PEDW.Infrastructure@gov.wales)

**Phone:** 0300 0604400

**Post:** Planning and Environment Decisions Wales, 2nd Floor, CP2, Crown Buildings, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

## Wales' First Chief Planning Inspector named

Julie James, Welsh Government Minister for Climate Change, has welcomed the appointment of Vicky Robinson as the first Chief Planning Inspector of Planning and Environment Decisions Wales.

Vicky is currently Operational Manager for Planning and Building Control at Vale of Glamorgan Council and will take up her appointment early in 2022.

The Minister said: "In her role, Vicky will drive forward PEDW's commitment to supporting sustainable development by providing an open, fair and impartial service that ensures all planning decisions meets the needs of its customers. I'm looking forward to her taking up her post next year".

Vicky Robinson said: "I'm both delighted and proud to be the first Chief Planning Inspector of Planning and Environment Decisions Wales, and starting a new chapter in both my career and planning in Wales. The role presents an excellent opportunity at a time of major changes and challenges.

"I'm eager to start work, begin engaging with stakeholders and help continue to raise the standard of the service for all of its customers in its new home within the Welsh Government".

Vicky has also been Chair of the Planning Officer's Society for Wales and sits on the Cardiff University and Royal Town Planning Institute Partnership Board.





## What I learned at COP 26

I've monitored climate negotiations from afar since the 1990s and this year I had the opportunity to attend – well not quite, I was in the 'Green Zone' across the river from the negotiations taking place in the 'Blue Zone'.

### What did I learn in my four days in Glasgow?

Did you know it's not the flatulence of cows that is the problem, it's their burping? - Do I have your attention now? Washing hands in warm water is the equivalent of driving 3.3 billion miles (although that did come from a Dettol executive, so I assume for washing hands in cold water you need to use certain products?) 7 million people die of air pollution every year. And apparently two electric vehicles use the same energy as one house (obviously depends on the size of both ... but on average), so they aren't the panacea.



There were many astounding – and alarming - facts given out across the convention, but they all point to one thing, inaction is no longer an option.

My headline takeaways can be distilled to:

- Listen. The groups most affected by climate change are young people and those minority developing countries, who are already suffering the effects. They are not being listened to by the negotiators.
- You can only achieve effective change if you offer the right choices.
- Preaching won't deliver change – you need to inspire, educate, incentivise (and dis-incentivise).
- When assessing the cost of making changes for climate action – set this next to what the cost of not taking action is. One session said that “accountants can save the world” and this is a point for them to take away.
- Data is an essential tool.

There was an abundance of information about tech solutions and something that caught my attention was the use of bioacoustics by Rainforest Connection. Using mobile phone transmission to transmit real-time sound recordings of the rain forests in Sumatra and the Amazon, with added sophisticated computer ability, sounds made by the wildlife in the forest have been 'learned' and interpreted to enable predictions to be made as much as five days in advance of illegal logging taking place. Rainforest Connection is a real Dr Dolittle service which interprets what the wildlife is saying to each other, picking up indicators of the loggers' scouts. This gives the local wardens the time to reach these remote locations to prevent or reduce logging.

Whilst this is exciting, as a planner, I know we hold many of the answers. Planning our world to reduce the carbon we all use and to promote bio-diversity - carbon reduction is only part of the story – is essential.





For me, the 'Green Zone' offered so much; whilst it wasn't part of the negotiations, which the world needs to be successful, it was in my view where the real value sat. There were wider perspectives and experiences shared, and opportunities for exploring independent action.

I'll give the last word to young people: Ellie, Youth Climate Ambassador for Wales, said "the value of COP is what goes on outside, sharing experiences and values." Shenona – another Youth Climate Ambassador for Wales - observed whilst visiting the Blue Zone "Leaders making the decisions overlook the people being affected." Exclusion is clear.

*Roisin Willmott*

*Director, RTPI Cymru*

## Elsewhere at COP26

During our time at in Glasgow the RTPI team was able to attend a wide range of official events in the Blue and Green Zones and also a number of 'fringe' events held in Glasgow and elsewhere in Scotland.

