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Household and Language Survey Llangwnnadi 2024

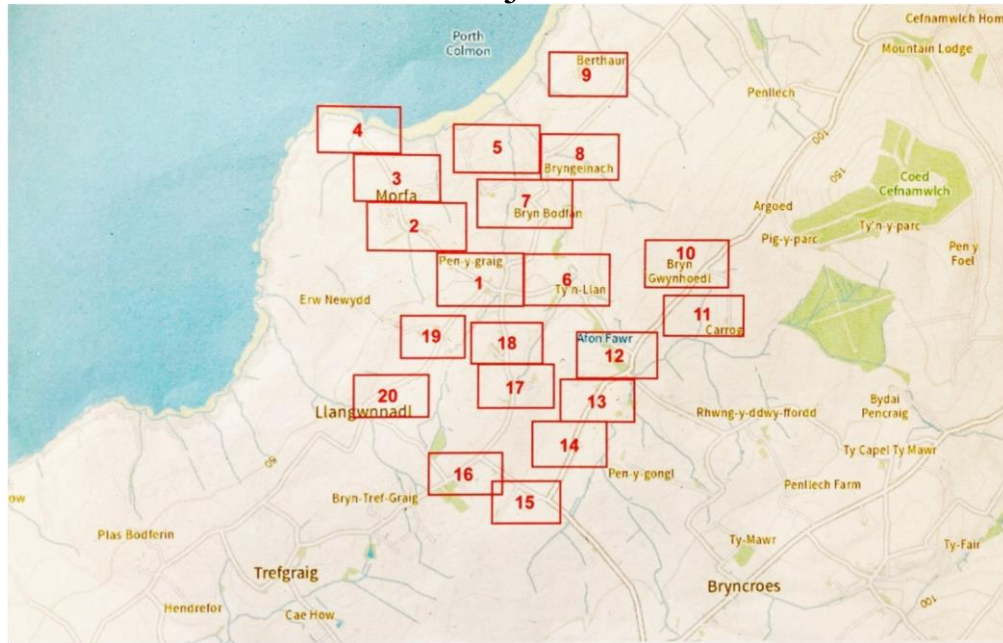
The following is the first part of a research paper published in two parts on the Household and Language Survey in Llangwnnadi 2024. The survey was conducted as part of the Welsh Government, Perthyn project with the aim of helping the Welsh language thrive within the Welsh communities with a high density of second homes and holiday lets.

Part 1) The Household and Language Survey is primary data on housing and language collected with, by, and for the local community of Llangwnnadi, Llŷn. It consists of the introduction, methodology, results and initial discussion and conclusion. The raw data spreadsheets (anonymised) are available on request.

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Part 2) An exploration of economic, social, cultural, and educational factors that contribute to the vitality of the Welsh language, contextualising the Household and Language Survey report, and identifying opportunities for revitalisation. This longer and far reaching discussion, conclusion and recommendations is to be published separately along with its appendixes.

Household and Language Survey – Research for the *Perthyn* Project



Abstract

This is the exploratory phase of the community led Perthyn project commissioned by Cymdeithas Penygraig to build a foundation for future research using local expertise. The Perthyn project aims to gain an integrated understanding of the whole community, its people, language, economy, and systems, to identify and collate the interconnected elements that contribute to the community's overall identity, well-being, and future. This exploratory phase establishes a baseline view of the community to guide further investigation.

Data was gathered using a Wholescape holistic framework, integrating secondary and primary sources. Secondary data includes the ONS, Census and Welsh language Data from the Annual Population Survey. Primary data was collected via the Households and Language Survey using hyper-local mapping. This survey was undertaken during January 2024 in an area of approximately 10.2km.² Centred around Llangwnadl, in the county of Gwynedd, it establishes the linguistic use of households in the area alongside other demographics. The exploratory results show that Welsh is used in only 29% of dwellings. These results show that hyper-local mapping provides deeper insights and more accurately representative data than 'Output Area' and national-level surveys.

Introduction

In recent decades, Welsh has witnessed a concerning and rapid decline, threatening its existence as a vital component of cultural heritage and linguistic diversity. This live-community language used for everyday cultural and social connectedness that binds the communities of the Llŷn Peninsula together is under extreme pressure. Welsh's dwindling usage and proficiency within our native communities in Llŷn and the broader socio-cultural context raise urgent concerns about preserving this linguistic treasure. Multiple interconnected factors contribute to this decline, including socioeconomic changes, tourism, housing, education and policies, and the all-pervasive influence of the dominant English language. Understanding and addressing these threats are imperative for preserving Welsh, fostering cultural diversity, and ensuring the well-being of the communities associated with this linguistic identity. Comprehensive research and new intervention strategies are imperative to reverse the trajectory of the decline of Welsh and safeguard its rich cultural and linguistic legacy for future generations.

