



Dyfi UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Having been struggling to make the desired impact on the region and local communities, the Dyfi UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is seeking to implement key changes to its management and to attract vital funding.

“We want to deliberately step up a gear and that means we need to stabilise funding to get onto a more stable footing which in turn requires some changes in the way that the executive functions are managed and organised.”

→ Andy Rowland, Biosphere Manager

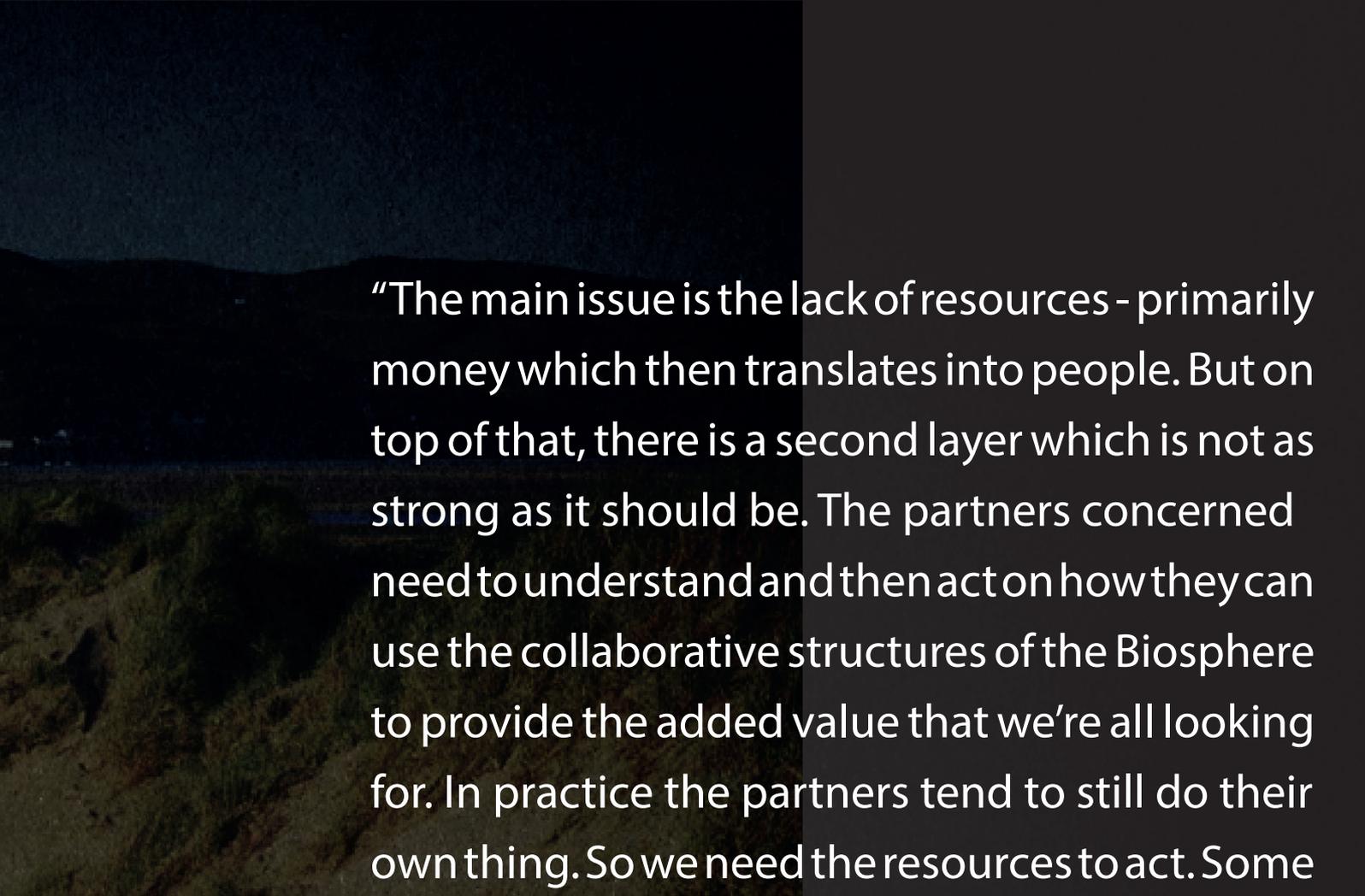
It's not a lack of motivation that stops Dyfi from doing its work. The main problem is the lack of resources and the necessary collaboration.



