# Wales Rural Network

## Annual Communications Review 2019

## The Wales Rural Network Support Unit

*"Supporting Rural Communities and Businesses; ensuring that natural resources are used sustainably"*

### Our role is to:

- Communicate, share and exchange information and news
- organise and promote free events and initiatives
- showcase funded projects examples and case studies
- Communicate and promote funding opportunities
- arrange study visits encouraging co-operation and sharing of knowledge
- connect businesses, community groups, and others, interested in Rural Development
- share best practices and EU supporting Information.

## Connect With Us...

We communicate with our audience through a variety of channels, which include:

### Facebook
December 2019:
**228 followers**

Oct – Dec 2019:
**3.5% growth**

### Twitter
December 2019:
**1,617 followers**

Oct – Dec 2019:
**1.7% growth**

### Newsletter
December 2018:
**English 6,123, Welsh 332**

December 2019:
**English 6,892, Welsh 344**

### Old Website
Jan 2018 to Dec 2018:
**26,248 views**

### New Website
www.businesswales.gov.wales/walesruralnetwork

Jan 2019 to Dec 2019
**105,248 views**

# Newsletters

The Wales Rural Network Support Unit issues regular news round ups of topics relating to the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. Discover news information, networking opportunities and examples of good practice and innovation from across Wales and beyond. The previous 3 months Newsletters are always available to view on the WRN website.

The newsletter provides funding information and advertises all forthcoming Expression of Interest Windows.

## 2019 Newsletters:

WRN Newsletter January 2019

WRN Newsletter February 2019

WRN Newsletter March 2019

WRN Newsletter April 2019

WRN Newsletter May 2019

WRN Newsletter June 2019

WRN Newsletter July 2019

WRN Newsletter August 2019

WRN Newsletter September 2019

WRN Newsletter October 2019

WRN Newsletter November 2019

WRN Newsletter December 2019

# 2019 Events Timeline

The Wales Rural Network have either organised and/or attended the following events during the year:

## February:

**21st – 13th:** National Rural Network (NRN) Meeting, Ireland. Thematic presentations and exchanges on how to connect the delivery chain, discussions on topics proposed by NSUs and of 'networX'.



## March:

**1st:** LEADER Co-operation – Event run in conjunction with Scottish Rural Network.

## April:

**11th & 12th:** This event was organised by ENRD NetworkX event, Brussels to recognise the value of Networks, demonstrating their results which have been built over the last ten years and looking together towards the future. Each of the 28 EU Networks were showcasing success stories.



## September:

**5th & 6th:** UK Rural Policy Exchange, Newtown.

**19th–15th:** NRN Meeting, Poitiers, France. This meeting involved an exchange of best practice on territorial cooperation and stakeholder consultation.



## October:

**14th:** Timber Passporting & Plant Health Workshop, Bangor. The Wales Rural Network arranged two forestry sector workshops to explain the changes to working practice and provide a platform for stakeholders to ask questions about the new regulations.



**15th:** Timber Passporting & Plant Health Workshop, Brecon.

**17th:** Programme Monitoring Committee Study Visits- Taff Bargoed, Bronllys Wellbeing Park & Hay Castle.



## November:

**11th:** Cywain Supply Chain Workshop, Newtown.

**14th:** Pembrokeshire Funding Fayre – WRN Representation and promotion

**15th:** Women in Entrepreneurship Workshop, Builth Wells

**18th & 19th:** UK NRN Event, Llangollen



**20th & 21st:** Smart Villages Scotland. A representative from the WRN attended this 2 day event in Scotland. The event comprised presentations and discussions on how digital innovation has the potential to solve many major challenges facing Rural communities. A study visit took place on the second day.



In addition to these, the WRN have attended South West Wales Local Action Group (LAG) meetings every quarter, and South East Wales LAG meetings every 6 months.

# 2019: Focus On Innovation

A key theme underpinning Rural Development Programme funded projects is Innovation. This year has seen further developments in projects promoting innovation, and utilising solutions offered by digital technologies. Some examples of projects funding these type of activities are as follows:

## Edeyrnion Community Car Club

This project will pilot the development of a car club and the leasing of an electric vehicle and installation of vehicle charging points to enable the vehicle to be charged at a variety of community locations in the Edeyrnion area. The Edeyrnion Community Car Club project was officially launched on 23rd November by Ken Skates, Cabinet Secretary for the Economy and Transport, and Susan Allen MP. The launch was very well attended and there has been significant press interest, with BBC Wales, BBC Radio Wales and S4C covering the development of the electric car club. It has also generated interest in other areas of Wales, and we are providing follow up support in Ceredigion, Powys and Gwynedd. Booking software has been developed to facilitate the booking of the car. The project is up and running and 'Neli' the electric car can be seen driving around Rural Denbighshire.



