



The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site 2022-23 Annual Report

Compiled by Llechi Cymru



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The Slate Landscape of
Northwest Wales
Inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 2021

Foreword

Lord Dafydd Wigley

Chair, Llechi Cymru Partnership Board



The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site

The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales was inscribed as Wales's fourth World Heritage Site (WHS) by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee on July the 28th, 2021.

The three other Welsh World Heritage Sites are the Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd, Blaenavon Industrial Landscape and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal.

There are currently 33 World Heritage Sites in the UK and within its overseas territories.

This is a landscape and a story worthy of recognition. The Welsh slate industry employed thousands of people, transforming parts of the agricultural landscape into the industrial centre for slate production during the Industrial Revolution. The feats of engineering and technological innovation employed in the extraction, processing and transportation of slate are awe-inspiring, with quarrying activity carving out entire mountainsides in some instances. The towns, villages and communities which grew in quarrying areas also altered the physical landscape, this growth also affected change in the cultural landscape, helping strengthen the Welsh language. These communities also created literature, music and art of international significance. Slate was a global product, it 'roofed the world'. Technology and skills were exported too, as the extraction of Welsh slate became a model for quarries in other parts of the world.

Today, the slate industry continues to make an important contribution to our economy. Extraction and processing take place adjacent to two of the WHS component parts.

Of course, every industrial landscape has its complexities. There's a lot to celebrate here, but what of those more sobering elements? In 1903 The Great Strike at Penrhyn Quarry brought much suffering and hardship to Dyffryn Ogwen. Or what of working conditions? Consider how many lads and men were taken early in an often unforgiving working environment; consider the effect such losses would have had on families and communities. These somewhat less celebratory elements must also form part of the conservation on this iconic, yet nuanced landscape.

In a recent survey conducted among Gwynedd residents, the majority of respondents said they viewed the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales's designation as a WHS as something positive. One gentleman replied, when asked how he felt about the designation: 'My grandfather worked in the [Dinorwig] quarry, and it was a difficult, dangerous life; low pay, full of hardship. But this is part of *our* history'

This Report

So, two years on from inscription, how are things progressing? What have we achieved so far in terms of protecting and conserving this, one of our most important and internationally significant historic landscapes? Or what of our efforts to reinforce cultural distinctiveness, strengthen the Welsh language and become a significant driver for economic regeneration and social inclusion in the WHS?

Managing expectation regarding the speed of progress has ever been a challenge – benefitting from World Heritage status was always going to take time. Yet we are now starting to see real headway in terms of both economic benefit and conservation.

We'll be taking stock of this progress during the last twelve months or so, whilst outlining some of our future plans.



Lord Dafydd Wigley

Chair, Llechi Cymru Partnership Board



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1. Background

The journey to inscription as a WHS was a long one, the idea was first proposed during the mid-1990s. In 2009 the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales was added to the UK Government's Tentative List – a list of potential nominees for UNESCO World Heritage status. In 2018 it was announced that the UK's next bid for World Heritage status would be for the Slate Landscape. The nomination process followed, before inscription in June 2021.

A bid (or nomination) for World Heritage status is based on a statement of Outstanding Universal Value, which, for the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales, is (in synthesis):

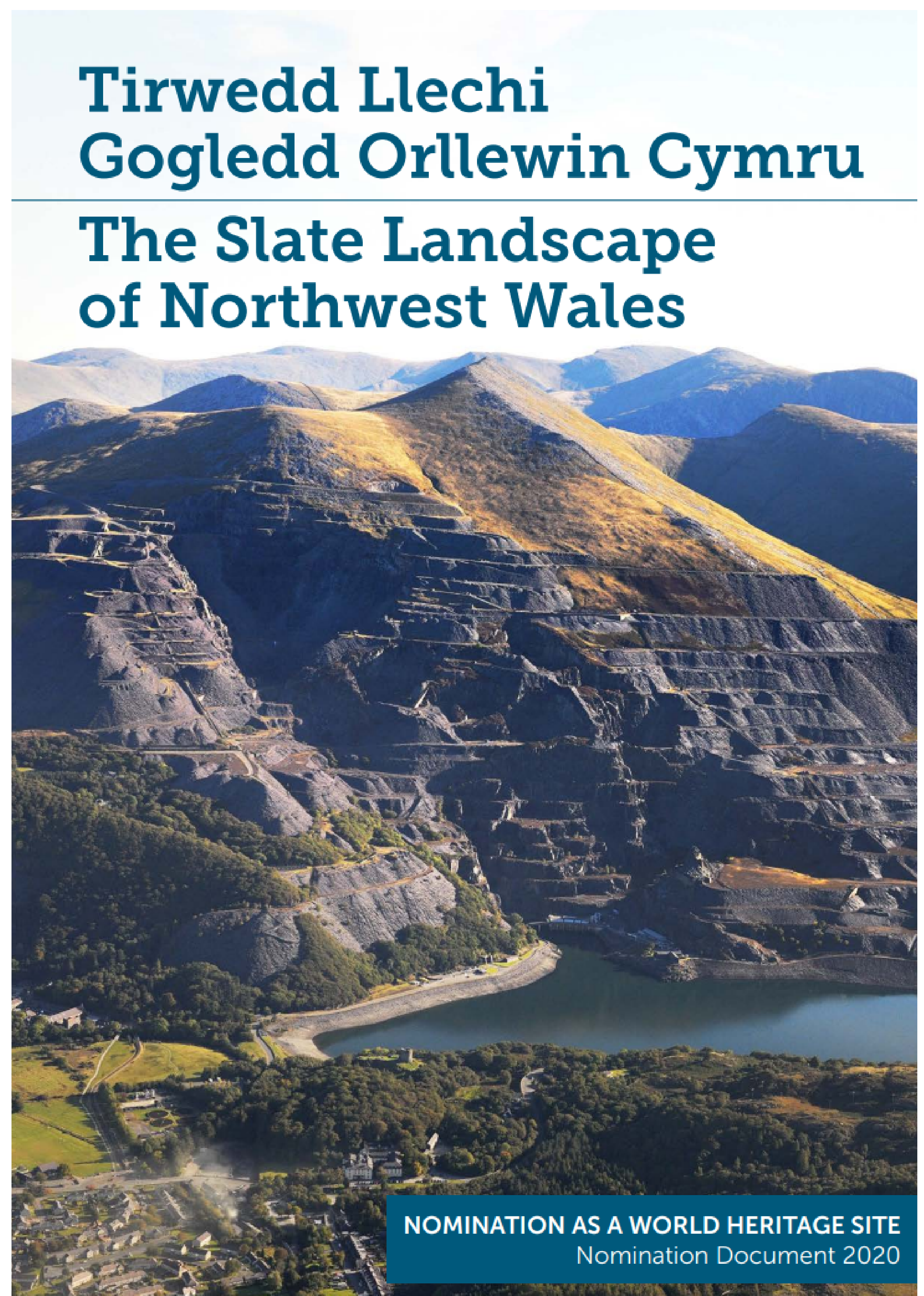
The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales represents an exceptional example of an industrial cultural landscape that was profoundly shaped by large-scale slate quarrying and underground mining and by the working and transport of slate for national and international markets. The industry, particularly in the period from 1780 to 1940, dominated the world production of roofing slates, opened up new slate quarries and mines across the world through cultural transfer of technology and skills, and transformed both the environment and the way of life of those who lived and worked in the mountains of Eryri.

As part of the designation process, sites must meet one or more of ten criteria which, in our instance, are:

- Criterion ii: The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales exhibits an important interchange, particularly in the period from 1780 to 1940, on developments in architecture and technology.
- Criterion iv: The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales is an outstanding example of a stone quarrying and mining landscape which illustrates the extent of transformation of an agricultural environment during the Industrial Revolution.

Click [here](#) to view the Nomination Document.