This included holding our own fringe event on World Town Planning Day (8th November) The Race to Net Zero: Why we need to plan the world we need. The RTPI organised the event in partnership with the Global Planners Network, Commonwealth Association of Planners and the International Society of City and Regional Planners. We had speakers from across the globe both joining us in Glasgow and some with video messages. We were particularly pleased to be joined by Executive Director of UN Habitat, Maimunah Mohd Sharif (see right).

On the night our audience was a mixture of in-person and on-line. You can view the video of the event at: [rtpi.livevideostream.co.uk](https://rtpi.livevideostream.co.uk)



*Images: Opportunities to meet, discuss planning and joint working, and in case you wondered - yes I took the train(s).*



# The role of the planning profession in delivering a net-zero emissions future

*RTPI President, Wei Yang FRTP, attended the RTPI Cymru Awards celebration in November held in Cardiff. Her speech to the event can be read below.*

The RTPI Cymru Awards for Planning Excellence celebrate outstanding students, academics, planners, plans and projects that demonstrate the power of planning. It is through these Awards that we can celebrate the very best, and in doing so - put planning in the spotlight for all to see.

Whilst we have all been affected by the pandemic, the planning profession has still been delivering excellence. Through these achievements we will continue to transform our communities, protect and enhance our environment and help shape successful and resilient economies for future generations.

In November, Roisin, I and other colleagues were in Glasgow attending COP26 on behalf of the RTPI. It was the most important climate summit since the landmark Paris Agreement was agreed at COP21 in 2015.

A short time after attending the two weeks' intensive programme in Glasgow, I am still stimulated by the sheer amount of energy and determination generated by many like-minded people I met at COP26. There was a strong consensus on the urgency of the climate crisis, the recognition of nature-based solutions, and the willingness to collaborate.

The true impacts of the key outcomes agreed at COP26 will need to stand the test of time. The biggest success from COP26 I think was "keeping 1.5C alive". Although highly ambitious and currently not on track, at least we haven't given up – haven't given up fighting for the survival of humanity.

In the post COP26 period, urgent actions, collaborations, and transformative changes need to happen immediately!

According to the analysis conducted by Carbon Brief after COP26, "current policies in place today will lead to a best-estimate of around 2.6C to 2.7C warming by the year twenty-one hundred (2100).

If countries meet both conditional and unconditional nationally determined contributions (NDCs) for the near-term target of 2030, projected warming by the year twenty-one hundred (2100) falls to 2.4C.

Finally, if countries meet their long-term net-zero promises, global warming would be reduced to around 1.8C by the year twenty-one hundred (2100), though temperatures would likely peak around 1.9C in the middle of the century before declining."

That means more radical actions and transformative policies are needed urgently. The "Glasgow Climate Pact" agreed at COP26 introduced a broad, political "cover decision" – requesting countries to further raise their ambition again next year at COP27.

## So, what is the role of the planning profession in this?

Town planners have a vital role to play.

Because planning is a key part of our national survival system. It should embed zero-carbon principles at all levels, nothing should be planned without having successfully demonstrated it is fit to take its place in a net-zero emissions future.

### **To achieve this, we need a place-based systems approach.**

The vast amount of research and studies for decades about climate change and bio-diversity decline are calling for one thing – utilising place-based spatial planning in a long term, strategic, multi-disciplinary, systems approach can be a transformative solution to coordinate the efforts from different professionals to achieve our overall mission of controlling climate change within the 'safe' limit.

It is also the most direct way to influence human activities and lifestyles.

According to the Sixth Carbon Budget published by the UK Climate Change Committee, societal and behavioural change can contribute to as much as 59% in the Balanced Net Zero Pathway.

**Future Wales – the National Plan 2040** published this year set the direction for development in Wales for the







next 20 years. As a spatial plan, Future Wales sets the direction for where the nation should be investing in infrastructure and development for the greater good of Wales and its people.

