

Placemaking Wales Charter Fifth Anniversary Celebration Stories

September 2025





Introduction:

To celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Placemaking Wales Charter, we have compiled this celebration document to share examples of how the Charter is impacting practice in Wales. Signatories were invited to share how they have used the Charter or how it has influenced their practice since becoming a signatory.

This document presents a snapshot of good practice taking place across Wales by a range of organisations from different disciplines in the public and private sector. We continue to promote the Charter to help ensure its principles remain at the forefront of the creation of great places for people and community.

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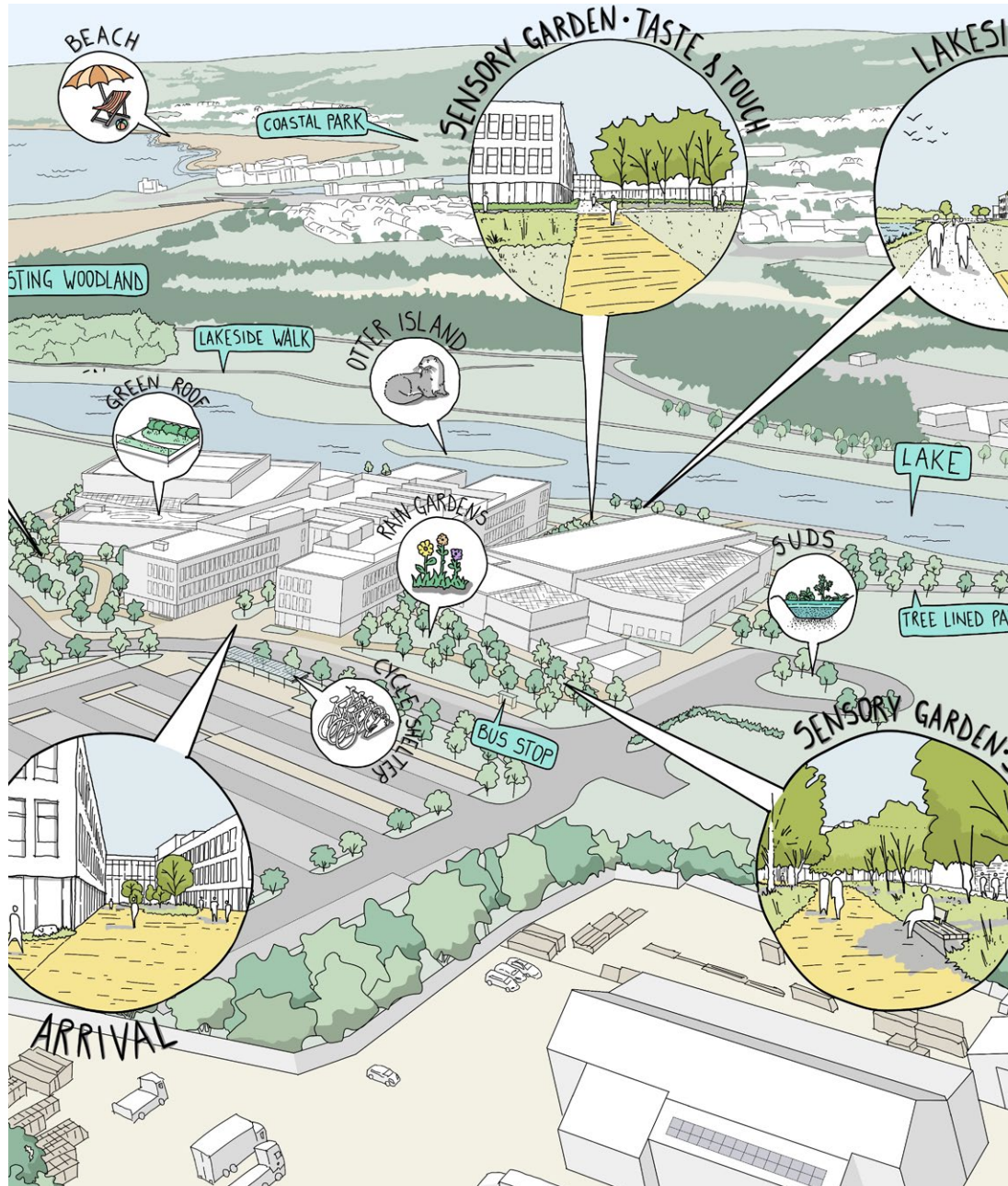
Analog_
architecture

There has been a noticeable shift in thinking in Wales which advocates for placemaking with a creative and community centered focus, and a realization that good site analysis alone does not make a 'place'.

Analog Architecture pursue projects which explore architecture, art, landscape and community – it's in the overlaps between these fields of working that opportunities for ideas and change arise. Using dis-used sites within neighbourhoods for meanwhile community arts and placemaking projects and temporary interventions is something I'd like to see endorsed, as they provide the opportunity to be experimental and for developers and design professionals to propagate strong relationships between people, place and landscape.

“Meanwhile projects have the capacity to empower communities by providing a welcoming place to collectively imagine and test new ideas centred around community, placemaking and identity. The knowledge and learning from the meanwhile use project can then inform the permanent development.”





BDP

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BDP.

Passionate about design, curious by nature and proud signatories, it's been great to see how the guiding principles are getting people talking about placemaking and moving it up the development agenda for our public and private sector clients across Wales. From Llanelli to Torfaen and numerous projects in between and beyond, the principles have been embraced and will continue to guide and underpin our approach to creating a sense of place and belonging.

We are the original multidisciplinary house of design. We were, we are, and we always will be: Built Original.

"It's been great to see how the Charters guiding principles have raised the bar for design quality and placemaking across Wales."

