

# STRATEGIC PLAN / CYNLLUN STRATEGOL: 2011 - 2021



National Botanic  
Garden of Wales  
Gardd Fotaneg  
Genedlaethol Cymru



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



<http://www.gardenofwales.org.uk/>

version 40





World Class Showcase design in a Parkland Setting  
The Great Glasshouse and *Agapanthus*

Colin Baglow



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## 1. Foreword

This 10 Year Strategic Plan is written for everyone with an interest in the National Botanic Garden of Wales (the Garden). In it, you will find our vision, our mission statement, the values we will live by and our strategic goals. Through these goals, we explain our ambitions and what we plan to do in the next ten years. We also set out how we expect to achieve each goal through activity which can be measured as time goes by.

This means you will be able to assess our progress, and tell whether we do what we say we are going to do. You will be able to see for yourself whether we are being successful or not.

Each year, the Garden will produce an annual plan which will be the vital link between this Strategic Plan and the annual budget. The annual plan will explain how the 10 Year Plan will be taken forward within the constraints of the available finance for that year, steadily taking the steps towards our goals and ambitions.

When we write formal reports from the Garden, these will be set in the context of this Strategic Plan and its accompanying annual plan.

When you contribute money, time or other resources to the Garden, this Plan will articulate how this is to be applied and tell you what kind of organisation you are supporting.

When you work in the Garden, either as paid staff or as a volunteer, you will be able to see where the part you play fits into the whole.

And finally, for those charged with managing the Garden, this Strategic Plan is the blueprint for the future. It seeks to capture the totality of the Garden's endeavour and aims to serve as a guide to steer us in easy and difficult times.

This Strategic Plan is a living document and will change over time. It will be reviewed and amended to reflect new circumstances as necessary. Change is to be expected; and by setting change within the context of a strategic plan, it can be harnessed to achieve key purposes, and both managed and accommodated with least difficulty.

I commend this Strategic Plan to you. Become familiar with it.

Watch your Garden grow and develop.



Rob Jolliffe  
Chairman of Trustees

## 2. Introduction

The National Botanic Garden of Wales (the Garden) was conceived in the 1990s and opened to the public in May 2000 as one of three millennium projects in Wales supported by the Millennium Commission (now BIG Lottery), the only one outside Cardiff and in a rural area. It comprises a physical estate of some 560 acres of former Regency parkland in the Tywi Valley of Carmarthenshire now developed to include the planted collections of the Garden and the farmland and woodlands of the Waun Las National Nature Reserve. The site features include a necklace of lakes, and a variety of listed buildings restored to new functional purpose, together with recent buildings of international design standard including the iconic largest single span glasshouse in the world designed by Lord Norman Foster. It lies in the western seaboard zone of the UK and Europe, and includes a number of naturally occurring habitats of national and international biodiversity importance. Amongst these the rhos pastures and waxcap meadows are of particular note.

The Garden is a registered charity (number 1036354) and a company limited by guarantee. It has a wholly owned subsidiary company, Middleton Garden Limited, which undertakes the commercial (non-charitable) aspects of the Garden's trading activities. In accord with its charitable purpose, main activities centre on plant conservation and research, education and life-long learning, sustainability and as an important visitor attraction in South Wales which has received over 1.8M visitors in its 11 year history. The Garden raises two-thirds of its income and is unique amongst UK national botanic gardens in achieving this high level of self-generated income. In doing so it makes a substantial contribution to the regional economy and currently employs up to 100 staff in the summer season, equating to 66 full-time-equivalent staff year round. It has an annual turnover of around £2.4M.

HRH Prince Charles is Patron of the Garden and Gareth Edwards its Honorary President. Governance is by means of a Board of Trustees collectively responsible for corporate and strategic oversight. The Garden executive includes a Director together with senior management and commercial management teams who develop strategic proposals and have operational responsibility. Key stakeholder funding partners are the Welsh Government, Carmarthenshire County Council, and the Countryside Council for Wales. In addition the Garden has active relations and partnerships with over 50 collaborating organisations in Wales, the UK, and internationally.