Click [here](#) the UNESCO World Heritage Convention Policy Compendium.

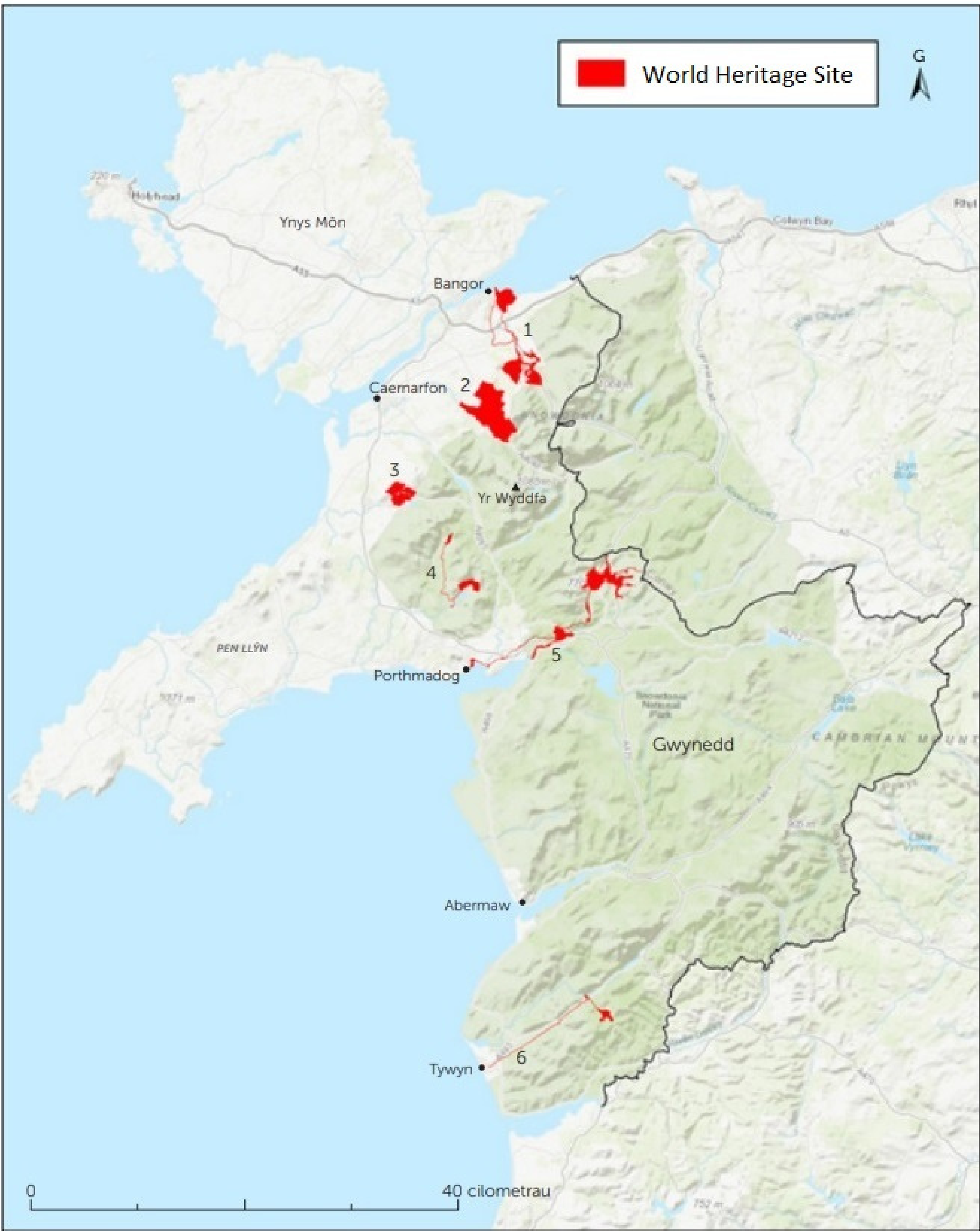


The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales WHS consists of six component parts. The **Nomination Document** summarises the location, setting and key elements of each of these parts.

Vision

Our aim is to look after and celebrate the heritage of this compelling landscape. But this is also a living landscape - people live and work here. Our vision is to build on this prestigious status in order to protect our history and heritage, whilst promoting and improving the region for the benefit of local communities and businesses:

Protect, conserve, improve and convey the area's important features to reinforce the cultural uniqueness and strengthen the Welsh language, and become an important catalyst for economic regeneration and social inclusion.



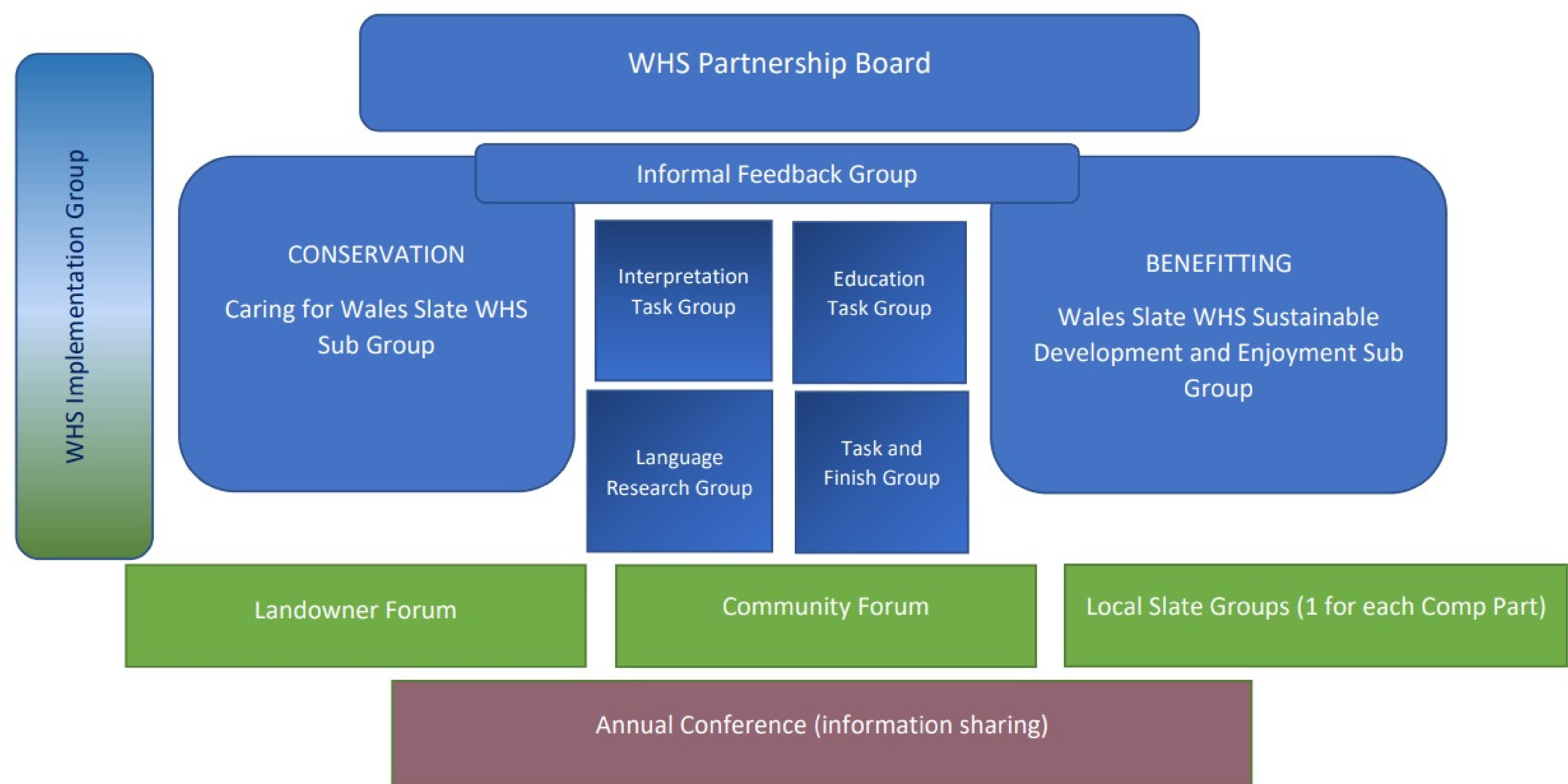
2. Governance and Management

Each WHS is managed by an accountable body, which in this instance is Cyngor Gwynedd, or more specifically the Llechi Cymru (Wales Slate) team. The team at Cyngor Gwynedd are responsible for the day to day running of the site at an operational level with partners across the landscape providing site-specific operational management and support for their sites.

