

THE GREEN DRAGON

DANIEL TAYLOR

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The green dragon

“Taking bold climate action will naturally bring many advantages and benefits. Yet needless to say we will not be able to solve a crisis we do not treat as a crisis and we do not understand the magnitude of. Perhaps playing a role helps you sleep at night. Saying things just for the sake of it because the words are in your scripts. But while you’re busy working the stage you seem to forget the climate crisis is not something distant in the future. It is already taking so much from the most affected people in the most affected areas. This might just be a game to you. A game to win votes, popularity, points on the stock market or your next high paid position in a company or lobbying firm. The ones who focus on the packaging rather than the actual content and the ones with the most beautiful speeches and the most short-sighted, likeable politics, wins.

“You can and will, of course, choose to continue to play your parts, say your lines and wear your costumes. You can and will continue to pretend. But nature and physics will not fall for it. Nature and physics are not entertained nor distracted by your theatre. The audience has grown weary. The show is over. Thank you.”

Greta Thunberg, addressing world leaders at the Austrian World Summit, 1 July 2021

As wildfires rage across Greece, Turkey, Italy, Russia, Canada and the US, floods sweep through the UK, Germany and China, and a heatwave stifles Siberia, the urgency over climate change has surely never been greater.

Greta Thunberg’s response to the 9 August report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was characteristically direct:



GGI has been collaborating with the One Planet Centre on how governance and integrated reporting can help organisations to reduce their carbon footprint across all of their activities. For this work, the One Planet Centre has been shortlisted to present at COP26. GGI will also itself be adopting the One Planet Standard in the coming year.

The IPCC report prompted COP26 president Alok Sharma to call on all countries to embrace their responsibility to keep global warming limited to 1.5C and thus hopefully avoid the worst effects of climate change.

GGI will be presenting the Flip the Script game in Glasgow at COP26 with the One Planet Centre.

So, what can be done?

In October this year, an international army of around 30,000 delegates from 200 countries will mobilise and descend on Glasgow for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26). They will do so in an attempt to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement; consensus and ambition are what they are after and action primarily on the triple fronts of mitigation, adaptation and finance.

It is ahead of events like these that leaders start to focus their actions. COP26's imminence has given political urgency back to the issue of climate change which has been largely subsumed over the past 18 months by the more immediate threat of COVID-19. The planet has warmed by around 1.2° since industrial times. It is essential now to phase out the use of coal for energy. As host, the UK is going out of its way to demonstrate its commitment to working with all countries and joining forces with civil society, companies and people on the frontline of climate change to inspire climate action ahead of COP26.

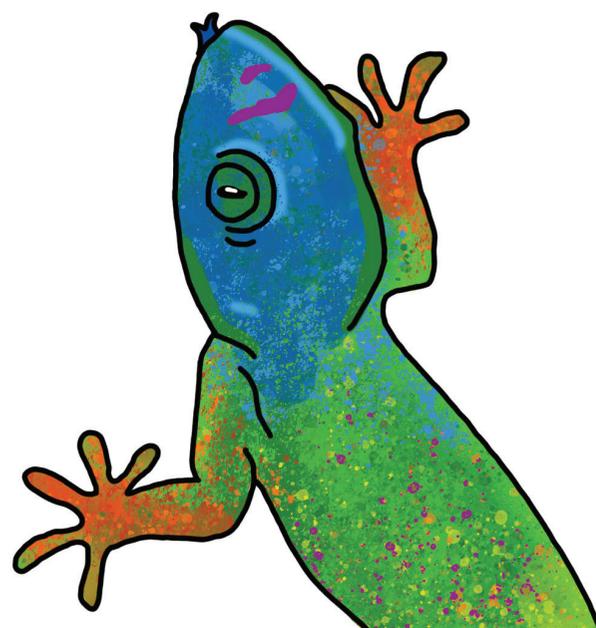
It is great to see nations coming together to coordinate action but we need to talk about organisations and their role - particularly that of anchor institutions at the level of place. Tackling climate change will depend on the ability to meet the global targets of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, including net-zero by 2050. Organisations have a huge role to play in this and should work together and support each other.

