

# Appointment of Members to the Board of Natural Resources Wales announced

Catherine Brown and Professor Steve Ormerod have been appointed for three years, together with Julia Cherrett, Dr Rosie Plummer and Professor Peter Rigby who have been appointed for two years. They will join the five current members of the Board and the recently appointed Interim Chair, Sir David Henshaw.

The members who are leaving the Board at the end of October are Dr Madeleine Havard, Andy Middleton, Dr Ruth Hall, Nigel Reader and Sir Paul Williams.

They have each completed six years of service on the Board of NRW, including five months in advance of NRW's launch in April 2013.

The Board now has three people who are able to speak Welsh. In an effort to strengthen these skills on the Board, the Cabinet Secretary has asked the Advisory Assessment Panel to look again at those who applied and are able to converse fluently in Welsh. The intention is to appoint someone before the end of this year, taking the number of Board members to 12, including the Chief Executive.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Natural Resources Wales is responsible for sustainably managing, maintaining and using Wales’ natural resources and I attach great importance to its role and the work of its board. I am pleased to announce the new members to help the organisation in their important work. In addition, I would like to thank the outgoing Board members for their commitment and support to NRW over the years.”

Sir David Henshaw:

“I am very pleased to have the opportunity to work with these new members. They, together with the existing members, will help me in my role to support this organisation to building more effective structures and ways of working.”

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## “Wales’ justice arrangements are not

# fit for purpose” Counsel General tells Law Society event

Speaking to an audience of legal practitioners the Counsel General will say:

“We must realise a vision for Wales that reflects the values and particular characteristics of Welsh society and is based on fairness, and social and economic justice, by developing a distinct justice system for Wales.”

“One of the most profound challenges to a fair and equitable justice system is the increasing pressure brought about by repeated cuts in funding. In Wales we have experienced disproportionately higher cuts to legal aid compared to those for the whole of England and Wales. Legal Aid provision is facing a fundamental crisis in the UK today and we need to take action.”

The Counsel General will argue that current justice arrangements are not fit for purpose and that policing and justice need to be devolved in order to deliver a fair and equitable justice system in Wales.

He will say;

“Another major challenge facing the justice system in Wales is the integration of justice with public services. Our current system of government is complex and confusing and inconsistent with the rest of the UK and other decentralised legislatures across the world. This is largely due to the growing divergence between the laws in England and Wales and the UK Government’s wish to protect a single legal jurisdiction. This impacts upon our ability to provide efficient and effective, joined-up public services for Wales.

Speaking about the inaugural Justice Week event he continued;

“It is important to bring justice and the rule of the law to the forefront of public and political thinking, especially during a time of significant change. Many of the events taking place this week will present an opportunity for discussions and debate about innovative solutions and I encourage all with an interest to get involved.”

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# UK Government must end austerity and provide the much-needed funding boost for public services and the economy – Mark Drakeford

In a letter to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford set out Wales' priorities ahead of the Autumn Budget on Monday 29 October 2018.

The Finance Secretary is urging the UK government to make a series of commitments to Wales, including:

- delivering on its promise that Wales will not lose a penny of funding from the decision to leave the EU
- increasing our borrowing capacity to support ongoing investment priorities
- assurance that the costs arising from the recently announced pay deals and pension changes will be fully funded
- continuing constructive joint working on the four new tax ideas
- recognise expert reports and reverse the decision not to devolve Air Passenger Duty to Wales
- address the significant under-investment in Wales' rail infrastructure and commit to an equitable share of rail funding for Wales

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“We have repeatedly called for an end to the UK Government’s failed austerity policy. Whilst I cautiously welcome the Prime Minister’s recent indication that austerity is coming to an end, I look forward to hearing what this means in practice. It’s time for the UK Government to increase public spending to meet the growing demands for public services and repair the damage inflicted by a decade of cuts.

“There remains significant pressure on the resources available to the Welsh Government to invest in infrastructure. We already make full use of our borrowing capacity, but in order to continue to deliver our ongoing investment priorities we need to see an increase.

“We have consistently called for an end to the cap on public sector pay, so we welcome announcements of pay deals in excess of 1%. We now expect the UK Government to provide the requisite funding – for all workforce groups – to avoid increases in pay impacting on the delivery of vital public services.”

The Finance Secretary also urged the UK government to ensure that Wales receives the same level of funding from current EU programmes after Brexit – without any top slicing or conditions attached.

He added:

“Brexit related uncertainties continue to depress the growth prospects for Wales and the UK as a whole. The Chief Economist’s Report published earlier this month, notes, in line with a range of independent experts, that our economy may already be around 2 per cent smaller as a result of the referendum result. A no-deal Brexit is likely to be catastrophic for the Welsh economy.

“I expect the UK Government to deliver the referendum promise that Wales would not lose out on a penny from the decision to leave the EU. Withdrawal from the EU must not take money from our communities or restrict our ability to continue investing in the economy and people of Wales.”

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## Wales and Scotland Health Secretaries raise serious concerns about EU Settlement Scheme

Both Health Secretaries believe including family members in the scheme would potentially help remove some of the uncertainty for EU staff at this unsettling time. It would also send a clear signal of how much the contribution they make to health and social care services across the UK is valued.

In the letter, the Secretaries state their view that the scheme as currently proposed is much more likely to deter, rather than to encourage, our EU staff from taking the opportunity to clarify their immigration status ahead of the UK leaving the EU on 29 March 2019.

They have called for the UK Government to reconsider their decision or the Welsh and Scottish Government will not actively promote the scheme to health and social care staff in Wales and Scotland.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“We want to be able to provide a level of certainty for EU staff and their families working in the health service in Wales. They deserve nothing less and we pay tribute to those who come from the

EU and beyond who provide care and life-saving treatment to the people of Wales.

“These proposals are simply unacceptable as they stand. They add to a feeling of huge frustration fuelled by the severe lack of meaningful engagement with us on the wide range of challenges facing the NHS across UK post-Brexit.

“Unless the UK Government changes its mind and makes the decent decision we will not be promoting the scheme in Wales although it will be open to health and social care staff in Wales to apply for settled status as part of the pilot if they choose to do so.”

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## **£1.7 million EU funds to boost Wales' manufacturing sector**

The EU funding will support small and medium-sized enterprises to maximise the use of advanced technology to create new and improved processes and products as part of the £2.8 million Advanced Design Engineering project.

Led by the University of Wales Trinity St David, the project will support manufacturing businesses to move away from traditional manufacturing methods to new processes, helping to increase their competitiveness and sustainability in global markets.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

“This EU-funded scheme will equip the Welsh manufacturing sector with the knowledge needed to take advantage of emerging technology trends to compete in global markets.

“This investment will help drive employment, productivity and growth in our economy.”

Professor Medwin Hughes, vice chancellor of University Wales Trinity St David, added:

“The university has a long tradition of working in partnership with industry and delivering programmes and collaborations which meet the needs of industry. We are delighted to have secured funding to deliver the next level of collaborations, which will allow us to work with the manufacturing sector to respond to the technological challenges of the fourth industrial revolution.

“It will also enable us to support manufacturing SMEs to embrace the significant opportunities to help Welsh industry – particularly the manufacturing sector – respond to rapid technological change.

“The university shares the Welsh Government’s ambition to secure future employment, productivity and growth in the country’s economy and is very pleased to be making its research capabilities in advanced manufacturing available to companies by collaborating in this way.”