The WHS Partnership Board is responsible for the running of the site at a strategic level.

Community, business, third sector and organisational representatives sit on the sub-groups within the management structure; they feed activities, concerns or ideas up to the Partnership Board, and also disseminate information from Board level to local stakeholders.

Wales Slate Governance Structure

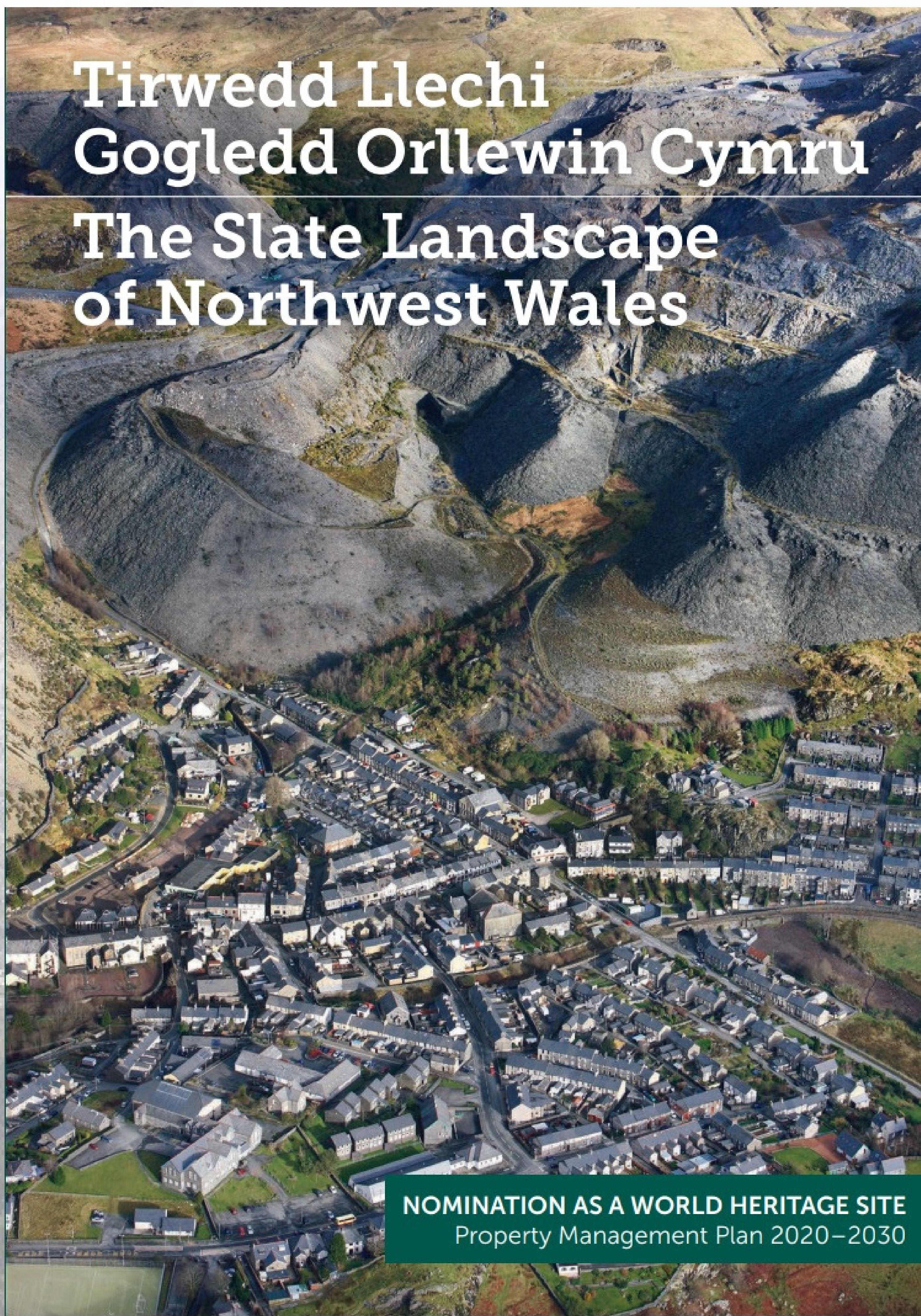


Partnership Board, Conservation sub-group and Benefitting sub-group meetings are quarterly. The remaining groups meet as and when required. Click [here](#) to view minutes of past Partnership Board meetings.

For more information on the WHS management structure and to view the current list of Partnership Board members, click [here](#).

The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales WHS Management Plan

The Management Plan sets out how the WHS is managed, cared for, developed and enjoyed. It includes a corresponding Action Plan, geared towards developing and implementing management strategies and initiatives, it is a document that runs from 2010 – 2020, with the actions being reviewed annually. Click [here](#) to view the Management Plan.



2022-23 Annual Meeting



Our annual meeting took place in CellB, Blaenau Ffestiniog. Taking stock of some of our management strategies and initiatives, we looked at progress over the last year and outlined some of our future plans. Members of the local community contributed to the programme of presentations. Attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions to our panel.

Northwest Wales World Heritage Coordinator

A Northwest Wales World Heritage Coordinator has been appointed. This was a 2022-23 management and governance priority. The coordinator is helping facilitate activity in the two Northwest Wales World Heritage Sites (The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales and The Castles and Walled Towns of Edward I in Gwynedd). The post is funded by Cyngor Gwynedd and Welsh Government (Cadw).



3. Caring for The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales



Modern historic environment conservation practice recognises the need to strike a balance between preservation, access and use. It is by enjoying, using and adaptively reusing our historic assets – our buildings, monuments and landscapes – that we can manage, maintain and retain them for the benefit of communities today and for future generations. This is the basis of sustainable heritage management.

The WHS Conservation sub-group meets on a quarterly basis, developing and implementing appropriate protection and conservation measures.

Here are some of the ways in which conservation has, and is being managed in the WHS.

Informal Feedback on Potential Developments within the WHS

We’ve seen an increase in take up for our informal feedback sessions. Developers are given an opportunity to gain informal feedback on potential developments within or near the WHS, prior to commencement of the formal planning process. These sessions are voluntary, and have, to date, garnered a good deal of positive feedback. The sessions are an effective means of bringing together representatives from planning, conservation, economic development and community consultation backgrounds to offer professional feedback within a WHS context. A variety of organisations from both the private and public sectors are taking advantage of these sessions.

For more information on the process click [here](#).