Many multifaceted factors contribute to the declining percentage of Welsh speakers and the language's living use within the community. How these factors influence and interact within the socio-cultural, educational, and economic contexts are intrinsic to understanding their combined detrimental effects on the Welsh-speaking communities. One driver has been identified time and time again as having an overwhelming negative influence on the decline of the Welsh language, that is, the economic predominance of the Tourist Industry in this rural area and the wider Llŷn peninsula. This driver needs to be acknowledged and accepted as both a positive economic mainstay and inflicting negative ramifications on the Welsh language. This acknowledgement needs to be made before strategies and effective interventions can be made to reverse the negative effects of the current tourism industry. Interventions are needed to promote the revitalisation of Welsh, ensuring its preservation as the integral indigenous element of Welsh cultural heritage, and continued linguistic diversity.

In November 2023, Cymdeithas Pen-y-Graig, received funding from the Welsh Government to conduct the Perthyn project with Cyfeillion Llŷn and local Community Councils, to help achieve the government's goal to support the Welsh language in communities with a high density of second homes. One of the Perthyn project aims is to strengthen Welsh in Llŷn by creating opportunities to develop affordable housing schemes that would lead to more Welsh speaking households. Another purpose of the project is to look at the possibilities of establishing responsible tourism, compatible with Welsh culture. The project began by analysing the Census 2021 evidence, which suggested that Aberdaron, Tudweiliog, and Botwnnog local community councils had remained areas with high levels of Welsh speakers as well as the highest levels of second homes across Wales. This correlation instigated the Perthyn project's research focus, as we, on a community level, witness the negative effects of tourism on an indigenous language daily. How can national surveys present their findings to suggest that the language is both thriving and at risk?

There are several gaps in existing knowledge and a paucity of detailed information on the use of Welsh in the community by policymakers at the County Council, Welsh Government, and U.K. Government. All use data sets that vary greatly from one another and the more reliable and representative data captured during the Households and Language Survey. Failure to use accurate data will lead to a continued decline in the use of the Welsh language and the use of inaccurate information and datasets that will misinform and weaken the effectiveness of strategies, policy

decisions, local plans and interventions by organisations, local and national government, policymakers and individuals across a wide range of fields.

Beyond weakening the effectiveness of actions based on ‘broad brush’ data, they make these interventions, to a great extent, ineffective, untrustworthy, and potentially worthless or detrimental. It will have a ripple effect, not only on language revitalisation but also on housing, education, transport, health, economic regeneration, and many other areas of our communities. Evidence based policy change must be based on accurate data, but individual and ‘local’ variations must also be recognised and accounted for while making informed decisions and interventions.

The value of community-led methods to gather data on and with the community cannot be overstated here. The granularity and detail, coupled with blind cross-referencing and correcting of survey data from three sets of independent data collection, have resulted in unequivocal evidence and findings that must be addressed. This approach is in no way novel and was actually recommended as standard practice to local authorities in a 2001 research paper, ‘*Effeithiau Twristiaeth ar yr Iaith Gymraeg yng ngogledd-orllewin Cymru*’ (Effects of tourism on the Welsh language in Northwest Wales) commissioned by Gwynedd County Council. It stated “*Argymhellir bod awdurdodau lleol yn cynnal arolygon manwl a chynhwysfawr yn gyson er mwyn asesu cyflwr y Gymraeg ym mhob cymuned o fewn eu tiriogaeth*”¹. (We recommend that local authorities conduct detailed and comprehensive surveys in order to assess the condition of the Welsh language in each community in their areas). However, this has never been realised or attempted by any local authority. Only now, with this detailed and comprehensive Households and Language Survey undertaken by, with, and for members of our community, can we see the true and dire state of the Welsh language in this community in Llŷn.

The Households and Language Survey identifies the root causes of the decline in the Welsh language at a community level by producing accurate and representative quantitative information to establish accurate baseline data. It answers one of the Perthyn project goals; to obtain a current, representative, and accurate picture of the local situation and discover practical ways to revive the Welsh language in its stronghold. Having truly representative data will help inform and develop policies, ideas, and methods to mitigate the decline of the Welsh language in its stronghold. The importance of this cannot be emphasised more starkly than, as Saunders Lewis said in the trial in 1936 following the burning of the M.O.D. building at Penyberth – “*fod parhad yr iaith yn Llŷn, sy’n ddi-dor ers y chweched ganrif yn fater o fyw neu farw i Gymru*” (that the continuation of the language in Llŷn, which has been uninterrupted since the sixth century, is a matter of life or death for Wales).

These findings and the conversations they will ignite will support and contribute to cultural preservation, empower communities, explore socioeconomic impacts, make academic contributions, and provide practical strategies for language revitalisation in Llŷn and beyond by contributing to the global discourse on language diversity.