It's a perfect foundation which enables us to adopt a place-based systems approach. We also need to think multi-functionality and take multi-disciplinary approaches. It can maximise the efficiency and effectiveness, in planning more green spaces for existing communities, new national parks, new national forest, green transport corridors, new communities, low carbon transportation, as well as vibrant town centres for people to live, work and play.

A place-based systems approach would align local development frameworks and local plans with the national sustainability agenda, create mechanisms which enable planning across local authority boundaries.

The climate emergency and biodiversity crises are two sides of the same coin, and there is direct linkage between them and the pandemic.

Nature has to be our first priority.

Currently, in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - known as COP15 being held in China, a '30x30 targets', which aims to protect at least 30% of Earth's land and sea by 2030, is part of a package being negotiated for the next decade and beyond.

If the right approach is taken, we can find a 'high nature and low carbon' solution. We need a strategic, long-term, urban-rural, integrated approach which considers the whole territory as one ecological entity.

Everything is a part of a holistic, integrated and interconnected eco-system.

For COP26 the RTPI published a globally focused research paper - Urban Planning after Covid-19: supporting a global sustainable recovery. It complements the RTPI's ongoing work to understand how planners are responding to the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic and our engagement with COP26.

The report reflects on the current situation, and more importantly highlights what needs to change - **How can we do things differently to tackle climate change, as well as other grand challenges of our times?**

It highlighted that taking a holistic approach, urban planning can improve some of the key areas to tackle climate change and at the same time support a global sustainable recovery after Covid-19. That's including:

- Integrating housing, health and wellbeing in tackling place-based inequality
- Enabling a green industrial revolution
- Ensuring inclusive connectivity through low-carbon infrastructure.

A commitment to climate justice and disadvantaged communities should be the starting point for all urban planning activity.

Crucial to delivering communities fit for the future is a renewed focus on participation and an understanding that planners must recognise the needs and aspirations of individuals, communities and businesses.

Also, to empower and enable these, four areas of focus for policy and actions were emphasised including

- Governance and resourcing
- Joined-up national and local strategies
- Common objectives and metrics
- Data and technology

**All in all, we need a re-imagining of planning – a profession with a solution to offer.**

Planning should expand its scope to include place-based systems-thinking into plan-making, looking at the local and global, and social and environmental implications of urban development.

Recently, the UN Secretary-General said - **"The emissions gap is the result of a leadership gap."** COP26 certainly had a clear agenda to engage and convince global political and business leaders to take urgent climate actions. In my view, that's still not enough, the leadership gap needs to be filled both politically and professionally.

I believe it is time for the planning profession to take a leadership role in forging a common and collaborative sense of purpose with other good forces in wider society.

We need green, collaborative, creative, smart, and inclusive actions to resolve multifaceted challenges. We can create a valid range of practical solutions that effectively underpin measurable actions.

I am full of hope for our profession. I have no doubt the heyday of the planning profession is coming.

I look forward to working with you to unlock the full potential of the planning profession to deliver a net-zero emissions future!

*Dr Wei Yang FRTPI, RTPI President 2021*

# Holiday Homes in Wales

## *How can planning support the management of holiday homes?*

Pressure on housing in Wales is a well-documented issue and there are many factors contributing to this. The spiralling use of housing for short-term holiday lets and second homes, particularly in rural areas, is one such factor and has become the subject of controversy across Wales, evoking strong opinions for and against.

RTPI Cymru has published a paper to explore the issues and potential solutions with specific relevance to planning. This is a complex matter and as such will require multi-faceted solutions, many of which will not be planning such as taxation and licensing. The paper drew on published papers (referenced in the report) and valuable input via RTPI Cymru events covering the topic and a roundtable held in October. RTPI Cymru is very grateful to everyone that has shared their experiences and knowledge to inform our report.



We support the Welsh Government's three pronged approach incorporating taxation measures, a registration scheme and planning measures. We also support ongoing actions to address housing supply and affordability. We would emphasise that it is the taxation and licencing measures that would have the most control.

Potential planning measures are not straightforward and none offer quick solutions to effectively manage the use of market homes for holiday use. It is easier for planning to restrict new homes in relation to becoming second homes or holiday lets, but not the older housing stock.

