

Wales Federation  
Of Young Farmers Clubs

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2021



# The election

In May 2021, there will be a Senedd Election.

This election will give rise to the biggest change to Welsh policy since 1969 with The Senedd and Election Act of 2020 granting 16 and 17 year old the right to vote.

Wales is only the second nation in the UK to enact this right. As Wales' largest rural youth organisation encouraging a high turnout of voters aged 16-17 is a priority.

## Who are we?

The Wales Federation of Young Farmers Clubs (Wales YFC) is a democratically steered, fully bilingual voluntary youth organisation.

Comprising of 157 local clubs with over 5,500 active member between 10 and 26 years of age, Wales YFC is a rural network operating pan- Wales through 12 County Federations.

Wales YFC is a core element in the social fabric of rural Wales positively impacting the lives of all generations in Welsh communities beyond the membership.

An inclusive, social and accessible organisation. We strive to deliver a holistic experience to our members and represent their interests offering opportunities for personal development through informal education, training, activities and competitions.

Our aim is to nurture confident, forward thinking individuals to become effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Contrary to our name, the Wales Federation of Young Farmers Clubs represents more than young farmers. This is a movement that brings together individuals from a range of backgrounds united by the desire to shape a thriving, prosperous rural Wales.



# Our call to Welsh Government

Our vision is for a thriving, sustainable network of rural communities throughout Wales.

To achieve this aim, supporting and securing the development of rural young people within these communities is essential.

These are our seven points of priority to achieve this aim.

## 7 Points of Priority



Food & Farming



Recognition of Informal Learning



Mental Health & Well-being



Youth Empowerment & Representation



Welsh Language

Tackle Rural Inequality



Industry support focused on Young Farmers



# Food & Farming



**W**ith the rise of fake news as a result of uncensored news outlets, the agricultural industry at times is subjected to large-scale condemnation from unreliable, inaccurate sources. While the freedom of thought and expression is accepted and respected, defective information can have a detrimental impact on the industries reputation and resilience - mentally, physically and economically.

## **We ask:**

- Welsh Government works to ensure a balanced and regulated view is always put forward in discussions regarding farming and food production in the context of the climate change.
- Welsh Government promotes the positive impacts Welsh agricultural practises have on the wider environment amongst activists and consumers alike.
- Welsh Government to commit to five hours of environmental lessons a month to develop awareness of Wales' sustainable food and farming practises, promote a practical response to our climate emergency and encourage innovative and creative solutions to the climate emergency.

- Welsh Government to make it mandatory for all five food groups to be present on all public sector eatery menus with food and drink procured from the local circular economy.
- Further promote the strong link between sustainably sourced food and personal health and well-being. Having witnessed the immense pressure the coronavirus has placed on the health service, it has arguably never been so vital to emphasise the importance of healthy, balanced diets to help alleviate future pressures.

## **We propose:**

Wales YFC is used as a vehicle to help drive these asks. As a pan-Wales movement, Wales YFC could be used to help promote the importance of a healthy, balanced diet by putting a face to food production and increase awareness of foods provenance helping to achieve all these aims.



# Rural Mental Health & Well-being



The importance of community support services has become paramount across Wales during the pandemic. Wales YFC has first-hand experienced rural communities need for support. Us, like many other organisations across Wales have acted like lifelines for many vulnerable people dealing with isolation and loneliness.

We recognise the great work done by charities - before and during the pandemic to raise awareness about issues of rural mental health and welfare such as Farm Safety.

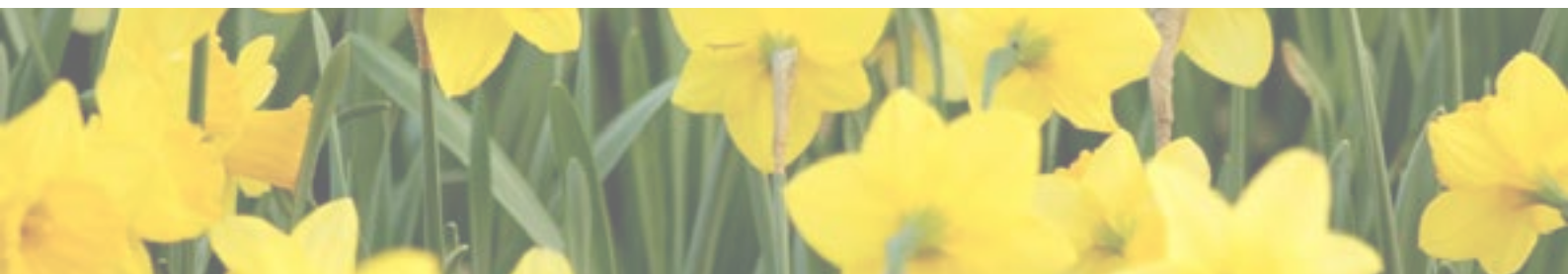
Wales YFC has benefited significantly from the training and expertise of partner organisations resulting in the movement taking a pro-active approach to highlighting matters surrounding mental health, welfare and well-being.

## **We ask:**

- Welsh Government to put in place a package of measures providing funding for the YFC, accompanied with the assistance of rural support networks to act as a mechanism/platform for the distribution of wide-reaching training and knowledge-building soft session across Welsh communities.

## **We propose:**

Wales YFC, a core thread in the social structure of Wales is used as a proactive deliverer in building awareness on mental health by ensuring people between the age of 10-26 and beyond can become more mentally resilient.



# Recognition of Informal Learning



The personal development of Wales' rural youth is one of the fundamental driving factors of the Wales YFC movement. Driven by the growth of soft skills through our voluntary programme of activities and opportunities, we help people thrive. Similar to other third sector organisations across Wales, we believe our role in helping shape Welsh civic life is essential.

## **We ask:**

- Welsh Government to recognise the importance of informal learning through the voluntary work by implementing a third sector accreditation in order to add further value to the sector. Similar to the Welsh Baccalaureate the would be a qualification recognised by prospect employers and university admissions. In turn, this would cement greater collaboration and partnership across Wales' Third Sector.
- Skills passport??

# Tackling Rural Inequality



**W**hen comparing services and facilities between rural and more densely populated areas, there are stark inequalities across Wales. Despite being a reality for a long time, the coronavirus has only exacerbated the disparities.

**I**n order to rural Welsh communities to not only survive, but thrive the Welsh Government needs to focus on improving three key areas:

## **Technology**

- Phone and Broadband signal provision needs to be more stable and reliable.