



YMGYRCH DIOGELU CYMRU WLEDIG  
CAMPAIGN FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL WALES

**PRESS RELEASE**

**September 14, 2021**

### **CPRW celebrates Minister's refusal of Gwent Levels solar farm plan**

The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW) has welcomed Senedd Minister Lesley Griffith's "courageous" decision to refuse planning permission for a 129 hectare, 250,000 panel St Brides solar farm on the Gwent Levels.

After considering a Planning Inspectorate report, the Welsh Government's Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales rejected the planning application, primarily focusing on the damage to the outstanding historic landscape of the Gwent Levels.

Wentlooge Farmers' Solar Scheme Limited had proposed a renewable energy hub with solar panels, 160 battery storage units with a generating capacity of 125 megawatts, together with underground cabling and a grid connection hub.

CPRW, a registered charity for nearly a century, has been at the forefront of campaigning for Welsh landscape protection and those who live and work in rural areas.

CPRW volunteers worked tirelessly to make the case for irreparable harm to the unique Gwent Levels landscape, providing detailed written evidence to the Planning Inspector Hywel Wyn Jones and giving oral evidence at the hearings in the run up to the ministerial decision.

CPRW's Chairman, Jonathan Colchester, said: "CPRW congratulates Minister Lesley Griffiths on sending this courageous and clear signal that our precious and unique landscapes in Wales have to be preserved. The Gwent Levels are the green lungs of Severnside that are vital for nature, biodiversity and people."

Rob Hepworth, CPRW Trustee and Gwent Levels resident, said: “We will now continue to press the Welsh Government to follow up on this historic decision to save St Brides from further development by issuing new planning guidance to steer renewable energy proposals away from the Gwent Levels.”

CPRW fully acknowledges the need to tackle climate change and for Wales to lead on pushing towards net zero carbon targets, but very much on the premise of having the right development in the right place for the right reasons, whether it be tree planting ambitions, renewable investments or housing.

Newport and Valleys CPRW Branch Chair, Simon Brook said: “We would now call on Newport, Monmouthshire and Cardiff Councils to strengthen the protection given to the Gwent Levels as they roll forward their local development plans.

“The decision on the solar development arrives amidst renewed debate over the M4 relief road that CPRW and other campaign groups fought hard against, so we hope that this case provides a clear stake in the ground for the future protection of the Gwent Levels.”

Ends

### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- The decision to reject the application was made by Minister Lesley Griffiths on September 10, 2021
- The Minister’s decision was made contrary to the Planning Inspectorate’s Report of the March 2021 that recommended approval with conditions

**For more information, please contact CPRW spokesperson:**

Jon Parker

CPRW Chief Executive

[jon.parker@cprw.wales](mailto:jon.parker@cprw.wales)

07841 869893

For more information about the CPRW, please go to [www.cprw.org.uk](http://www.cprw.org.uk)