Whilst an amendment to the Use Classes Order offers a relatively quick change and appears to offer the solution, it would be difficult to evidence and enforce, and would need to be applied across the whole of Wales in a blanket approach and not provide the targeted approach needed.

We would recommend Welsh Government focus resources on the planning measures to amend legislation to change the definition of development, to include short-term holiday lets. In September 2021, the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution announced the legislative programme which would include a draft consolidation Bill to bring the law on planning into a single statute. This would provide the opportunity to also include the change in the definition of development and we would recommend this is brought forward at the earliest opportunity. Regulations to implement this legislative change would also need to be brought forward and would therefore require investment in time by Welsh Government.

This proposal for planning would however, only be effective if accompanied by a licencing scheme and taxation changes, as well as resourcing LPAs to be able to implement the changes.

The report can be downloaded at: [www.rtpi.org.uk/holidayhomesinwales](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/holidayhomesinwales)

## Inquiry into second homes

The Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament Local Government and Housing Committee have launched an Inquiry into second homes.

The Committee's terms of reference for its inquiry are:

- To examine the recommendations made by Dr Simon Brooks in his report, Second homes: developing new policies in Wales, and the Welsh Government's response to those proposals.
- To consider the policy objectives and evaluate the evidence base for policy change in this area and to identify any gaps in knowledge and data.

Details of the Inquiry and how to submit evidence can be found at: [business.senedd.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=434&RPID=1027338770&cp=yes](https://business.senedd.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=434&RPID=1027338770&cp=yes) The deadline for submissions is Friday 14 January 2022.

Dr Simon Brooks' report can be downloaded from: [gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/second-homes-developing-new-policies-in-wales.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/second-homes-developing-new-policies-in-wales.pdf)





## Development Procedure (Consultees) (Wales) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Order 2021: Guidance on Fire and Rescue Authorities becoming statutory consultees

The Development Procedure (Consultees) (Wales) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Order 2021 (“the Order”) was laid on 27 October. The Order amends the Procedure Orders to introduce Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in Wales as ‘statutory consultees’ (including references to ‘specialist consultees’) for certain types of development at both pre-application and post-submission stages. This will apply to planning applications to be determined by local planning authorities (LPAs) and Developments of National Significance (DNS) applications determined by the Welsh Ministers.

The Order also makes consequential amendments to the criteria by which the ‘natural resources body for Wales’ (Natural Resources Wales) is consulted on matters of flood risk as a result of the replacement of the current TAN 15 development advice map with a new Flood Map for Planning.

The Order can be viewed here: [business.senedd.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=38256](https://business.senedd.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=38256)

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## Suspension of the new TAN 15: development, flood risk and coastal erosion

In September, there was a ‘soft launch’ of a new version of Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15, accompanied by a new Flood Map for Planning, ahead of their planned formal publication and coming into full effect on Wednesday 1 December 2021.

The Minister for Climate Change, Julie James, published a Written Statement on 23rd November 2021. In this she advised that since the soft launch some Local Authorities have raised concerns about the proposed new policy advice and map.

The advice in the new TAN 15 is based on a Flood Map for Planning that includes projections showing future flood risk areas as a result of climate change. The inclusion of such projections has caused some significant increases in the extent of the highest risk flood zones including in some city and town centres

The Statement said: “To allow local planning authorities to fully consider the impact of the climate change projections on their respective areas, I am suspending the coming into force of the new TAN 15 and Flood Map for Planning until 1st June 2023. I have written to local authorities setting out the work that must now be done to make communities that may be affected by climate change resilient.”

“The existing TAN 15, published in 2004, and the Development Advice Map will continue in the meantime as the framework for assessing flood risk in the planning system.

“I have informed the Llywydd that the suspension of TAN 15 and Flood Map for Planning will require legislation in the form of the Development Procedure (Consultees) (Wales) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Amendment) Order 2021.”

### Welsh Government Consultation: Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan

Welsh Government are consulting on proposals for the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan which offers support to Welsh speaking communities with a high concentration of second homes.