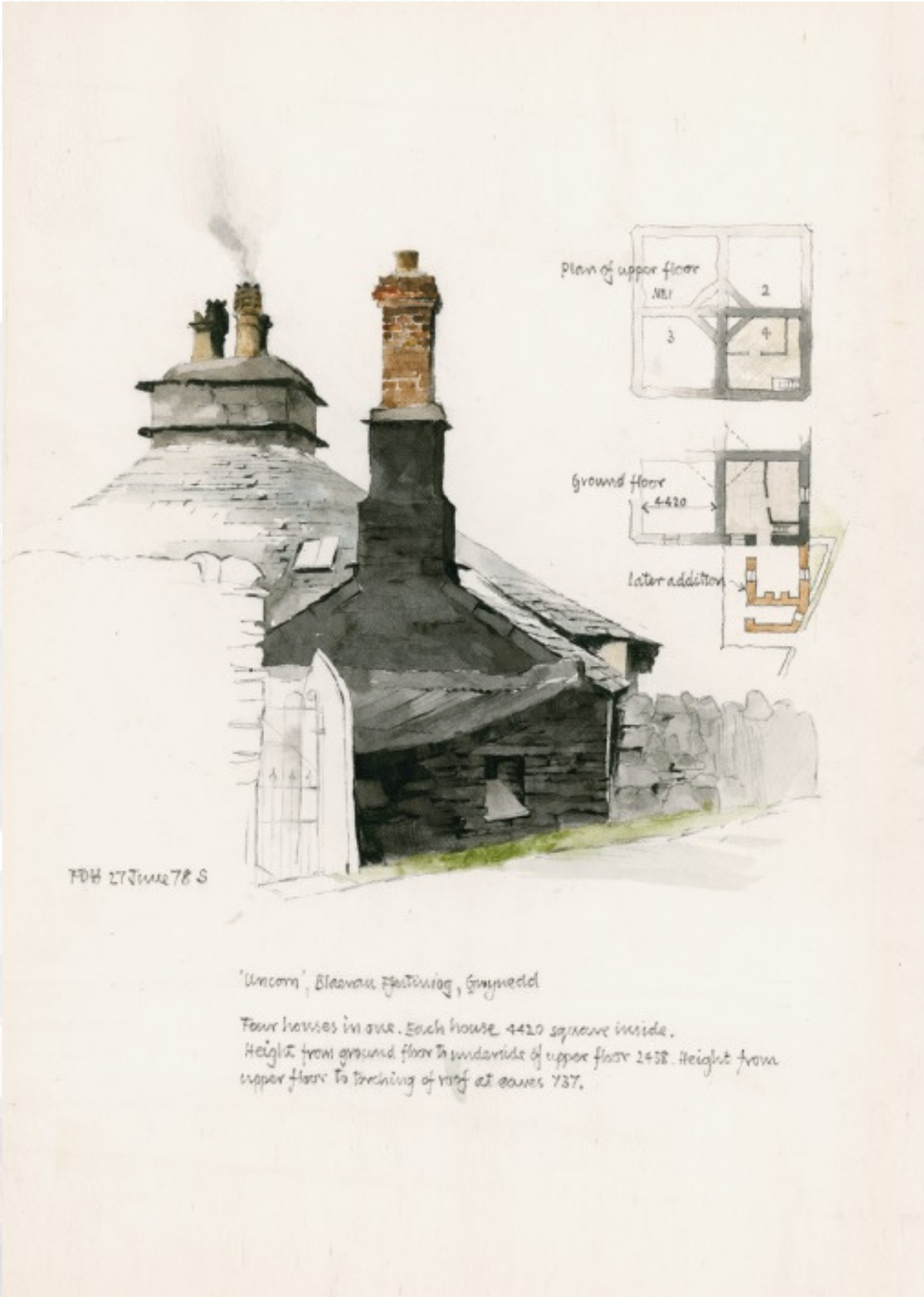
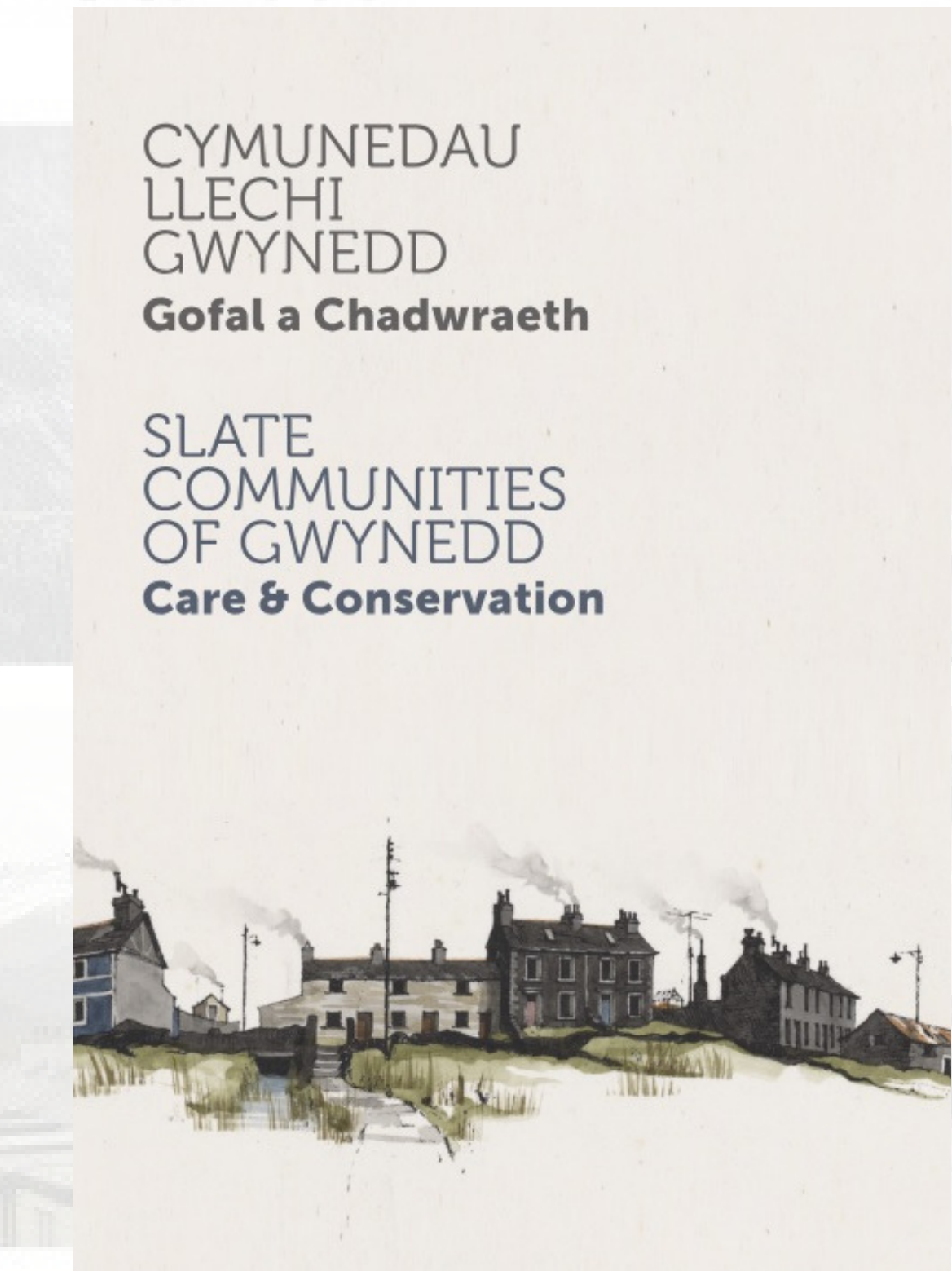
Training for Decision Makers

WHS-themed sessions formed part of a wider training programme for planning officers (Cyngor Gwynedd and Eryri National Park) and local planning committee members. WHS elements of this training focused on our Slate Landscape Supplementary Planning Guidance. Click [here](#) to view this guidance. Such provision helps ensure decision makers take into account World Heritage status, where appropriate, when making planning decisions.

Slate Communities of Gwynedd: Care & Conservation

For those interested in the unique character of the towns, villages and communities in the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales, this guide is worth reading. It is aimed at property owners and outlines the rich heritage of our slate communities and offers practical advice on preserving and restoring the character of buildings in order to safeguard the important historic character of our slate communities. There’s a brief overview of planning policy and processes, along with information on where to find further guidance.