The Perthyn project has four research objectives:

¹Dr Dylan Phillips, Catrin Thomas. *Effeithiau Twristiaeth ar yr Iaith Gymraeg yng ngogledd-orllewin Cymru* ISBN 0 947531 31 9

- 1) Investigate and identify the primary factors contributing to the decline of Welsh and explore their interactions and interdependencies.
- 2) Investigate the role of socioeconomic changes in contributing to the decline of Welsh, with a focus on how economic shifts affect language use and transmission.
- 3) Investigate successful language revitalisation strategies employed by other Welsh communities facing similar challenges to identify adaptable approaches for Llŷn.
- 4) Gather and analyse perspectives from the community to gain insights into their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding the language's decline.

This Perthyn project's initial exploration via the *Household and Language Survey* supports these research objectives by establishing a holistic and accurate representation of the housing and language landscape in this area of high importance in Llŷn. It will also serve as a baseline to further explore the interactions between economic factors such as tourism and the Welsh language.

Methodology

Design: The researchers sought initial guidance from a research consultant on how to conduct the survey. We followed a community led Wholescape design by collating a range of existing evidence from secondary sources (census ONS etc) and data collection from primary sources to draw on local expertise to achieve a highly accurate view. This aligned well with the purpose of this survey, which was to build a foundation for future Perthyn project research.

Community Advisors: As a community-led project, the study had input from our community advisors throughout. The advisors were recruited by reaching out to highly active lifelong community members from three local groups: Cymdeithas Penygraig ², Cyfeillion Llŷn ³, and the local Community Council ⁴. The advisers supported all research aspects, including the study design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

Materials: Physical maps (twenty A3 printouts at a 1:1250 scale) were used to survey all dwellings within the marked areas of interest. The maps were formed by cross-referencing Ordnance Survey Master Maps, Google Maps online, and Airbus / Maxar satellite data. This cross-referencing achieved the most current landscape of pods and static and touring caravans in the local area. Physical tally sheets were used to record the numbers of structures/properties and people based on property type and language within each map. Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel for Mac Versions 16.21 were used for data management, analysis, and write-up.

Measures: Hyper-local mapping collected all the community data on properties and residents across the research area. This was done by going through each map and noting the number of structures/properties by type (first home, second home, short-term let, campsite, static caravan, pod, community centre, shop, café or place of worship). The residents were accounted for by age (over or under 18-years-old) and language (Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh speaking). We operationalised ‘Welsh-speaking’ as; 1) being able to speak Welsh to at least a conversational level, 2) speaking Welsh within the family, and 3) speaking Welsh most of the time with others who can also understand Welsh. We operationalised ‘non-Welsh-speaking’ as being unable to speak Welsh to a conversational level. The households were grouped by language (Welsh-speaking, mixed language, and non-Welsh speaking). We operationalised ‘mixed-language households’ as a household where some residents may be Welsh-speaking, and some may be non-Welsh-speaking or hold some qualities of both.

Procedure: The researchers met to define the geographical area and produce the hyper-local mapping materials. Firstly, the community advisors met individually with a researcher to complete the hyper-local mapping. Their long-established connections with their community guided the advisor's decision-making. For any dwelling type or household language that the advisors were unsure of or not in total agreement, a researcher confirmed it. This was done online via council directories, letting advertisements at the property, and through further inquiry with other

² Cymdeithas Penygraig - http://llyn.co.uk/llyn/?page_id=97

³ Cyfeillion Llŷn - <http://cyfeillionllyn.org/>

⁴ Cyngor Cymdeithas Tudweiliog - <http://176.32.230.7/cyngorcymdeithastudweiliog.cymru/cym/>

community members and/or the residents themselves. This process was validated by blinding each community advisor as they worked independently.

Analysis: The analysis was descriptive and exploratory, consisting primarily of totals and percentages categorised by key factors. This was sufficient to; 1) align with the exploratory nature of this phase of the project, 2) to reach the same depth of analysis as national surveys to compare the accuracy of national datasets, and 3) to address, after 23 years, one of the main recommendations of the 2001 research report '*Effeithiau Twristiaeth ar yr Iaith Gymraeg yng NgogleddOrllewin Cymru*' (Effects of tourism on the Welsh language in North-West Wales) by Dr Dylan Phillips to undertake a local and detailed survey of the condition of the Welsh language in our community.

Results

Findings showed that there are 127 dwellings in the survey area, with only 76 (59%) occupied all year. Of these, 34 (26.8%) are Welsh-speaking households, 3 (2.4%) are mixed-language households, and 39 (30.7%) are non-Welsh-speaking households. Of the 76 households that are occupied all year round, 34 (44.7%) are Welsh-speaking, and 39 (51.3%) are non-Welsh-speaking, with 3 (3.9%) mixed language. There are 51 (40.6%), either second homes, holiday homes that are let to visitors, or vacant.