The importance and relevance of the Garden's cross-cutting contributions are increasingly being acknowledged as the critical balance of the world's environment and mankind's reliance on ecosystem services are being recognised. The Garden web site <http://www.gardenofwales.org.uk/> provides an accessible overview of current perspectives, activities, and achievements. Securing and developing the Garden's long-term contribution to this endeavour will be a key outcome of this strategic plan.

## 3. Vision

*Conservation, Education, Inspiration*, the National Botanic Garden of Wales will play for Wales on the world stage.

## 4. Mission

The National Botanic Garden of Wales is dedicated to the research and conservation of biodiversity, to sustainability, lifelong learning and the enjoyment of the visitor.

## 5. Guiding Principles

As its guiding principles, embedded in the way in which we operate, the Garden will:

- Be collaborative and consultative (internally and externally) and develop meaningful relationships.
- Act sustainably (both financially and environmentally, and in respect of its human resource).
- Communicate our relevance to the widest diversity of audiences and all our stakeholders.
- Work in effective and integrated ways, seeking and responding positively to feedback.
- Aspire to demonstrate best practice, as well as to pioneer and lead improvements.
- Be innovative and creative in our approaches and attitudes.
- Foster a culture of mutual respect amongst trustees, staff, volunteers, members, visitors, and stakeholders.
- Recruit, develop, and retain high calibre people who are dedicated to the Garden's vision and mission
- Acknowledge and safeguard the uniqueness of its cultural and historical context.
- Learn from our experience, and both celebrate and communicate our successes.

## 6. Overview and Outline

This strategic plan represents a vision for our future growth, development, and delivery. Its time-span takes the Garden up to a milestone 'coming of age' - at 21 years. This will be a landmark in its life and history, almost doubling its existence thus far. As such this plan is a fundamental document, articulating a framework for our future ambitions, steering our energies, and giving parameters to our ongoing endeavours and achievements - and we are indeed convinced we have already achieved a great deal.

The Garden's vision is to take a leading role in terms of conservation, education and inspiration. Such ambition necessarily relates directly to cross-cutting domestic, national and international interests which intersect at different levels with conservation, education, cultural and political policy agendas. The threats to biodiversity, and the prospect of climate change itself, are unquestionably amongst the greatest challenges we all face. The Garden therefore exists not for its own benefit but for the benefit of the communities it serves, and for their future. It is here to deliver the core purpose of a botanic garden for the people of Wales, and to represent Wales on the world stage.

As yet however we are a very young botanic garden in the first to be opened in the new millennium, and like all youngsters we need to mature into our role, and learn how best to meet our purpose.





Hugh Plummer

**Conserve historic landscapes**  
**Pont Felin Gat: stabilising erosion using compost socks**



To shape our growth we have identified **eight strategic goals** for the coming decade. These consolidate and extend our activities. They focus on our key functions and on providing the context, ethos, and vehicles by which this will be delivered and measured so we are increasingly recognised and referred to as a national institution of worth, respected for our contributions.

Plants, and therefore the Garden's activities, now underpin key national and international objectives – from conservation, education, food security, carbon reduction and sustainability targets, the health and well-being drives, to an increasingly critical range of social agendas and life-enrichments. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of plants, and of conserving and understanding them.

The work of the Garden is characterised by four key roles which inform its aims and ambitions for the future. A core requirement as a botanic garden is active involvement in plant conservation and display. This entails both **holding and growing** exemplar species and increasingly understanding their particular requirements, as well as investigating and unravelling the reasons *why* plants and habitats are endangered, and *how* these challenges can best be addressed. Central to this is conducting rigorous **research** of the highest standard that develops and informs understandings, helping us to aim to conserve biodiversity and increasingly harness the potential of plants for the benefit of human kind. Communicating this knowledge widely is of critical importance, so integrated and embedded formal and informal **education and outreach** that promotes this understanding and makes it both accessible and inspirational is a third strand. Finally, botanic gardens are institutions where the cultural ethos and well-being of a society is reflected and embellished. They are unique environments in which science, education, art and heritage come together to **enrich lives and experience** as well as to drive economic benefit and reputation as a national resource.