View the guide [here](#).



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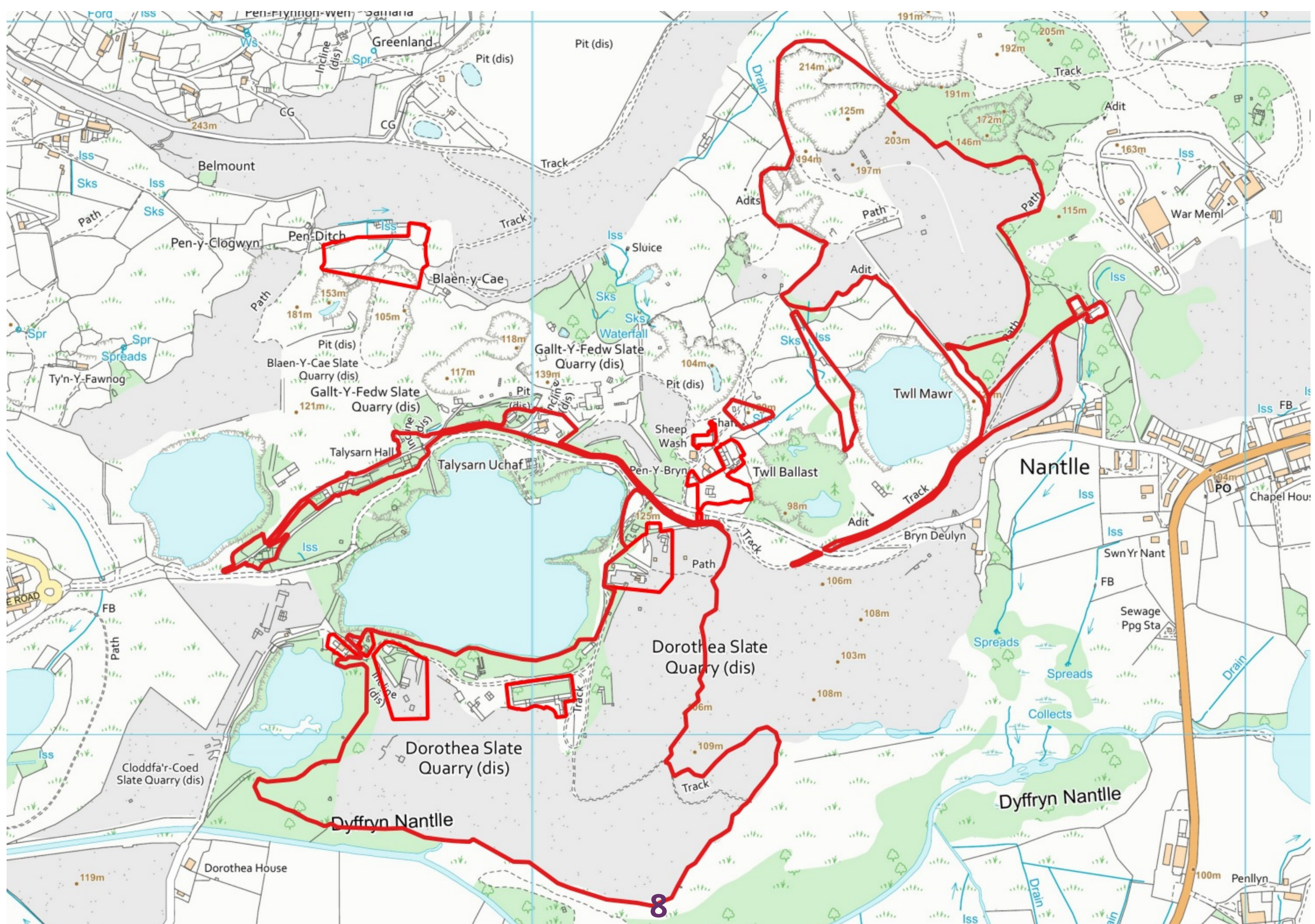


Scheduling



An important aspect of protecting historic assets within the WHS is an ongoing scheduling programme. The Welsh Government (Cadw) is responsible for the statutory designation of historic assets. Scheduling is the means of protection applied to relict historic structures and archaeological sites which are no longer in, or capable of being in active use. Many historic assets within the WHS have already been scheduled and a programme of scheduling for the remaining historic assets which meet the criteria for protection is underway.

In 2022-23 scheduling in the WHS focussed on revisions and new schedulings in the Nantlle area (Component Part 3). See map, below. Scheduled areas are denoted in red.



More recently, revisions are ongoing in Component Part 3 at Chwarel Pen yr Orsedd and also Component Part 2, at Chwarel Dinorwig.

As well as protection via scheduling, there are instances where immediate conservation interventions are required.

Case study, Chwarel Dinorwig (Component Part 2)

HBO (Home Box Office, Warner Brothers) became an unexpected player in this designation process, helping fund protective measures at Chwarel Dinorwig whilst conducting filming there. In advance of filming, trial excavations revealed well preserved archaeological deposits in areas of the quarry thought to be archaeologically sterile. Information gleaned therein will feed back into the designation process.

But the filming work also led to some comprehensive repair and conservation work. The site's C4 incline western parapet wall, which had collapsed, needed to be repaired before an actor could be filmed descending the incline.

The incline is pictured below (the pillars, realistic though they look, are in fact fibreglass - parts of the temporary set design).



Case Study, Chwarel Bryneglwys (Component Part 6)

An innovative solution was used to remove felled trees from an archaeologically sensitive area of Bryneglwys Quarry. Root systems were embedded in the masonry of launder pillars; these pillars would have supported an aqueduct which fed water powered machinery.

Situated in an area of forestry managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the nature of the site necessitated a sensitive approach to the removal of the felled trees. As harvesters and other heavy machinery were not a viable option, NRW trialled a more traditional approach – horse logging. Horses were used to remove the felled trees (see image, below). The trial was a success, resulting in very little damage to stonework. There is scope for using this method in similar instances in the future.



4. Sustainable Development in the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales



Part of the vision for the World Heritage Site is to ensure a sustainable, evolving landscape which will support economic development. Yes, we must seek to conserve the physical heritage of the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales; but this is also a living landscape.

The WHS Benefitting sub-group works in partnership with various public, private, voluntary and third sector organisations, to try and ensure WHS designation brings maximum benefit to communities in the Slate Landscape.

In section 3 of this report we outlined our informal feedback sessions for those proposing potential developments within the WHS. These sessions are a good example of addressing matters concerning both conservation and economic development.

Levelling Up Fund (Llewyrch o'r Llechi)

The support package from the Levelling Up funding is helping us build on World Heritage status.

Many local families will have ancestors who worked either in the quarries of Eryri or connected industries and we are proud that their Welsh-speaking, working class legacy will be protected, promoted and celebrated thanks to the UNESCO World Heritage status and that we are able to use this designation as a springboard to attract funding such as the Levelling Up fund.

[Councillor Nia Jeffreys, Cyngor Gwynedd Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for the Economy and Communities]

Only one in four Levelling Up applications submitted by UK Local Authorities were successful. A strength of the Llewyrch o'r Lechi application was the way in which it built upon priorities detailed in the WHS Management Plan and the partnership approach towards regeneration between Cyngor Gwynedd and delivery partners.



Hwb Ogwen (Component Part 1)

Yr Hen Bost, a prominent building on Bethesda High Street, will be transformed into a community centre including the creation of a heritage centre, a café, creative space and business units. Lead partner: Partneriaeth Ogwen.

New soundproofing is being installed in **Neuadd Ogwen**. Lead partner: Tabernacl (Bethesda) Cyf.

Improved public footpaths and cycle routes will ensure better connectivity between Bethesda town centre and Penrhyn Quarry. Lead partner: Cyngor Gwynedd.