In the Welsh-speaking households, there are 73 Welsh-speaking adults and 82 non-Welsh-speaking adults in the non-Welsh-speaking households. There are also 43 children, 88% in Welsh-speaking households, with only 3 mixed households. Most non-Welsh-speaking households are older adults and economically inactive, i.e. about 80% were retired.

There were 20 holiday homes and 25 dwellings used as holiday lets, i.e. 20 second homes are used exclusively by the owners, family and friends, and 25 are used as businesses or short-term lets by their owners. Conservative figures put the number of occupants of these at 80 and 100 respectively (+/-5%). These figures are based on knowledge of the properties and figures derived from internet advertising of the holiday lets.

In addition to the above dwellings, there are 10 caravan sites, 90 static caravans and 7 pods. There are also 112 'touring' caravans. It is estimated that there are around 1002 (+/-5%) visitors in the above during the peak 'season' with an additional 60 visitors in tents, mobile caravans and motor homes. This means that during the summer Welsh-speaking adult residents are 7.3% of the population of the survey area.

There are two shops / cafés, both of which are only open during the summer (early July to late August). Apart from the caravan business, self-employment, including building and ancillary trades and farming, are the main economic activities. There is a mixture of home workers and employment outside the survey area.

There is one Community Centre, Church, and Chapel. There is no school, doctor's surgery, pub, hotel or other community meeting place.

Table 1. Dwelling

Dwelling Type	Dwellings Number (Percentage)
All	127
Residential Households (Welsh speaking)	34 (26.8%)
Residential Households (Non-Welsh speaking)	39 (30.7%)
Residential Households (Mixed language)	3 (2.4%)
Empty Houses	2 (1.6%)
Second Homes (with 2 residents)	23 (18.1%)
Holiday Lets (short term e.g. Air B&B)	26 (20.5%)

Table 2. Language

People	Number (Percentage of total residents offseason/peak season)
Welsh Speaking Residents	110 (60% / 7.3%)
Adult	73 (40.1% / 4.8%)
Children	38 (20.8% / 2.5%)
Non-Welsh Speaking Residents	82 (45% / 5.4%)
Adult	77 (42.3% / 5.1%)
Children	5 (2.7% / 0.3%)
Visitors	1302 (8.7% / 87.1%)*

Table 3. Non-residential households and other dwelling/building type

Building Type	Number
Second Home, Short-term Holiday let, B&B or Vacant.	51
Caravan (static)	90
Caravan (Tourer)	112
Caravan / Camping Site	10
Pods / Glamping	7
Shop / Cafe	2
Community Centre	1
Place of Worship	2

*Visitor occupancy numbers in peak and shoulder periods are based on Welsh Government figures from Visit Wales - Self-Catering occupancy rates are an annual average of 55%-60%. There is a highly seasonal pattern with both types of accommodation, and significant capacity remains in the shoulder seasons and winter. There are high occupancy rates for static caravan and holiday homes with very limited spare capacity in the peak summer months.⁵

⁵ Welsh Government (2020) 'Welcome to Wales'-priorities for the visitor economy (Summary of evidence Base)

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/202001/welcome-to-wales-priorities-for-the-visitor-economy-2020-to-2025-summary.pdf> and Surveys -

<https://www.gov.wales/wales-tourism-accommodation-occupancy-surveys>

Discussion

The following discussion only highlights the main areas of concern uncovered by this survey. The second part of the report, which is published separately, discusses these more comprehensively and contextualises them within.

This research shed light on the complex and multifaceted nature of the decline in Welsh language usage in the Llŷn Peninsula, particularly in areas with high levels of second homes and tourism. Despite national surveys often showing a high percentage of Welsh speakers in rural areas, our hyper-local survey offers a more nuanced and concerning perspective. The data collected reveals that although Welsh-speaking households still exist, their percentage is dwindling, and the influx of non-Welsh-speaking residents and visitors during peak tourist seasons poses a significant threat to the language's survival. As the percentage of Welsh speakers decreases, the destructive effect of unstable bilingualism becomes evident as the percentage of decrease of the daily use of the Welsh decreases much more than the percentage of speakers. Within a social context it only takes one non-Welsh speaker among many Welsh speakers to change the language of an event from Welsh to English. The influx of non-Welsh speaking residents and visitors and the wider harmful effects of tourism in general are significant threats to the survival of the language. Failure to remediate the situation soon will inevitably lead to the death of the Welsh language in the near future.