The proposals sit alongside other proposals being brought forward to address the impact of the concentration of second and holiday homes in concentrated parts of Wales.

The deadline for responses is comments by 22 February 2022 and further information is available from: [gov.wales/welsh-language-communities-housing-plan](https://gov.wales/welsh-language-communities-housing-plan)



Championing the very  
best examples of  
planning & planners  
in Wales

The RTPI Cymru Awards for Planning Excellence celebrate outstanding planners, plans and projects that demonstrate the power of planning.

The awards highlight exceptional examples of how planning and planners have a positive impact on our quality of life in creating exceptional places and protecting our environment. In recognising and rewarding excellence we aim to inspire others to achieve the same high standards.

We received an excellent response to the RTPI Cymru Awards for Planning Excellence 2021 and it challenged the Judges. We were pleased to receive entries from across Wales and from a mix of planning work, the range demonstrates the wide reach of planning.

**Congratulations to all the Finalists who all demonstrated planning excellence.**

## Winner

### Merthyr Tydfil Transport Interchange

*Submitted by: Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council - Planning Department working with Morgan Sindall and Capita.*

The Merthyr Tydfil Transport Interchange is a state of the art and stunning transport facility that sets itself apart while catering for the public transport needs of Merthyr Tydfil and the region. The newest developments created during this project link multiple public transport elements including bus, taxi and rail metro infrastructure. This has been completed to support future regeneration and growth of the town centre. All of this has been done with sustainability at the core, by introducing electrification of public transport and the facility itself, ensuring green renewable energy sources are prioritized, as well as other key environmental features.

The judges said:

**“This is an exemplar project delivering an inclusive approach at design, construction and operational stages that demonstrates how to make a substantive change to how an integrated transport system works. The approach was an excellent example of meaningful and inclusive engagement and there was a strong planning lead in evidence and included the Design Commission for Wales.**

**“The building is visually striking and is an innovative celebration of the modern face of public transport: a model for others to follow.”**



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For further information go to:  
[www.rtpi.org.uk/walesaward](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/walesaward)



## Highly Commended

### Conwy Green Infrastructure Assessment

*Submitted by: The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd, Conwy County Borough Council*

This Green Infrastructure Assessment (GIA), commissioned by Conwy County Borough Council, will guide the delivery of a greener, healthier, more biodiverse and prosperous Conwy up to 2033. The need for creation, enhancement or protection of GI has been assessed through a range of forums. This includes a policy review, stakeholder consultation and qualitative GIS analysis and mapping.

Proposals at the strategic scale have been enhanced by local proposals, which includes a multi-functional GI open space at Parc Hanes in Kinnel Bay. There are also GI recommendations for the development of Conwy's strategic sites and the Replacement Local Development Plan (RDLP).



## Highly Commended

### Zip World Tower

*Submitted by: Cadnant Planning, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Sturgess Ecology, Trysor, Bronwen Thomas Landscape Architect, Rhondda Geotechnical Services, Curtins, Cadarn Consulting Engineering, Peter Du Crane, Hepworth Acoustics.*

The iconic Tower Colliery was the last working colliery of its kind in the South Wales Valleys. After closing in 2008, the site became derelict. Some of the buildings at the site are listed and others are curtilage listed.

Much of the colliery site has been successfully redeveloped and houses a ZipWorld zipline, coaster kart ride and restaurant. Planning permission and listed building consent were required to facilitate the development, and there has been a massive boost to the local economy, tourism and cultural heritage resulting from the scheme.



## Commended

### St Paul's, Penarth

*Submitted by: Newydd Housing Association, Asbri Planning, CFW Architects, Vale of Glamorgan*

In 2011 St Paul's Church in Penarth had to close on health and safety grounds due to the level of disrepair that the site had fallen into. The development contributes to the provision of much-needed affordable housing, assisting in addressing the significant demand for affordable housing within the Vale of Glamorgan.

The retention of the front façade of the church was a key consideration, alongside the provision of a community hub to ensure that the site would retain its status as a long focal point and historic character.