Hwb Dinorwig (Component Part 2)



The **redevelopment of the National Slate Museum** will include significant restoration and conservation work, as well as a revamped interpretation. The museum will also act as the main WHS hub and gateway, signposting to other parts of the WHS. Lead partner: National Slate Museum.

Parc Padarn Country Park will also undergo significant improvements including the repurposing of historic buildings, and improved visitor infrastructure and creating better footpath links between Gilfach Ddu and the slate landscape. Lead partner: Cyngor Gwynedd.

Hwb Ffestiniog (Component Part 5)

The **restoration and repurposing of buildings** in the town will see the creation of a youth and community centre, as well as business, creative and residential spaces. Lead partner: Antur Stiniog.

A **new public footpath and cycle route** will better connect the town centre with Llechwedd Quarry.



Levelling Up-supported activity across these three component parts also includes community public art projects, a monuments conservation plan and further town centre regeneration projects.

Three of the World Heritage component parts have been allocated Levelling Up funding. For further information on the Levelling Up support package, click [**here**](#).

Alongside the Levelling Up support for the Slate Landscape, Shared Prosperity funding has been secured to deliver similar project in the remaining three Component Parts, community public art projects and further town centre regeneration projects are also being developed in Penygroes, Porthmadog and Tywyn.

Business Events

Following on from our successful ‘business breakfasts’, Llechi Cymru and Cyngor Gwynedd’s Business Support Team are organising a series of events focussing on how World Heritage status can be of benefit to local businesses.

Training

A WHS-themed course for staff in public facing roles across various organisations and businesses in and around the WHS. Part of our NHLF project (further information in section 7).

Welsh Language

At least 65% of the population of The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales speak Welsh (with higher proportions in some areas). Welsh was the working language of the quarries, towns and villages which developed in quarrying areas were - and remain - predominantly Welsh language communities. The growth of these towns and villages helped strengthen the language.

We’re working with those same towns and villages - the regeneration projects we’re facilitating in the WHS are targeting these communities.

Language is central to our management of the WHS. Programmes of activities and events delivered by Llechi Cymru are done so via the medium of Welsh (and bilingually where required). All Interpretation in the WHS is bilingual. One strand of our NHLF project will specifically cater for Welsh learners – five years’ worth of support, resources and activities.

One aim of The Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan 2035 is to measure the impact of tourism from a linguistic perspective.

Sustainable Visitor Economy

Tourism is a key economic driver in Gwynedd, and across much of the WHS. But how do we balance this economic necessity with the needs of local communities?

The Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan 2035 will recognise the importance of Gwynedd and Eryri's visitor economy, whilst safeguarding those qualities which make the area unique. It will also measure the impact of tourism in Gwynedd and Eryri from an environmental, community, linguistic and economic perspective.

The plan was created following rigorous consultation with those who live and work here, in doing so establishing a new set of principles which aim to redress balance in the area, putting communities first in terms of those who benefit from the visitor economy.

For more information on the Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy 2035, click [here](#).



5. Enjoying the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales

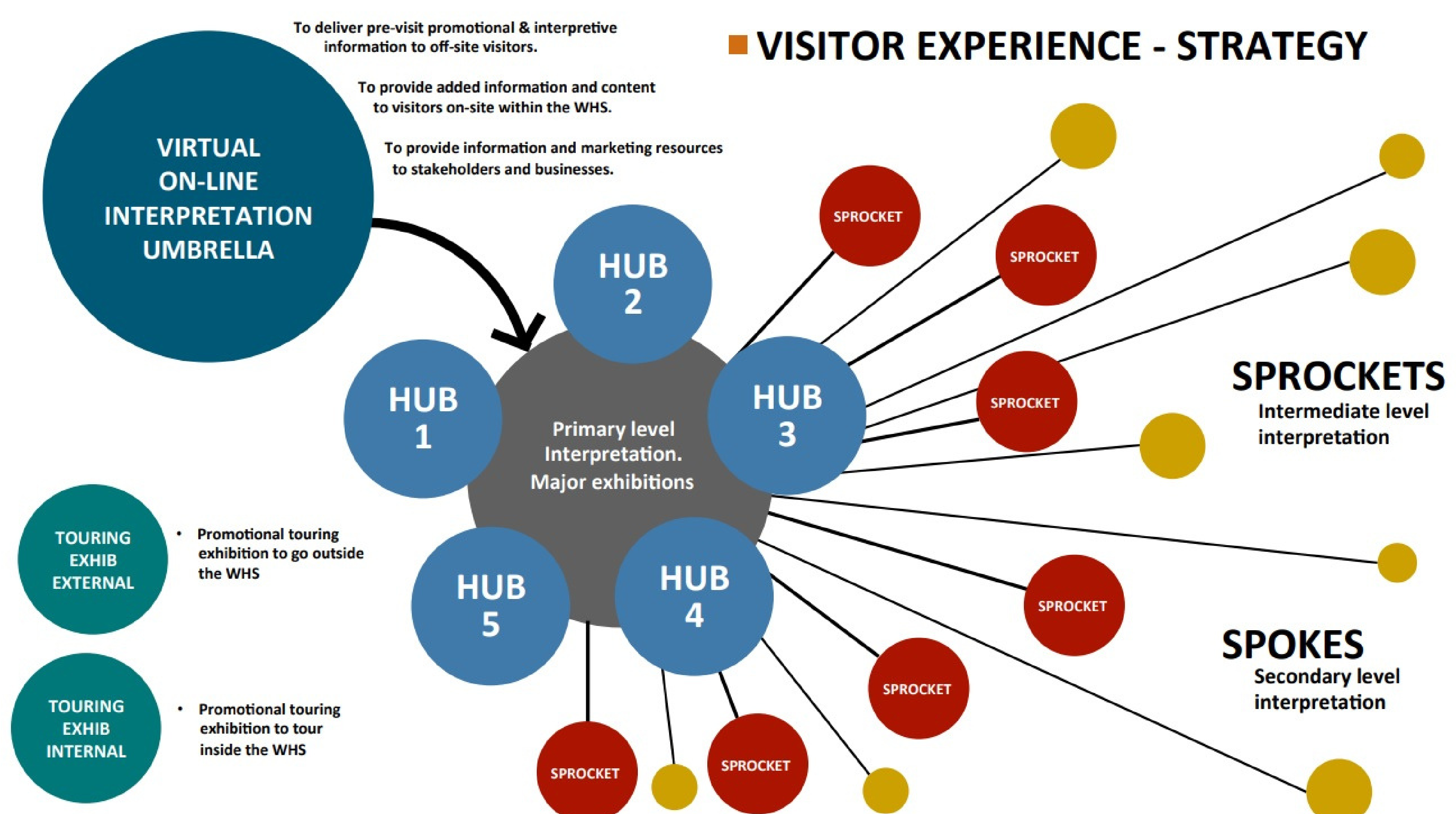
One objective of our management plan is to ensure the WHS can be enjoyed, experienced and understood - by Gwynedd residents and visitors alike.

Interpretation

Interpretation is a key element in terms of understanding, appreciating, enjoying and hopefully respecting the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales. The WHS Interpretation Plan is being implemented, the proposed 'hubs and spokes' model is beginning to bear fruit. Hubs will encourage visitors to move around the various component parts of the WHS, whilst also serving as focal points for community benefit.

In the preceding section we outlined how support from the Levelling Up Fund is facilitating the creation of the first of these hubs. As well as acting as heritage centres and a means of interpreting the WHS, these hubs will also cater for their respective communities, offering creative spaces, business spaces, cafes, spaces for young people, and, in some instances, accommodation.