In England, integrated care systems are terrific new vehicles of possibility on this front. Good governance helps us to collaborate on a large scale. The Good Governance Institute has been collaborating with The One Planet Centre on how governance can provide the means for organisations to become sustainable and collaborate as sustainable systems. For this work, which this article will explore, they have been shortlisted to present at COP26.

How can towns and cities become sustainable ecosystems, and what role can organisations play in this? And what can and should the leaders be doing? Those are the questions this article seeks to answer.

In doing so it will draw on the thoughts and knowledge of Jane Davidson, former minister for environment, sustainability and housing in the Welsh government and driving force behind the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales); Caroline Lucas, Green party MP, former leader of the Green Party and sponsor of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill (England); Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales; David Thorpe, founder and director of the One Planet Centre; and Tegryn Jones, chief executive of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and chair of the Pembrokeshire Public Service Board.

Continue on page. 58



About the author

Daniel Taylor

Communications and Relationships
Manager, GGI

Daniel joined GGI in January 2021 and is GGI's Communications and Relationships Manager. Prior to joining GGI he worked in local government as a communications professional for seven years.

Most recently he was the communications manager for Hastings Borough Council. As the strategic communications lead, and manager of the council's communication service, he led a team focused on corporate communications, developing and managing local, regional and national stakeholder relationships for a range of projects and partnership work, running community engagement campaigns and events, protecting and enhancing the brand of the council and managing public and media relations.

He led the council's communications throughout the pandemic in 2020, in close partnership with Public Health, local health services and national government. He was part of the 2019/20 District Council Network's talent development programme.

Daniel has also spent time managing digital communications teams, developing

I would like to flip the script on the culture of talking rather than doing.

Words are immaterial and we need action. Sometimes when we talk about things, we think we have taken action but actually we haven't.

award winning council websites and self-service platforms, achieving sector leading figures for channel shift and e-newsletter readership and transforming the use of social media platforms to drive engagement. He is a qualified project manager and a trained business analyst.

Daniel was a school governor for five years and has been involved in supporting the work of arts charities. In the early years of his communications career his focus was economic development and tourism as well as managing the marketing and promotion of Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery. He has a degree in History and an MA in English.



The One Planet Standard

The One Planet Centre CIC and Assessment Services Ltd are launching a new One Planet Standard as part of the Festival of Governance on 28 September 2021. Its purpose is to provide a set of protocols to help organisations of any size successfully manage internal change that will help them meet the challenges of climate change, mass extinction and resource scarcity.

The standard is backed by Jane Davidson, the architect of the Well-being of Future Generations Act in Wales, and Sophie Howe, the Future Generations Commissioner, who says:

“The Standard aligns and builds on my existing advice in the area of decarbonisation and enhancing nature resilience, and it can help not only the public sector but all organisations in Wales with practical actions towards meeting carbon emission and biodiversity targets.

“The Standard centres around the five ways of working and promotes long-term thinking; it is an easy-to-understand and useful tool that can help address the climate and nature emergencies, prevent the disaster we are currently heading towards and help ensure the wellbeing of our future generations and the planet.”

It will help organisations of all types combat climate change and re-introduce more biodiversity and nature into our environment, by adjusting the complete impacts of their activities – their estate, products and services, and operations – so they do not exceed what the planet can provide.

An independent assessment evaluates progress and whether an organisation is doing in reality what it says it is doing.

It will be done by Assessment Services Ltd, an independent assessor with 30 years’ experience of evaluating standards in both the private and public sector.

A self-assessment tool is also available, and organisations can receive support and opt to use toolkits, training and capacity-building from The One Planet Centre.

The One Planet Centre CIC’s founder-director David Thorpe said: “We believe we already have the answers to the environmental and social problems, we just don’t apply them systematically. So we offer a compendium of solutions, metrics and indicators that support the implementation of the Standard.”

Assessment Services CEO Paul Bridle said: “We’re delighted to be supporting the One Planet Centre with their aims to create a better planet. The Standard will help organisations wishing to ensure they play their part in securing the future of our planet in a practical way.”