## E-bike Charging Network

The Rural charging point's project is an innovative plan aimed at developing opportunities in the great outdoors. With the growing demand for cycling and the ever increasing presence of e-bikes in the area Conwy can benefit from developing both mobile and permanent charging points within the rural areas.

Project activities will include:

- Installation of permanent charging points.
- Mobile charging point to further develop interest and support events that encourage both cycling and this project.
- Increase in visitors to the areas where points are installed.

## Gwynedd Data

This project will demonstrate:



1. Data can be collected via community digital infrastucture e.g. community wifi, TVWS

2. Communities can use data collected via digital infrastucture to share information with stakeholders, customers and other groups.

Gwynedd Council are in the process of installing community wifi in 10 communities which will provide the public with access to free wifi. These will be in addition to communities that have already installed the technology e.g. Caernarfon and Aberdaron.

## Solar and Battery Project / Egni Rural NPT– Neath Port Talbot

This project aimed to secure planning for a ground mounted solar farm, and a battery storage facility on Mynydd y Gwrhyd. Profits support local charity Awel Aman Tawe in tackling fuel poverty and developing other renewable energy projects. The windfarm was completed in 2017 and these turbines produce clean, low carbon energy - estimated to be 12,558 MWh of clean energy a year, enough to supply over 2,500 homes. Production levels so far are well ahead of this estimate. To date, we've generated more than 20,000 MWh and counting...

In additional, Egni Co-op are also delivering a similar project - Egni Rural NPT - Egni Co-op develops rooftop solar energy in Wales. We generate clean energy, enabling our sites to take action on climate change and be more financially stable. Through our co-op share offer, we also give people the chance to invest their money towards in a more sustainable future and get a fair rate of return. **Energy Local NPT.**
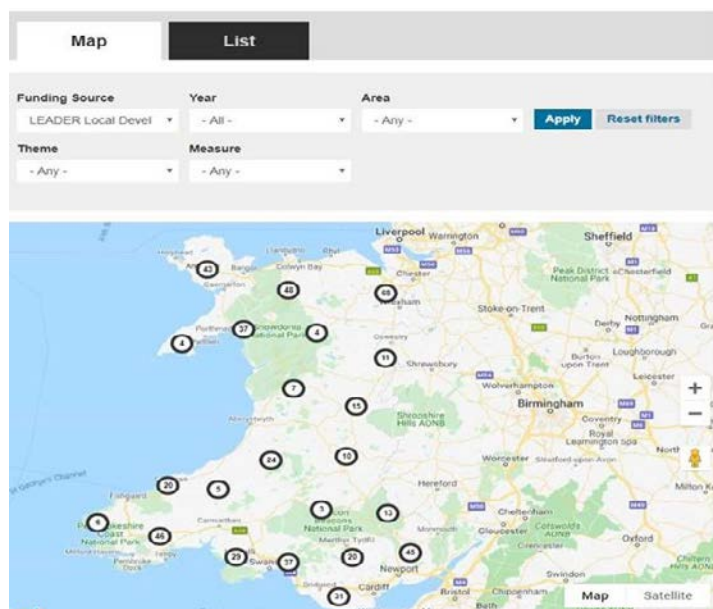
# WRN Website As A Communication Tool

## Interactive Project Mapping

In January 2019, the Wales Rural Network have added an **interactive map** to the website to display locations of LEADER funded projects across Wales. This can be filtered by a number of criteria to make it more user friendly.

In September 2019, the Wales Rural Network added an additional Map to show all other RDP Projects. This has enabled the addition of all RDP funded projects to the directory including Socio-economic; Tourism; EIP Wales; & Rural Business Funds.



# Case Studies

Both written and video case studies are regularly sought and uploaded on the WRN website with circa. 50 written case studies and 10 video case studies uploaded during 2019.

# News Stories

Press Releases and News stories are published on the news page of the WRN website – circa. 2 per day where applicable.