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“The main issue is the lack of resources - primarily money which then translates into people. But on top of that, there is a second layer which is not as strong as it should be. The partners concerned need to understand and then act on how they can use the collaborative structures of the Biosphere to provide the added value that we’re all looking for. In practice the partners tend to still do their own thing. So we need the resources to act. Some of that resource will have to be dedicated to helping the partners to collaborate.”

→ Andy Rowland, Biosphere Manager



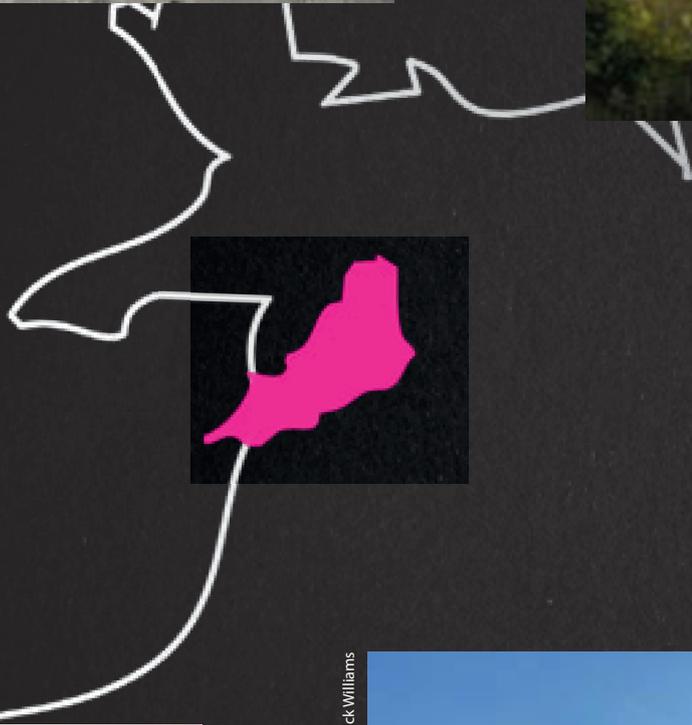
As a bilingual community, Dyfi is particularly committed to celebrating and supporting the Welsh language and culture – sustainable development in terms of culture and the environment is equally important and in line with Wales’ Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.¹²²

‘Taking a broad view like that also helps us remember from time to time UNESCO’s founding mission of creating peace in the minds of men and women. We’re very happy collectively to be associated with UNESCO in that way and going forward, we’re trying to encourage Wales to strengthen its links with UNESCO. Wales is developing its own international policy through the Welsh government and in a small voice we’ve been trying to say UNESCO is an opportunity here to ensure that Wales can be the outward-facing nation that it aspires to be and use UNESCO’s particular route and channels for that.’ Andy Rowland

¹²² Welsh Government. (2019). Wellbeing of future generations. Retrieved from <https://futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf>.



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Getting funding and strengthening the networking between partners, stakeholders and other designations could be a step in that direction, according to Rowland, who also stresses the need 'to possibly formalise it with some kind of oversight and stewardship and assistance from the Welsh government.' Without the necessary resources, the range and impact of Dyfi's activities and projects on local communities and business partners, in particular, remains low.

“The visitors and potential visitors are an important audience but actually not really as important as the local community, including business. So, it's critical for us that we have that sort of groundswell of support. But actually, we know that we are lacking in that, not because of local opposition, but just because of the lack of resources. This means we are not really engaging with local people as deeply as we want to. [...] We know that if you go out in the street and ask, “What is the Biosphere?” they're going to struggle.”

→ Andy Rowland, Programme Manager, Learning at the Jurassic Coast Trust

Dyfi is now trying to tackle these problems with new pilot projects. One of these is the Outdoor Health Project. Built on partnerships with statutory health providers and practitioners in the outdoors and tourism industries such as walk leaders and gardeners, the project seeks to enhance people's relationship with nature and improve their well-being. Once Dyfi has built sufficient partnerships with GPs¹²³ willing to prescribe time in nature to their patients, it will look into suitable areas within the Biosphere, training and recruitment, ways of improving its green infrastructure and finding the necessary financial support to make a lasting contribution.¹²⁴

¹²³ General Practitioners are doctors who serve their local communities

¹²⁴ Wider Value Interview with Andy Rowland, Dyfi.