David Thorpe added: “The One Planet Standard makes everything crystal clear for public bodies, private companies, and community organisations.

“We examined other relevant standards, and we have learnt from what they fail to do. Firstly, our Standard accounts for the complete impacts of an organisation – its estate, products and services, and operations. Secondly it accounts for impacts on nature and society as well as carbon emissions. Finally, an independent assessment evaluates progress and whether an organisation is doing what it says it is doing. There is no opportunity for greenwash.”

Continue on page. 64





Tim Nathan
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It is as if the drama and anticipation of changing skies and moody seas echo the complication and confusion of our troubled minds.



Integrated reporting and ethical leadership

Nelson Mandela's Supreme Court Judge, Professor Mervyn King, wrote in 2020: "The consciousness of corporate leadership – and so the world – has moved to mindful, outcomes-based thinking. If you look at the Sustainable Development Goals of 2015, they are outcomes-based: clean water, clean production and, most important of all, collaboration. Without collaboration between the stakeholders of any entity, the critical outcomes agreed by the UK Government will not be achieved. And, by the way, if we don't achieve them by 2030, we won't have a habitable planet by the end of the century."

Professor King started his career in corporate governance when Nelson Mandela asked him to devise the mindset, systems and culture needed to retain confidence in South African organisations after Apartheid. Corporate social responsibility and integrated reporting is what they came up with in a series of King Reports.

In our first Festival of Governance in 2015, Professor King warned that future global tensions would most likely be over water, rather than oil or other natural resources. He invited us to see our responsibilities towards the world, and the resources it provides to humans, in a different way. He spoke of our responsibilities towards a sustainable planet as the core challenge, not just for nation-states, but also for organisations. Good governance, he said, demands that all those who have the privilege of running an organisation are thoughtful, but transient, caretakers.

Stewardship is fundamentally about future

assurance. Our continued presence on this planet depends on our ability to live sustainably on it.

Defining sustainability as a value is vital, bringing clarity and consensus about what sustainability means for your organisation. Sustainability is central to value creation and inseparable from it, and good governance is fundamental to long-term value creation. Sustainability can't be siloed. It must be the lens of central strategic thinking and decision-making. This is how it interacts with governance. Sustainability in governance is about considering environmental, social, human and economic impact of all decisions, and focusing on long-term sustainable value creation rather than short-term financial value.

When it comes to the practicalities of sustainable governance, GGI is an advocate of Professor King's integrated reporting methodology. Integrating reporting is an outcomes-based approach to reporting that accounts to environmental context. Integrated reports are concise communications about how an organisation's strategy, governance, performance and prospects, in the context of its external environment, lead to the creation, preservation or erosion of value over the short, medium and long term.

As Professor King explains: "If you look at the integrated report, it asks what are your inputs to produce your product or render your services and what are the impacts on the three critical dimensions for value creation: economy, society and environment? Finally it asks what the outcomes of all that are on the critical three dimensions. We were all brought up with a mindset of silo thinking: HR does its job, financial reporting does its job, internal audit does its job."

Yet these resources should always have been integrated – so that the resources used by an entity and the relationship between that entity and its stakeholders are fully integrated.”



We have Professor Mervyn King to thank for our right to clean drinking water, as sanctioned through the UN. Professor King’s career speaks to how good governance can be applied to bring about positive change, even at a global level. His work, and that of the King Commission, has formed the basis of UN Human Rights to clean water, air and arable land and influenced the development of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. His work and his life is testimony to the power, importance and utility of governance.

Integrated care systems

As the health and care reform progresses in England, integrated care systems (ICSs) are ideally placed to drive sustainable governance at the level of place. The purpose of ICSs as set out in the ICS design framework is to:

- **Improve outcomes in population health and healthcare**
- **Tackle inequalities in outcomes, experience and access**
- **Enhance productivity and value for money**
- **Help the NHS support broader social and economic development.**

The World Health Organisation called climate change ‘the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century.’ Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress alone. The direct damage costs to health is estimated to be between USD 2-4 billion per year by 2030.

