Lhosa Daly
Director
National Trust Cymru
Priest House
Tredegar House
Newport
South Wales
NP10 8YW

Email: lhosa.daly@nationaltrust.org.uk

Date: 20th November 2026

Dear Lhosa,

As agricultural organisations and individuals with a significant interest in championing thriving, sustainable family farms in Wales, we write to you to request information and justification for the National Trust's actions in the Nant Ffrancon area of Gwynedd.

In an area rich in Welsh culture, traditions and history shaped by generations of agricultural activity, recent actions taken by the National Trust, intentionally or unintentionally, undermine the management of hefted flocks of Welsh mountain sheep using traditional practices. Such changes are a significant concern to us all.

It is our understanding that only two farm holdings in Nant Ffrancon now have flocks of Welsh mountain ewes, with estimates suggesting that there are around five thousand fewer sheep in the area compared to peak levels.

Of particular concern to us is the way in which the National Trust has approached and implemented its agenda in the area, not least by removing entire hefted flocks of upwards of a thousand ewes and recently launching the Nature for the People of Nant Ffrancon Project with minimal discussion or consultation with local communities.

We do not consider attempts to engage with local communities post-project launch to be indicative of a real desire to consult fully.

Collectively, we are supportive of projects and initiatives that protect and enhance Wales' environment. However, we do not support projects that focus entirely on environmental outcomes by sidelining traditional practices, family farms and rural communities.

We remain unconvinced that the unilateral decisions made by the National Trust in Nant Ffrancon are sustainable.

It states on your website that the National Trust aims to run itself *"efficiently and transparently, making it clear who is accountable for what."* It describes its governance as designed to deliver openness, transparency and accountability.

The Charity Governance Code expects a charity's values to include *"being open about how the charity operates and responding thoughtfully to feedback."* It also expects complaints and concerns to be taken seriously and handled fairly.

The Nature Networks Fund also aims to strengthen the resilience of Wales' network of protected land and marine sites, supporting a green recovery for both nature and communities.

We do not believe that the National Trust has adhered to its values of transparency, nor has it responded thoughtfully to feedback and concerns from local people, nor are we convinced that the Nature for the People of Nant Ffrancon Project will support a green recovery for its communities.

On these grounds, we call on the National Trust to *pause and review* its ambitions for Nant Ffrancon.

The National Trust has previously stated that it looks at stocking densities on a case-by-case basis, and that in some *rare* cases the total removal of grazing livestock is deemed necessary. We would argue that decisions to totally remove flocks from Nant Ffrancon were not a rare necessity, but wholly detrimental to the sustainability of the area.

The National Trust has also stated that it has excellent data to support the significant improvements in diversity of species where such changes have been implemented. Despite this, we are yet to see any data that demonstrates significant improvements in diversity of species.

We seek true transparency and evidence that justifies the National Trust's land management decisions in Nant Ffrancon and demonstrates that plans have been informed by environmental and socio-economic assessments.

Where decisions have been made regarding the purchase, removal or compensation of hefted sheep, we would welcome clarification of the principles and criteria applied to ensure that affected tenants are treated fairly and consistently.

We also call on the National Trust to meet with affected tenants and farming representatives as soon as possible to discuss this evidence and sustainable methods of enhancing Nant Ffrancon in collaboration.

We are not opposing environmental improvements, but we are calling for decisions affecting the future of upland farming in Nant Ffrancon to be transparent, evidence-based and developed in a way that recognises the interdependence of environmental stewardship, agricultural activity and rural communities.

We look forward to receiving your response and discussing this further as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

Farmers' Union of Wales

Tenant Farmers Association Cymru

NFU Cymru

National Sheep Association

Hybu Cig Cymru

Cymdeithas Defaid Mynydd Cymreig

Dyfodol i Ffermydd Defaid Eryri

Cylch yr Iaith

Cyngor Cymuned Llanllechid

Livestock Auctioneers Association

Countryside Alliance

CC: Hilary McGrady, Director General, National Trust

Jonathan Hughes, Assistant Director, National Trust

Gerald Hunt, Land & Estate Director, National Trust

Gethin Evans, Senior Estate Manager, National Trust

Trystan Edwards, Eryri General Manager, National Trust

Rhun ap Iorwerth MS, First Minister of Wales

Llyr Gruffydd MS, Cabinet Minister for Rural Resilience and Sustainability

Alistair Carmichael MP, Chair of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

Ruth Jones MP, Chair of Welsh Affairs Committee

Welsh Affairs Committee

Claire Hughes MP

James Evans MS, Chair of Climate Change, Environment, Sustainability and Rural Affairs Committee

Derek Walker, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Darren Millar MS

Helen Jenner MS

Ken Skates MS

Vikki Howells MS

Elfed Williams MS

Janet Finch-Saunders MS

Mair Rowlands MS

John Clark MS

Andrew RT Davies

Laura Anne Jones MS

Cynghorydd Beca Roberts

Nature Networks Fund

Eryri National Park

Cymdeithas Eryri