Socioeconomic Impact of Tourism and Second Homes

As highlighted in the results, one of the primary drivers of this linguistic decline is the increase in second homes and holiday rentals. This trend has not only led to a reduction in the number of permanent residents, it has also altered the community's demographic makeup, particularly during the peak tourist season. The results show that in peak season, the population of Welsh speakers shrinks dramatically, with Welsh-speaking adults constituting just 7.3% of the population. This seasonal shift in the linguistic landscape underscores the impact of tourism on the vitality of the Welsh language. As second homes and holiday rentals increase, the demand for services catering to English speaking tourists grows, further marginalising the use of Welsh in everyday interactions and community spaces.

The Perthyn project's focus on addressing this issue by promoting affordable housing schemes is a crucial step toward stabilising the community's demographic and linguistic makeup. Creating opportunities for Welsh speaking locals to remain in the area ensures that Welsh continues to be spoken daily, especially in homes and informal community settings. It is impossible to ignore the fact that the current English-speaking tourism supports Welsh communities and destroys them at the same time. The challenge of how to reconcile the economic benefits and the harmful effects of tourism must be addressed.

Discrepancies in National and Local Data

The analysis also highlights discrepancies between national datasets and our hyper-local survey findings. While national surveys suggest that Welsh is thriving in certain areas, our detailed, community-led approach reveals a more alarming reality. The failure of national surveys to capture the hyper-local nuances of language use—particularly the seasonal nature of population changes—

calls into question the reliability of those datasets when used to inform language preservation policies.

An example, but in no way unique, of where national data sets are at variance to data that we have collected and verified can be seen in this example - Table 3.6 on p23 of 'Prosiect BRO Compendium of Language Statistics based on Census 2021 data'⁶⁷. This states that the number and percentage of Welsh speakers, as reported in the Census of 2021 for the wards of Aberdaron, Botwnnog and Tudweiliog (LSOA W01001932) aged 24+ was 70.16%. However, our survey shows that only 40.1% of adults are Welsh speakers within our research area. Such variance in 'raw' figures, whilst shocking at first glance, is perverse when they are extrapolated and used as a basis for policies and strategies such as the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023 – 2033, Gwynedd Housing Action Plan 2020/21-2026/27, The Local Development Plan, the Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan, economic development strategies and Ardal Ni and many other policies.

Even statistics produced for the OA W00000602 from 2021⁸, (Output Areas (OAs) are the lowest level of geographical area for census statistics and were first created following the 2001 Census.), shows a similar discrepancy to the data generated by our survey.

In the Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023 – 2033, p4 under section 4 Current situation - summary of the statistical position and challenges, it states: *“On the day of the 2021 Census, 73,560 people (aged 3 and over) were able to speak Welsh in Gwynedd which corresponds to 64.4%. In 2011, the number of speakers in Gwynedd was 77,000 and the corresponding percentage was 65.4%, therefore, the proportion has reduced by 1%”*. It then says: *“We have set a specific aim for this new language strategy's initial period to look in detail at the results of the census, to understand the exact changes happening across the different age groups, and areas of the county. Right after the census' results were published, our Research and Analytics service looked at the language profile, submitting an initial analysis to the Council's Language Committee and to the Cabinet Members.”*⁹

The above-mentioned initial analysis – Cyfrifiad 2021- Yr Iaith Gymraeg, shows Gwynedd as 13 areas, with Ardal Pen Llŷn with 69 % adult Welsh speakers. This area that is contiguous with the Ardal Ni area shows 68%. The 2021 census for the LSOA shows 70.16%. Our survey area shows 40.1%. Indeed, the first draft of the Ardal Ni had no mention of plans to strengthen the Welsh language. This was rectified in the September 2024 draft¹⁰, when the Croeso Cymraeg project was added to a list of projects in the Ardal Ni report. This happened as a result of the Community and Town Councils decision to unite under the Perthyn project and designated the whole Pen Llŷn area

⁶ Dr Richard Glyn Roberts and Professor Conchúr Ó Giollagáin - Prosiect BRO Compendium of Language Statistics based on Census 2021 data, Table 6.2, p55

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024->

7/Prosiect%20BRO%20Compendium%20of%20Language%20Statistics%20based%20on%20Census%202021%20data_0.pdf

⁸

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/datasets/welshskillsundersandingwalescensus2021/welshskillsunderstandingoutputareawalescensus2021/welshskillsunderstandingoutputareasts036.xlsx>

⁹ <https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Council/Documents---Council/Strategies-and-policies/Language-Standardsand-Policy/Appendix-2-Welsh-Language-Strategy-2023-2033-Word.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Residents/Have-your-say/Consultation-results/2022/Canlyniadau-ArdalNi/Canlyniadau-Ardal-Ni-2035-Dalgylch-Pen-Llyn.aspx>

of Ardal Ni as an Area of 'higher density linguistic significance', where policies should be varied and action taken urgently in order to protect and strengthen the Welsh language. So, the latest draft version September 2024 of Gwynedd' Regeneration Plan includes 'plans to strengthen the Welsh language' in the in Llŷn, for the first time ever. This regeneration plan is part of the wider economic regeneration strategy by Cyngor Gwynedd.