HUBS, SPROCKETS AND SPOKES

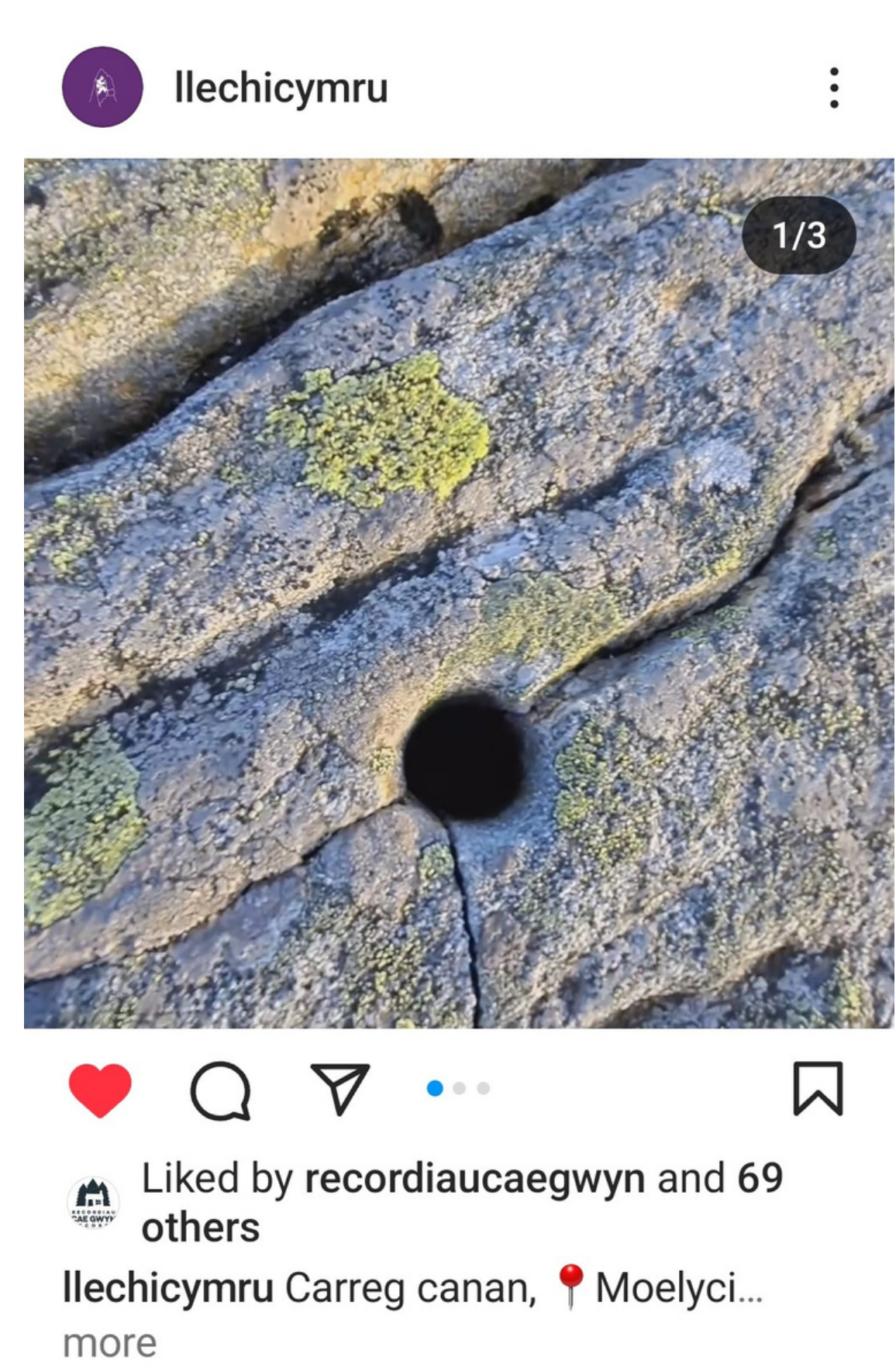
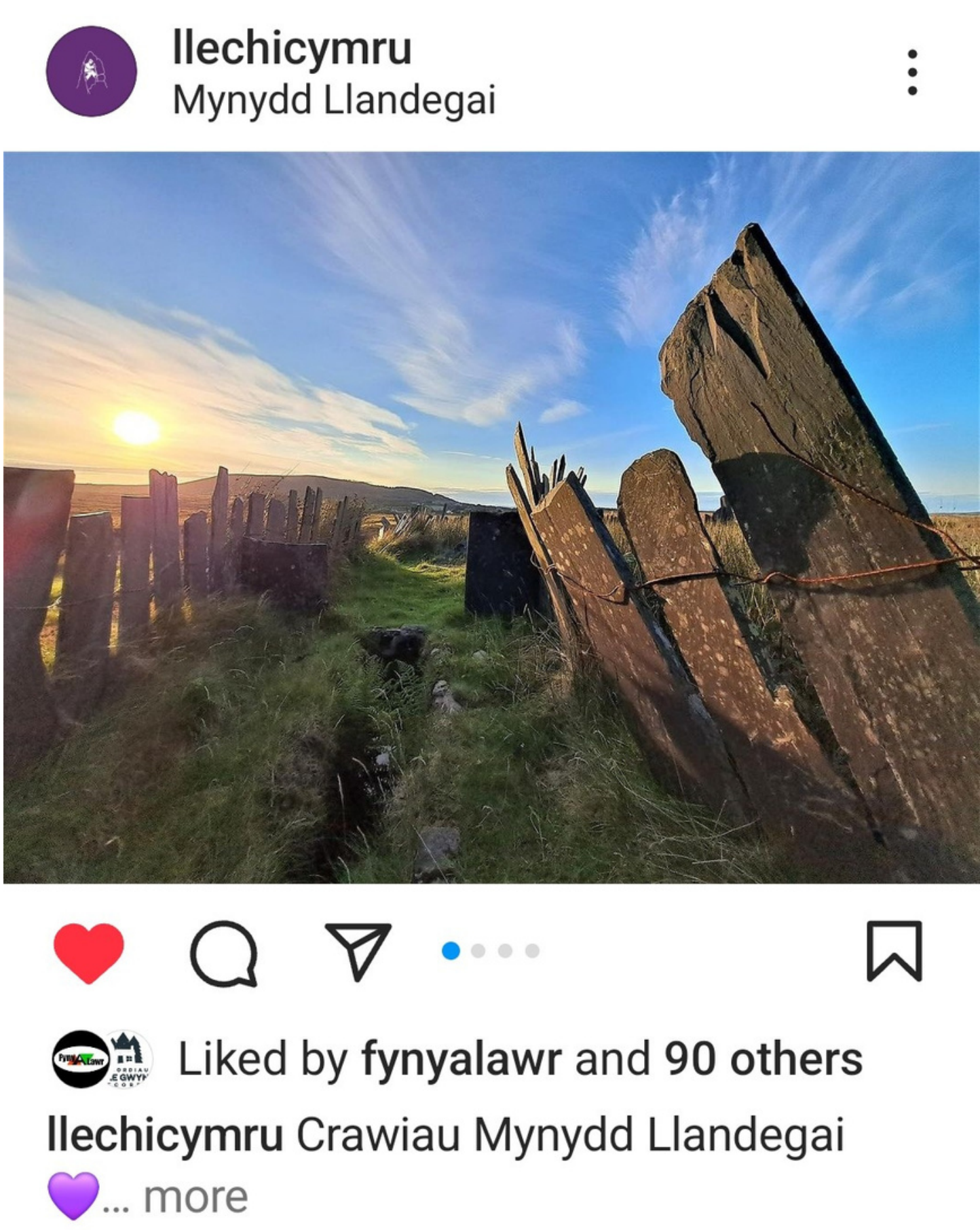


Interpretation Panels



A series of interpretation panels are now in place across the WHS. Some are housed at popular visitor attractions and key sites within the WHS – an opportunity to learn about our iconic historic landscape whilst visiting the area.