In other words climate change significantly impacts population health. The WHO framework requires all countries to integrate health and social care, with wellbeing outcomes being their most important indicator for success. ICSs have a duty of care to take their role in addressing and tackling climate change locally, seriously. Their goal is to safeguard the health and happiness of their local populations.

The integrated care partnership boards, which will set the strategy for ICSs, bring together the key anchor institutions in place: local authorities, NHS and voluntary and community organisations. Every one of these organisations should report on progress against the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and the System could produce an overarching, integrated report.

Partners should all hold one another to account. As systems made up of another of anchor institutions they can have a profound influence on creating local sustainable economies and creating one-planet communities.

To flip the script on COP26, we would say that it is for organisations to set targets and take action without waiting for their governments to mandate them. Global Justice Now has calculated that 69 of the world’s 100 largest economies are organisations rather than countries.

Sustainability in Place – One Planet Life in Wales

“What Wales is doing today, the world will be doing tomorrow” – Nikhil Seth, UN Assistant Secretary General

One of the barriers to tackling climate change is the scale of the problem. What each one of us does as individuals or organisations won’t be enough. That can cause disillusionment and prevent action. What we all do will make a difference but to make enough of a difference we need action on a systemic level.

If I were to ask you which countries in the world are leading the way on sustainable governance, I doubt many of you would say Wales. And yet this small nation is setting an example that others, including England and Scotland, are seeking to follow.

The origins of Welsh commitment to sustainable governance can be traced back to its very origins as an autonomous state within the UK. The first Government of Wales Act in 1998, which established the Welsh Parliament, includes what is a fairly unique clause which establishes that the National Assembly should set out how it proposed to promote sustainable development in the exercise of its functions to enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations.

Wales is one of very few countries in the world with such a statutory duty. It is a duty with significant, real, implications - elected Welsh Assembly members have a constitutional duty to actively enhance the environmental, economic and social wellbeing of people yet to

be born, communities yet to exist. It is from this premise, this responsibility to ensure and assure a better quality of life not just for current but future generations that the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2014 was rooted.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act was signed into law on 29 April 2015 by the Welsh government. Peter Davies, the former Commissioner for Sustainable Futures greeted the Act by saying:

“Our democratic system is driven by short term agendas around electoral cycles. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill aims to balance the nature of this short-term accountability with the need for a long term framework if we are going to deal with the major intergenerational challenges. Above all, it recognises that greater engagement in the democratic process, a

stronger citizen voice and active participation in decision-making is fundamental for the wellbeing of future generations.”

The legislation aims to improve economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing in Wales by strengthening institutional governance structures in accordance with Wales’ sustainable development principle: “acting in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It places an active wellbeing duty on public bodies to implement sustainable development by incorporating seven wellbeing goals into their work and decision making.”

The Welsh National Wellbeing Framework includes seven indicators:



The Welsh National Wellbeing Framework

Each public body must set and publish wellbeing objectives. Public bodies must then take action to make sure they meet the objectives they set and report on progress. This is alongside national indicators set by the Welsh government.

The act provides for better decision-making by ensuring that public bodies: take account of the

long term, help to prevent problems occurring or getting worse, take an integrated approach, take a collaborative approach, consider and involve people of all ages and diversity.

There are seven things that public bodies need to consider and show that they have applied the sustainable development principle:

Continue on page. 74





Tim Nathan
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The dragon's breath

The Well-being of Future Generations Act builds on another related and important document: 'One Wales One Planet' (OWOP) published in 2009. OWOP set out a vision of putting sustainable governance and development at the centre of decision making and delivery, as the central organising principle.

The vision is one where Wales 'lives within its environmental limits, using only its share of the earth's resources so that our ecological footprint is reduced to the global average availability of resources, and we are resilient to the impacts of climate change.' It is a bold target - to achieve it Wales will need to reduce its consumption of resources by two thirds. But this is the time for bold targets.

Jane Davidson, the former Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing in the Welsh government who successfully delivered on recycling targets and massive reductions in single use plastics, was a driving force behind the Well-being of Future Generations Act. GGI spoke to her to understand more about the motivations, inspirations and what had happened since the legislation was passed in Wales, she explains that truthfully progress was somewhat slow in the first few years. Because although the structures and processes were put in place, it took a longer time for mindset and culture to follow. As what was prioritised, valued and incentivised in the system changed, gradually so did behaviour.