Our findings echo previous recommendations from the 2001 report on the effects of tourism on Welsh, which emphasised the need for detailed, regular surveys at the local level. Despite these recommendations, local authorities have not implemented such comprehensive data collection to date. This gap in data collection has hindered effective policymaking and intervention strategies, as policymakers have been working with inaccurate or incomplete information. The Perthyn project, through its Households and Language Survey, seeks to rectify this by providing a more accurate and representative dataset that can better inform future decisions.

Intergenerational Transmission and the Role of the Community

Another key issue identified in the research from 2001 is maintaining intergenerational transmission of the Welsh language. The data shows that the majority of Welsh speaking households have younger children who are being raised in Welsh speaking environments. However, as the number of non-Welsh speaking households grows, the opportunities for children to use the language outside the home are decreasing. This is particularly concerning in areas with limited public services, such as schools and community centres, which could otherwise serve as hubs for Welsh language transmission.

The role of the community in language revitalisation cannot be overstated. The involvement of the community advisors in this research highlights the importance of grassroots efforts in gathering accurate data and implementing practical strategies. Local community members' strong connections and knowledge were essential to producing reliable findings, and this approach could serve as a model for other communities facing similar challenges. The success of the Perthyn project in engaging with the community demonstrates that any efforts to revitalise Welsh must be community-led and tailored to each area's specific needs and circumstances.

Recommendations for Policy and Future Research

A multi-pronged approach is necessary to address the linguistic challenges identified in this research. First, local and national governments must collaborate to address the housing crisis exacerbating the decline of the Welsh language. Affordable housing schemes that will lead to an increase in the number of Welsh-speaking families and households are essential. In order to do this, appropriate local letting and sales policies must be established, and priority must be given to creating Welsh speaking households. Additionally, tourism policies should prioritise sustainable practices that do not undermine the cultural and linguistic fabric of the region but seek to strengthen it.

Furthermore, policymakers must adopt more accurate and granular data collection methods to track the use of Welsh across different contexts and times of the year. Without reliable data, it is impossible to create effective strategies for language preservation. This project demonstrated that

the implementation of community-led surveys should be expanded across Wales to ensure that language policies are based on the lived realities of Welsh speakers in different regions.

Action should be taken on the recommendations of investigations, such as Dr Dylan Phillips' research in 2001. The research in 2001 used local information as its basis, as our Perthyn research has done today. An accurate current picture of the situation of the Welsh language can only be obtained through the grassroots testimony of Welsh residents in the communities. The residents and Councilors of the Llŷn community have taken advantage of the Perthyn project in order to send a clear message to Council and Government leaders about their deep concerns about the decline of the Welsh language.

The effectiveness of different projects carried out in the past should be analysed, in order to fund the most effective projects in the future. Projects to promote the Welsh language should be specifically investigated as well as those that have been involved in promoting tourism. Community projects should be implemented, which will best increase the use of the Welsh language and give the best value for money. The Croeso Cymraeg pilot which took place in Llangwnnadr in 2012 promoted the Welsh language in collaboration with all the tourism businesses. The Croeso Cymraeg project is the only project that promotes the Welsh language, on the priority list of the 'Ardal Ni' Regeneration Scheme by Gwynedd Council. The aim of the Croeso Cymraeg project is to reverse the harmful effects of tourism by nurturing the positive effects of circular, sustainable Welsh-language tourism that will maintain the Welsh language in Llŷn and contribute to Cymraeg 2050.

Finally, it is essential to continue gathering and analysing perspectives from the community to gain insights into their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding the language's decline. Community perspectives and engagement significantly influence the trajectory of the decline of Welsh, and understanding these perspectives is crucial for developing effective mitigation and revitalisation strategies. During the Perthyn project and this study, many interviews and conversations opened avenues yet to be explored. These will be revisited as a continuation of this work. Some possible ways of continuing this work might be to:

- Evaluate the statistics and research of other academic and statutory bodies.
- Review the County Council and Welsh Government policies within local contexts.
- Assess the economic and linguistic data available on smaller geographic areas.
- Survey local residents, tourism businesses, and other influential individuals, via questionnaires or interviews.
- Discuss our findings with academics and language policy experts.
- Workshop with stakeholders, social enterprises, businesses, councillors, and officers.
- Extend the survey area to the whole Output Area - OA W00000602.
- Work with and support the Community Councils of Botwnnog, Tudweiliog and Aberdaron with their designations of being Areas of Higher Density Linguistic Significance.