## The Finalists

### Colwyn Bay Victoria Pier Project

*Conwy County Borough Council*

The project has replaced a derelict and dangerous eyesore with a community resource, retaining significant architectural features and enhancing Colwyn Bay as a tourist destination.



### Llantrisant Guildhall

*Llantrisant Guildhall CIO, Martin Hooker, Llantrisant Community Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, Alwyn Jones Architects, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Cadw, Visit Wales.*

Llantrisant Guildhall, dating from 1346, has been refurbished and extended to house exhibitions and provide a venue for a range of community based activities.



### Goodsheds, Barry

*Asbri Planning Limited on behalf of LoftCo and Newydd Housing Association, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Tony King Architect*

These developments in Barry comprise the first new sustainable urban high street in the UK where people can eat, shop, work, live and play.



### Technquest Science Capital Project

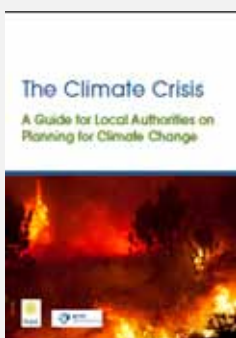
*Submitted by: Wardell Armstrong LLP, HLM Architects, Hydrock, Bureau Veritas, Cardiff Council*

The Science Capital project is a radical re-imagining of Technquest, allowing the science discovery centre to expand STEM to attract new and diverse audiences.



## The Climate Crisis

*A guide for local authorities on planning for climate change*



Jointly produced with the Town and Country Planning Association this guide shows how the planning system can help communities face the climate crisis. With the climate science clearly warning of the catastrophic impacts of climate change this new guide seeks to place Governments' ambitions for net zero as well as building community resilience to severe weather at the heart of the planning system. The guide makes clear the vital importance of the planning system in designing places which cut carbon through the promotion of energy efficiency, sustainable transport and renewable energy.

This guide is intended as an introduction to some of the key issues. It is a starting point on the vital journey to put in place practical solutions which will halt the rise in temperatures and begin to reverse the climate crisis.

The Guide can be downloaded from: [www.rtpi.org.uk/practice/2021/october/the-climate-crisis/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/practice/2021/october/the-climate-crisis/)





Coming soon... 

Our 2022 awards will open in January

[www.rtpi.org.uk/excellence](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/excellence)

## Awards opening soon with a refreshed approach

Now in their 45th year, the RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence continue to recognise and reward the brightest talent in the profession; the most outstanding projects, teams and people helping to transform economies, environments, and communities. Entering the Awards for Planning Excellence is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate your professional achievements and showcase your work.

For 2022, we're refreshing the awards to provide a more seamless entry process. The open for entries and closing date are the same across all nations and regions. As across the rest of the UK, the Northern Ireland entries will be judged locally with the winners being announced in the summer.

The top scoring entries across all categories will go through to the UK and Ireland finals, culminating in a national ceremony towards the end of the year where we will announce all our overall category winners, as well as award the Silver Jubilee Cup to the project deemed the most outstanding of all the project category winners.

The Awards for Planning Excellence are free to enter. You can start your entry on our online platform from 10 January, saving and making as many changes as you like until the entry deadline.

Visit [www.rtpi.org.uk/excellence](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/excellence) for more details. For the latest news, check #RTPIAwards on social media. We look forward to receiving your entries and wish everyone the best of luck.

# Planning's Digital Future – is it time to let the intelligent machines in?

In the legal sector, we are seeing a rapid rise in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to replace or supplement a variety of processes and streamline our work. This is not a replacement for a human legal mind, but the efficiencies that are being gained, for example through bulk review of documents is game changing.

Many other sectors are increasingly adopting AI-driven processes, so is there scope in the planning sector for such technology?

## A 'new digital system'

This is a pertinent question in many ways, but perhaps the government's recent budget promise of £65 million for a 'new digital system' to 'improve planning' brings this question into sharper relief.

In reality, this only represents around £150,000 per planning authority.