"One of the huge strengths of the Well-being of Future Generations Act is it can start from a different place, and it can appeal to a different audience in different ways, but it provides coherence. The way it's currently crafted means

you could have different parties with different ideologies - or potentially in government in Wales - who'd want to deliver outcomes on it in different ways: but because the Act is predicated on low carbon prosperity, because it's predicated on looking at the causes of inequality or the causes of poor health, because it's predicated on making communities safe and cohesive, because it's predicated on taking no actions that would worsen the climate crisis, but instead on doing everything you can to improve the outcomes, that improve biodiversity, because enshrined within it is the evidence base, against which all these decisions should be made. The roots might be different, but the outcomes should be similar. That is also what makes it transferable.

To understand the leadership perspective of a public body in Wales, we spoke to Tegryn Jones, the chief executive of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA).

GGI: How much of a difference had the Act made?

"National parks have always taken more of a long-term view and health and wellbeing is and always has been intrinsic to what we do. Our corporate planning approach has been adapted to be consistent and our corporate plan was re-written around the wellbeing goals and the ways of working and we did a lot of engagement with both staff and members around the Act. A lot of our ways of working and our principles were reasonably consistent with the Act, so for us less of a change than say local authorities but there has been an impact. We were one of the early adopters and part of the initial audit pilot. Interestingly as time has gone on there has been more of an emphasis on the ways of working. The biggest difference has been around collaboration

through the Public Service Boards.

GGI: Do you think it was the collective challenge of the other board members that created the mindset flip?

“Yes, and climate change has instilled a greater urgency. Lots of public bodies, particularly local authorities, have declared climate emergencies and that has given impetus to action. A particular challenge for the PSBs is turnover of people. In the early phases when developing our assessment and plan we had fairly minimal turnover but that has changed and that affects collective mindset in different ways, different people bring different energy, enthusiasm and attitude.”

A transferable model

“I’ve spent a lot of time in the past months making the case for the awareness of sustainability issues. It’s how we get on and do that within the new ICP/ICS landscape that is important - especially in a legislative framework, unlike in Wales, where there’s no regard for future generations.”

**Joan Walley, NED at North Staffordshire Combined Trust and ex Labour MP
Good Governance Institute**

What Wales has done is to successfully implement, monitor and continually develop sustainable governance at the level of public policy. The framework is a highly transferable model that regional, national and international governments and institutions can adopt in securing future justice for current and future generations.

England has taken note – a Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill is making its way through Parliament right now – while Scotland has pledged to pass its own version.

The English Bill is being sponsored by Caroline Lucas. We spoke to Caroline Lucas who told GGI:

“There needs to be a fundamental change in our approach, so that the focus of policymaking is not a growth-driven quick fix, which creates long-lasting problems. We need to reset our approach, with a focus instead on wellbeing, people’s health and the health and protection of the environment – not only of today’s population but future generations too.”

“The Wellbeing of Future Generations bill would require the government and other public bodies to focus on the prevention of crises, which we currently spend huge resources trying to respond to. It would give current and future generations a voice in decision-making by putting their interests at the heart of policymaking, requiring public bodies to balance the needs of those living today with the wellbeing of future generations. And it would enshrine long-term thinking in government.”

“It has backing from MPs from all the major political parties in the UK and every one of the UK’s four nations. That tells me that we politicians know, in our heart of hearts, that current policymaking is failing because its focus on four- or five-year election cycles means it largely ignores the wellbeing of our children and grandchildren, let alone their children and grandchildren.”

It’s only fair that we all live in a healthy, safe environment - and that’s for now, not just for the future. The UK will be judged on the influence it has on global climate change. The UK is an island, but when it comes to our climate we are all culpable.





These scenes witnessed through a lens and cast within a frame speak of personal human pain, experiences and circumstances, temper our suffering. The sea and sky bring us a calm wonder and visceral moments in time. Nature's visual gift to us is that of peace and joy.





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