Study Limitations

This study needs to be replicated and standardised in other communities in Llŷn to assess the area. The interconnectedness of the drivers of language decline in Llŷn is complex and diverse, even though the main drivers are easily recognised. Due to the small scale, it was only possible to scratch the surface. Furthermore, there is a great deal more of community expertise and insights, which were not included due to time and resource limitations. Conversations and interviews with residents were far-ranging and fell outside the scope of this work.

Conclusions

This research paper, published in two parts, contributes to the broader discourse on language diversity and preservation, specifically addressing challenges in the Llŷn Peninsula. The findings emphasise the critical role of community-driven data in informing language revitalisation efforts. They confirm the need for urgent targeted policy interventions within the Welsh communities to tackle the socioeconomic factors contributing to the Welsh language's decline. While the Perthyn project offers a promising approach, substantial work remains in this and other communities to safeguard the long-term survival of the Welsh language in this region and beyond.

This survey highlights and confirms the negative effects of the tourism industry which is discussed in depth in the second part of the research paper. However, this paper does not address several other key contributing policy areas in Gwynedd, which demand urgent attention. No issue stands in isolation, and several interconnected factors must be acknowledged today. Three of these areas are 1) planning, 2) local lettings, and 3) areas of linguistic significance.

Planning

Gwynedd's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is misaligned with the needs of Welsh-speaking communities in Llŷn. To meet these communities' specific requirements, Local Place Plans also need to be undertaken to lay alongside the new Unitary Development Plan. Restrictive housing policies that limit construction outside 'settlements' have led to a stagnant and inflated housing market in rural areas, attracting wealthier incomers and displacing local Welsh-speaking families. Using developments in rural settlements like Congl Cae in Botwnnog to meet broader housing demands distorts small rural villages' demographic and linguistic makeup.

Botwnnog is a rural village, one of the villages with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers. The present UDP allocated for 21 new houses, expanding the present settlement by about a third, even though the rural housing enablers only identified a need for four. Such a large increase in housing stock would inevitably change the language of the village. Such expansion of a rural village like this seems negligent on the part of Gwynedd Council, and without steps (as mentioned below), will hasten the extinction of the Welsh language.

Gwynedd Common Housing Allocation Policy vs Local Lettings Policy

'Gwynedd Common Housing Allocation Policy' is Gwynedd Council's policy on allocating social housing in partnership with Adra, Grŵp Cynefin and North Wales Housing. This policy gives priority to people in urgent need of housing from outside Gwynedd including England. These people will therefore be unlikely to be able to speak Welsh and there is no procedure in place from Cyngor Gwynedd to ask if they can speak Welsh. This policy by the Council does not consider the Welsh language to be a relevant factor for decisions on allocating housing in the Welsh communities. The effect of the immigration of large numbers of non-Welsh speaking children and adults into Llŷn's Welsh communities changes the language of the communities from Welsh to English in an instant.

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) letting policies should reflect the linguistic makeup of the communities in which they operate. Section 167 (2E) of the 1996 Act enables authorities to establish Local Letting Policies and set additional criteria. In Welsh speaking communities 'the ability to speak Welsh' should be an additional criterion. Policies should actively promote the use of the Welsh language, particularly in Welsh-speaking areas. Local Letting Policies should be established with the aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers and households in accordance with the Welsh Government's Strategy Cymraeg 2050.

The Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities recommends: “*Recommendation 33: Local authorities and planning authorities should consider whether models can be developed for the letting of social housing or in drawing up Section 106 agreements, where the Welsh language may be one positive consideration alongside other considerations.*”¹¹”

Gwynedd Council has a statutory responsibility not to treat the Welsh language less favorably than the English language. Although the Gwynedd Common Housing Allocation Policy policy does not set a procedure to ask potential candidates what language they speak, those who make the decision will know that they will all speak English but they will not know if they are able to speak Welsh. Therefore the policy treats Welsh less favorably than English contrary to statutory requirements – ‘*The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011*’¹², or the ‘*Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*’¹³ that requires public bodies across Wales to work towards seven well-being goals. One is 'Wales with a vibrant culture where the Welsh language thrives'. Gwynedd's Common Housing Letting Policy gives priority to people in urgent need of housing from outside Gwynedd including England. These people will therefore be unlikely to be able to speak Welsh and there is no procedure in place from Cyngor Gwynedd to ask if they can speak Welsh.