Obviously, such additional funds will be welcome, but it may not strike many as being a transformational amount of money. But what might it achieve if aimed at reaping the rewards of digitising the planning system? With the right direction and some out-of-the-box thinking, £65m could actually result in significant changes to the system.

In theory, machine learning could be used to determine planning applications. Machine learning is a process whereby an AI is trained by being fed a series of known data inputs and their resulting outcomes. The AI 'learns' the key factors behind the decision outcome. This then enables the algorithm to be fed a new set of inputs and use its 'learning' to determine the outcome.

The more data the AI receives, the better it becomes – in theory – at reaching rational decisions. That vast database of inputs for planning decisions is readily available on planning authorities' planning portals, potentially providing the 'big data' that machine learning needs. They also contain the binary outcomes: approved or rejected.

## Blue-sky thinking

Once trained, there are a variety of tasks that machine learning could be applied to. AI could validate applications and automatically inform applicants of defects, recommending the steps needed to achieve validation.

Machine learning could also quickly identify those types of application that need special treatment, such as EIA development, or applications that need referring to the Secretary of State. In addition, it could be used to deal with the administratively heavy statutory requirements of the notification and publication of applications.

In each case, the determination could be so fast that an applicant could ask for a 'pre-determination'. Also, akin to checking a credit score online, the system could politely – inform you that your application has zero prospects of success, but if a determined developer still wanted to progress and pay the application fee they are free to do so. Perhaps AI could go so far as to take over the delegated decision-making process for small-scale applications.

## Managing the risks

Of course, allowing a computer to make planning decisions would be controversial, at least until the technology became more mainstream. Instead, the machine learning output could stop short of making the decision and simply provide a recommendation, allowing the planning officer to have the final say on the planning application. This is similar to the way that AI is being used in the legal sector; the machine learning flags issues that then require expert consideration and appropriate advice to the client. Importantly, the AI is not replacing the human, but is stripping out the tasks that are time-consuming and routine, allowing the expert advisor to focus on exactly that – the expert advice.

And what if the decision is a refusal? The appeal system also has a huge database of historic decisions that could lend itself to machine learning, providing a valuable tool to supplement decision-making.

As a planning lawyer, wherever decisions are made, thoughts inevitably turn to the potential challenge of those decisions through judicial review. If a planning determination is churned out of an AI-driven process, where does that leave us in terms of challenging that decision? Can AI be Wednesbury irrational? How do we know what 'material considerations' were taken into account within the machine learning black box? Can AI produce an affidavit to justify its decision? Clearly not.

There still has to be a human at the end of the process, and in many cases a planning committee. The point is that AI could be used to streamline significant parts of the planning process and help to improve the final human decision-making process. This is not replacing the need for expert determination, but who would complain if their



job was made easier, that backlog of undecided planning applications was reduced and high quality decisions were issued more quickly?

## Conclusion

Seismic changes like these are inevitably met with concern and alarm. But what we have seen in the legal sector is not a reduction in the need for trained professionals; rather, significant efficiencies that both make a lawyer's job more interesting and reduce costs for clients.

Going back to the £65 million pot of money for digitising the system; chances are this will be used for smaller efficiency gains that will be helpful but perhaps miss the opportunity for something more revolutionary.

The question is now whether we choose to go for a small step forward by further deploying existing tools or a leap into the future by embracing new machine learning capabilities. The longer we wait, the more examples there are of AI delivering transformational change, and the harder it becomes to ignore the possibilities and not use these funds to deliver these kinds of improvements.

*Andrew Ryan and Fergus Charlton*

*Andrew is a Partner and Fergus is a Director in TLT's national Planning & Environment Team.*

*A version of this article was first published in The Planner*

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## Young Planners Wine Tasting Event: *Our first in person and sell out event in over a year!*

An evening of meeting new faces and reconnecting with familiar ones after such a long time – Young Planners Cymru's (YPC) first in person and sell out event in over a year, which took place on Thursday 14th October.

Mec Coffee hosted us in their shop in the Castle Arcade in Cardiff which in itself is worth a visit! Those in attendance learnt about a range of wines, how they are made naturally, and about the sustainable process that goes into making the grape which goes into the bottles that were tasted on the night.