Social Media



Our social media following continues to grow. These platforms serve as an important engagement tool. Posts on features in the historic landscape are always popular, content also spotlights businesses and social enterprises operating in the WHS. There's also scope to promote 'responsible' and safe enjoyment of the WHS. We only share user generated content of locations within the WHS where there is public access.

Events and Activities



Recent events and activities have been well received. These were organised as part of the development phase of our National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) project - see section 7 for more information.

Various strands of our NHLF project will further the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the WHS. Such activities and programmes help inspire a sense of local ownership in the WHS, enabling residents to reconnect with their past and take an active role in the management and development of the site for the future.

In an interesting parallel between younger and adult audiences, it would seem those living in and around the WHS are keen to engage with the Slate Landscape by 'getting out' into said landscape. Guided walks ranked highly in an Eisteddfod questionnaire, where members of the public were asked how they would like to experience and enjoy the WHS. Young people would seem to agree – outdoor activities were top of the list during a series of consultation sessions with over 300 young people attending schools in the WHS. These school sessions, a forerunner to our NHLF Young Slate Ambassadors project, asked young people to suggest content for a forthcoming programme of WHS-themed activities.

6. Learning about the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales

A key objective is to ensure the WHS is a focus for shared learning and research, to foster an understanding and appreciation of this landscape's values and attributes.

Bangor University

Bangor University are a WHS Partnership Board member. Two undergraduate BA programmes include content on the two World Heritage Sites of Northwest Wales, as does an MA in Global Heritage. Cyngor Gwynedd and Cadw staff contribute to annual lecture programmes.

A screenshot of the Bangor University website. The header is red with the university's crest and name 'PRIFYSGOL BANGOR UNIVERSITY' on the left, and a search icon and 'Cymraeg' link on the right. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail reads 'Postgraduate Taught Study'. The main content area displays the module title 'MODULE HPH-4034: WORLD HERITAGE' in bold black text.

Other Partners

Research contributed by partners such as the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) furthers knowledge of the WHS. Some of these projects enlist university students and local volunteers.

Other partners (such as Penrhyn Castle and the National Slate Museum) run their own outreach and education programmes.

Schools and Younger Audiences



Activity: Let's make a caban soundscape!



GAT is producing a Slate Landscape-themed teaching resource for primary schools. They also created a caban soundscape activity as part a series of Wales-themed resources for the Young Archaeologists' Club (a UK-wide network of branches administered by the Council for British Archaeology). Both resources received grant aid from Cadw.

The Gwynedd Archives and Museums Education Service also responds to requests for learning materials and activities from the 72 Primary, 6 Secondary and 2 Special Schools that are signed-up to receive the service. There is consistently a strong demand for information relating to the Slate Landscape which during 2022-23 was a top 3 theme out of the 89 requests that the service responded to from schools.



Young Slate Ambassadors

Hoffem gael pobl ifanc i'n helpu ni ddylunio'r prosiect
We would like young people to help us design the project



The Young Slate Ambassadors is an out of school project for young people living in and around the WHS. This forms part of our NHLF project (see section 7) and will enable young people to engage with the slate Landscape via a programme of activities. The programme of activities will launch in 2024. Llechi Cymru have been undertaking consultation sessions in secondary schools in the WHS, gaining input from young people as to the sort of activities the project should offer.

We're also in conversation with secondary schools regarding the provision of classroom-specific sessions and field work, mapped to the New Curriculum for Wales.

Gwynedd Ambassador Course

(Not to be confused with the aforementioned Young Slate Ambassadors Project). The Gwynedd Ambassador Course offers online training opportunities where participants learn about what makes Gwynedd such a unique county. The programme includes a UNESCO World Heritage Sites module. For more information, click [here](#). There's also an Eryri Ambassador Scheme (click [here](#)).



Llysgennad
GWYNEDD
Ambassador



LLYSGENNAD ERYRI
ERYRI AMBASSADOR

7. LleCHI LleNI: Our World Heritage Site, Our Pride, Our Future. (National Lottery Heritage Fund project)



© David Peers

Cyngor Gwynedd and WHS partners have recognised the importance of capitalising on the success of the NHLF LleCHI project. As part of the new plan, there's an emphasis on furthering the role of communities in the management and development of the WHS.

Groups that do not traditionally engage with heritage will be targeted, with an emphasis on developing skills and creating volunteering and work opportunities in the heritage sector. There's also a drive to strengthen networks and confer local ownership and responsibility over the WHS.

Many of the themes and aims we've outlined in this report are central to the NHLF project (for example conservation, sustainable tourism, enjoying the WHS, interpretation and education).

Following a successful first round NHLF application, we've been piloting activities, conducting research and engaging with a wide range of stakeholders across the WHS as the development phase of the project progresses.

Some of the events and activities we've worked on:

Slate: A Different View



A photography competition and exhibition in partnership with the National Slate Museum, telling the story of our Slate Landscape and communities. The exhibition runs until March 2024.

Autumn, Art, Slate Stories

A wellbeing event was held in partnership with Eryri National Park Authority at Plas Tan y Bwlch. This included a talk detailing the property's connections with the slate industry, a wellbeing walk and a creative workshop in which participants made artworks using fallen autumn leaves.



Treasures on Paper



Penrhyn Castle staff led sessions on how to look after old books, letters, diaries, photographs and other documents. The intention is to develop this type of session and tour around different locations in the WHS.

Course for businesses in the WHS

A pilot training session for staff in public facing roles, including guidance on:

- how to tell the story of our WHS
- directing people to different parts of the WHS
- raising awareness on key messages in our WHS Interpretation Strategy

Attendees received information packs. We've received a number of applications for future courses, feedback was positive. One suggestion was to produce a bitesize film version of the training for seasonal staff.



Research

We conducted stakeholder engagement with a wide range of organisations and companies in order to develop various elements of the project:

- Safety Messaging – enjoying the Slate Landscape in a safe and responsible manner
- Twinning scheme – research and recommendations developing a scheme to strengthen links between the education sector and heritage partners
- Digital interpretation – costed recommendations for virtual interpretation of the Slate Landscape
- Welsh learners – resources and five years of activities to promote and support Welsh learners
- Cynefin a Chymuned course – to enable people living in the WHS to become ambassadors for their area
- Traditional Skills – research and recommendations for a scheme to support traditional skills training in Gwynedd.
- Young Slate Ambassadors – consultation sessions with young people, asking them to help us design a project enabling 13-18 year-olds to engage with the Slate Landscape via a programme of activities
- Community Conservation – a partnership with GAT to develop a scheme of community conservation projects across the slate landscape

Coming soon














If our £1.7m round two bid is successful, in addition to the above we will have five years of funding to run school workshops, community arts initiatives which celebrate the Slate Landscape, itineraries of things to see and do in the WHS, outdoor activities, opportunities for skills development and training and the chance to learn more about our slate heritage and instil a sense of pride in what makes our area so special.

8. Further Information

For more information on what we've got planned go to www.llechi.cymru or contact llechi@gwynedd.llyw.cymru.

Social Media (click):



  <p>Partnership Board Meetings</p>	<p>WHS Coordinator </p>	<p>195 </p> <p>Number of individuals/ businesses/ organisations on Sub Groups</p>
<p>Conservation Designations</p> 	<p>Conservation Area Reviews</p> 	<p>Completed Periodic Review</p> 
<p>WHS ITINERARIES</p> 	<p> Risk Management Strategy</p>	<p> Bangor University MA Course</p>
<p>Training for planning committee members </p>	<p>Grants </p> <p>£19,880,000</p>	<p>Number of WHS tools available on website</p> 





SAFLE TREFTADAETH Y BYD

Llechi Cymru Wales Slate

WORLD HERITAGE SITE



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The Slate Landscape of
Northwest Wales
Inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 2021