The Welsh Language Commissioner has recommended, in accordance with the Commissioner's powers under section 4, that Gwynedd Council should conduct a comprehensive impact assessment of the Common Housing Letting Policy, because the assessment carried out by Gwynedd Council in 2019 did not comply with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.¹⁴

Areas of Linguistic Significance

Continuing concerns over Gwynedd Council’s planning policies and their failure to protect the Welsh language prompted the community councils of Botwnnog, Aberdaron, and Tudweiliog to collaborate, designating the region as an ‘Area of Higher Density Linguistic Significance’.¹⁵ This initiative supports the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities' position paper,¹⁶ emphasising the need for stronger protections based on statistical evidence- it is suggested; “One approach to defining areas of higher density linguistic significance would be through a definition based solely on statistical evidence. Due to the comprehensive nature of the census, such a definition would likely rely on Census 2021 language data.” However, as demonstrated in this

¹¹ Commission for Welsh-speaking communities. (2024) p128. <https://www.gov.wales/commission-welsh-speaking-communities-report>

¹² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/contents/enacted>

¹³ <https://www.gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-act-essentials-html#60672>

¹⁴ Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/section/4>

¹⁵ <http://cyfeillionllyn.org/1/ardal-o-arwyddocad-icithyddol/>

¹⁶ Commission for Welsh-speaking communities. (2024) <https://www.gov.wales/commission-welsh-speaking-communities-report>

report, the Welsh-speaking threshold derived from census data does not fully reflect the actual number of Welsh speakers in the area.

Maps derived from census data over the years all show the decline of the Welsh language spreading slowly from the east and faster from Abersoch, pushing the Welsh language to the far west of the peninsula. This crisis and the need to vary policies and implement emergency interventions was why these Community Councils designated their areas. Their initiative and appetite should be supported and assisted by the authorities to develop and implement solutions.

All three of the above areas need to be addressed by The Welsh Government when evaluating the Dwyfor second homes and affordability pilot. The impact of these three topics, together with the cumulative effects of second homes, tourism, and the economic forces driving these phenomena must be addressed to safeguard the Welsh language. The Dwyfor Pilot - a partnership between the Welsh Government, Cyngor Gwynedd, Grŵp Cynefin, and the Eryri National Park - has been implemented in an area where these organisations have long operated, during which time the Welsh language has faced a steady decline, often exacerbated by their policies or lack of decisive action.

Recent legislative steps, such as The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2022¹⁷ and The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2022¹⁸ are a positive development. However, using the funds generated through these measures centrally, rather than mitigating the negative effects of second homes and holiday lets in the most affected areas, raises concerns. The 200% housing tax increase was one of the main recommendations of the 2001 report – ‘*The effects of tourism on the Welsh language*’.¹⁹ It has finally been implemented, but only after 23 years. Another key recommendation from the 2001 report was - “steps should be taken to control the market of second and holiday homes to a maximum of 5% in any community.” In Gwynedd County Councils present Unitary Development Plan from 2011, (updated in 2021 with Supplementary Planning guidance), the TWR 2 policy recommends setting a 15% threshold, the fact that the percentage is 38.6% in the survey area raises questions and doubts about Gwynedd Council's ability to protect the Welsh language. The validity of the UDP must also be considered because it has been developed and adopted on the basis of inaccurate statistics.

The sharp decline in Welsh speakers is alarming and harrowing for many. In 1971, the census found that the Llŷn Peninsula was home to parishes with over 90% Welsh speakers, as discussed in this report - “*Llyn shows a rather specialised pattern. The peninsula, and especially the north coast, is probably one of the remotest areas of Wales, even with modern communications, and the contrast between the north and south coasts is clearly apparent. The north coast is the only portion of the entire coastlands of Wales where parishes with 90 per cent or over of their population able to speak Welsh are found adjoining the shore. Such are Tudweiliog, Pistyll and Llanaelhaearn.*”²⁰ As discussed in this report, our 2024 survey shows that this number has dropped from 90% to 40.1%, and during the peak summer season, it falls to just 4.8%. This is far below the

¹⁷ https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2022/994/pdfs/wsi_20220994_mi.pdf

¹⁸ https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2022/997/pdfs/wsi_20220997_mi.pdf

¹⁹ Dr Dylan Phillips, Catrin Thomas. Effeithiau Twristiaeth ar yr Iaith Gymraeg yng ngogledd-orllewin Cymru Isbn 0 947531 31 9

²⁰ Bowen, E.G. and Carter H. (1974) ‘Observations on the Distribution of the Welsh Language at the 1971 Census’ The Royal Geographical Society vol 140, No3 (Oct 1974), pp.432440

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1796536>

threshold for maintaining a viable Welsh-speaking community. Statements made by Council Leader Dyfrig Siencyn In a full Gwynedd Council meeting on 7/12/2023 downplay the seriousness of this decline, and reflect a troubling disregard for the evidence: *'bygythiad mwyaf i'r Gymraeg ydi sylwadau negyddol Aelodau am ddirywiad yr iaith.'*²¹ (*The biggest threat to the Welsh [language] are the negative comments of members about its decline*).

Without immediate and effective remedial action, the Welsh language's survival in this area may be in jeopardy.

²¹ Gwe Darllediad Cyngor Llawen Gwynedd 7-12-2023 - <https://democratiaeth.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/ielistdocuments.aspx?cid=130&mid=4891&ver=4&>