It was fantastic to see the continued support from young planners from a variety of backgrounds who attended the wine tasting as we transition back to in person events. It was also a great opportunity to do some speed networking over a few glasses of extremely good wine! Feedback from the event has been overwhelmingly positive, with attendees very keen for our next networking event.



Thank you to Simply Planning Limited and Alex Smith (Director) for very kindly sponsoring the event.

YPC are already underway organising our Christmas Social so please keep an eye out for further details on the RTPI events page as well as YPC's social media pages to secure yourself a place:

**Twitter:** @YPCymru

**Facebook:** Young Planners Cymru

**LinkedIn:** RTPI Young Planners Cymru

If you're interested in joining the committee or and have suggestions for webinars and/or networking events you would like to see from us, please get in touch. We will discuss any webinar/networking event suggestions we receive at our virtual committee meetings and very much look forward to hearing your ideas!



## RTPI Cymru Executive Committee 2022

Following a call for nominations the RTPI Cymru Executive Committee for 2022 was confirmed at the Executive Meeting at its meeting in December.

<b>Chair:</b>	Rob Chichester MRTPI
<b>Senior Vice Chair:</b>	Joe Ayoubkhani MRTPI
<b>Junior Vice Chair:</b>	Allan Archer MRTPI
<b>Immediate Past Chair:</b>	Jane Jones MRTPI
<b>GA* Representatives:</b>	Neil Harris MRTPI Sean Taylor MRTPI
<b>Student / Licentiate:</b>	Kate Coventry MRTPI (Chair of YPC) Thom Simnett

### Corporate Members:

- Charlotte Ames MRTPI
- Chris Clarke MRTPI
- Aneurin Mon Parry MRTPI
- Alan Pitt MRTPI
- Simon Power MRTPI
- Will Ryan MRTPI

(\*GA is the RTPI's General Assembly)

If you are interested in finding out more please get in touch by contacting us at:  
[wales@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:wales@rtpi.org.uk)

If you would like to be involved, in the RTPI Cymru Executive Committee look out for nominations in the summer of 2022 for 2023.



Above: Rob Chichester, Chair RTPI Cymru



Above: Joe Ayoubkhani, Senior Vice Chair RTPI Cymru



Above: Allan Archer, Junior Vice Chair RTPI Cymru



Above: Jane Jones, Immediate Past Chair RTPI Cymru

## COP26 - 26th UN Climate Change Conference

The UK hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October – 12 November 2021. Further information can be found at: [ukcop26.org](http://ukcop26.org).

As reported elsewhere in this edition of Cynllunio, the RTPI took a delegation to attend COP26 and promote the role of planning as part of the solution. A great deal of information has been built up as a result and the RTPI has added a COP26 hub to our website, to provide a library of resources around tackling climate change for members. The COP26 hub can be accessed here: [www.rtpi.org.uk/new/cop26/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/new/cop26/)



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## RTPI Cymru Award for Academic Excellence 2021

Congratulations to Joseph Parsons and Tia Fishlock for being awarded the RTPI Cymru prize for Academic Excellence for 2020. The prizes are awarded based on the highest marks achieved in the first year of Cardiff University's two RTPI accredited undergraduate courses - BSc in Urban Planning and Development and the BSc in Geography and Planning.

The Awards were presented at the Awards Ceremony in Cardiff in November by Rob Chichester, RTPI Cymru Vice Chair.



Above: left - Tia Fishlock with Rob Chichester



Above: left - Joseph Parsons with Rob Chichester

## RTPI Education Prizes

At the Awards Ceremony in Cardiff in November, the RTPI's Education Prizes were also awarded.

Receiving the prizes from RTPI President, Wei Yang, were Joseph Parsons and India Yeardley. Congratulations to Joseph and India (pictured right).



We were pleased staff and students from Cardiff University were able to join us at the Awards Ceremony in November, pictured left with RTPI President Wei Yang.



# RTPI Cymru's Award Ceremony and Catch up Event - November 2021







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