Internationally, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is encompassed in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This sets out basic requirements for conservation, promoting human health, and securing sustainability. Through the 2011-2020 Global Strategy for Plant Conservation,



Carl Stringer

**Conserve the Welsh Flora**  
*Carum verticillatum* whorled caraway





Carl Stringer

**Celebrate Welsh culture and heritage  
International Day of Dance**

(GSPC) the Millennium Development Goals agreed by the international community are addressed. In 2010 the Nagoya Protocol amplified and strengthened the impetus for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

In Wales there is special resonance for the Garden in the “One Wales” document and delivery plan and its successor “Programme for Government”. In these the Welsh Government recognises the rich and diverse environment of Wales and accepts its own role and responsibilities for actions to conserve and protect it. These undertakings link directly with strategies and policies under The Government of Wales Act 2006. Amongst key features this places sustainable development at the heart of its responsibilities, making it one of few administrations in the world to have such a statutory duty. The Garden’s present and future work is directly relevant to these objectives, and its funding support from the Welsh Government signifies confidence in the contribution the Garden makes.

At regional and local level the Garden is keenly aware of its important role and contribution. Through its prominent stakeholder funding, Carmarthenshire County Council specifically recognises this. As an active participant in a knowledge-economy enriched by scientific know-how and heavily dependent on tourism income, the Garden helps to fuel the local and regional economy and measurably contributes. It is inextricably part of those communities that genuinely add value to the heritage, health, welfare,





Toby Driver

Interpret and conserve historic landscapes  
Site of Middleton Hall on the NNR



and well-being of the area. This strategic plan aims specifically to harmonise with, and build on, these strands and relationships.

Being a youthful enterprise has a range of advantages: we are enthusiastic, motivated, and can look at things in new ways. We consider ourselves creative, innovative, enterprising, and entrepreneurial - harnessing new technologies to best advantage. We also expect to gain in confidence and ability, getting better at what we do, strengthening overall as an organisation. Nevertheless we will have to temper our enthusiasm to remain within the resources available to us, whilst retaining a keen awareness of the impact of our actions on the environment itself. Most of all we aim to find the best ways of fulfilling our core roles, and of consulting and connecting with the community, all our stakeholders, our partners, and the wider public, so that the people of Wales can be proud of us. By achieving similar step-change transitions in our second decade to those already achieved, we believe we make remarkable and significant contributions to our goals. This strategic plan sets out, in very practical ways, how we aim achieve this.

Our eight key strategic goals for the decade are:

- GOAL 1 -** Develop and maintain the horticultural and other collections to the highest curatorial and presentational standards.
- GOAL 2 -** Become an internationally recognised centre for plant sciences and biodiversity research.
- GOAL 3 -** Be a centre for integrated plant conservation at a local, national and international level.
- GOAL 4 -** Provide exemplary and innovative formal and informal education and interpretation for all ages and abilities, promoting understanding of the connections between people, plants, the environment and their role in our sustainable future.
- GOAL 5 -** Become an iconic Welsh cultural institution, adding perceptibly and measurably to the status and recognition of Wales.
- GOAL 6 -** Achieve high reputation and success as a leading visitor attraction within the UK, offering outstanding experiences and value for money to the visitor.
- GOAL 7 -** Develop and secure an infrastructure and organisational framework of high standard, meeting the needs of the institution now as well as providing for its future growth and success.
- GOAL 8 -** Create a financially effective and sustainable institution.

## 7. The Ten Year Plan

This plan identifies key goals, providing each with an introductory context and detail as well as a number of corresponding targets for the coming decade. These targets are specifically linked to elements in the Action Plan (section 8) that will evolve and be articulated and integrated into successive ongoing Annual Plans.

The Risk Management review (section 10) identifies and registers the main areas of potential exposure and encapsulates the mitigating measures that address these appropriately.