Cadw

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Cadw is pleased to be a signatory to the first Placemaking Charter Wales and has embraced and promoted the principles of the placemaking charter, embedding them into our strategic planning, project delivery and community engagement. As more organizations embrace the charter, it is helping deliver a vibrant and culturally distinctive historic environment which promotes inclusivity and engagement. Cadw will continue to support the charter by providing advice, partnership and funding for projects that respect the principles of the placemaking charter and promote the rich cultural heritage of Wales.

“Cadw will continue to support the charter by providing advice, partnership and funding for projects that respect the principles of the placemaking charter and promote the rich cultural heritage of Wales.”





Cardiff University –
Community Engagement in Local Development Plans

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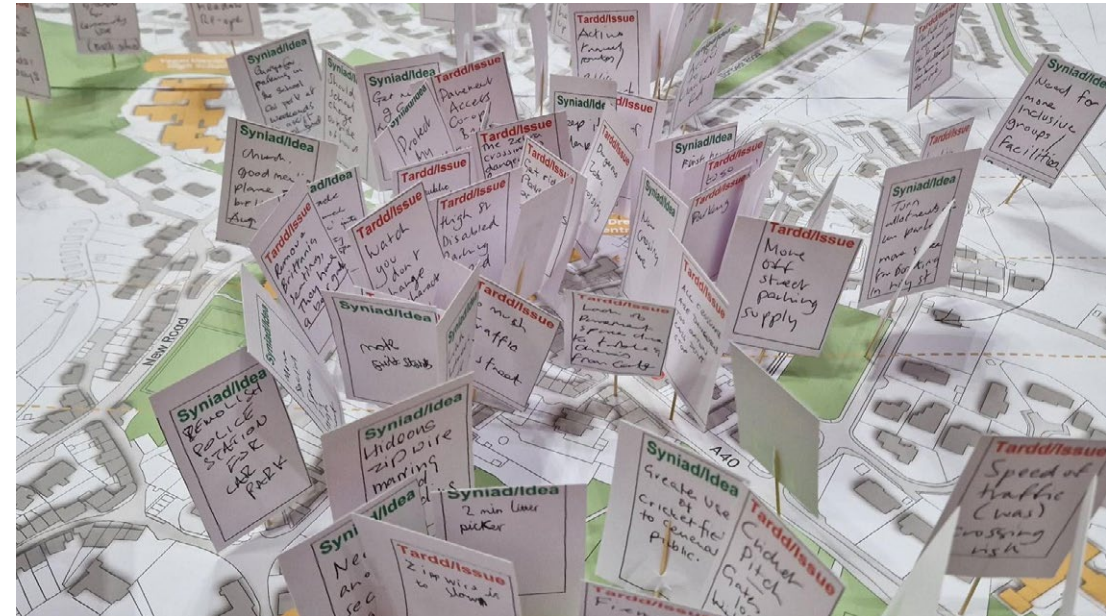
> <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/174711/>



The Placemaking Wales Charter’s ‘People and Community’ principle—that ‘the local community are involved in the development of proposals’—has helped Cardiff partnerships between place-based community organisations and local authority representatives in planning. Its emphasis on valuing existing places and connecting diverse uses and needs encouraged collaboration with community groups to understand what matters locally well before the development of any design briefs. Our joint project, Community Engagement in Local Development Plans, applied these principles to raise awareness of and engagement in Cardiff Council’s Replacement Local Development Plan consultations, by shifting power to community organisations to lead their own community consultations as ‘engagement actions’. We encourage this ‘flipped’ approach to ensure early collaboration with community organisers in planning consultation on future development proposals.

“Placemaking principles helped shift consultation power directly to communities, embedding community-identified values and needs into long term development planning.”

“Living and working in Wales, its sense of belonging is something we cherish daily. The Charter plays a key role in this.”





Communities Creating Homes by Cwmpas

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cwmpas

The synergy between placemaking and community-led housing (CLH) is clear, both emphasising community collaboration, empowerment, and long-term stewardship, which leads to inclusive, cohesive, locally-driven development that reflects the identity and needs of residents. Since signing the Charter, Cwmpas' Communities Creating Homes programme, and the community organisations that we support, has embedded placemaking principles in all our work to develop affordable, zero-carbon, community-led homes. Our bespoke support ensures that communities are actively involved in shaping their homes and places. Placemaking and CLH together promote social cohesion, sustainability, and a sense of belonging, turning affordable homes and communities into connected, thriving, people-centered places.

“The Placemaking Wales Charter and the community-led housing movement empower local people to shape inclusive homes and communities, fostering belonging, equity, and long-term wellbeing.”



“Placemaking is as much, if not more,
about the way of doing things as it is
about the resulting development.”

Placemaking Plans for Town Centres

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Donald Insall Associates

Since 2020, DIA has held the principles of the Placemaking Wales Charter at the heart of our work. Our design for Beics Antur Waunfawr, Caernarfon, created an inclusive hub shaped by community needs, efficiently reusing land within a UNESCO World Heritage Site while fostering equality and well-being. Colwyn Bay's Victoria Pier restored a treasured landmark, reconnecting the town with its waterfront, while respecting identity and heritage, and enhancing accessibility, active travel, and public space. These projects exemplify our commitment to people-centred design, heritage conservation, and community engagement. Where possible, we work with our clients' briefs to create vibrant, resilient places with cultural significance and a mix of uses that support future generations' well-being, be that through employment opportunities, access to nature, or public realm improvements.

"We design places that celebrate heritage, empower communities, and embody the inclusive, sustainable spirit of the Placemaking Wales Charter."





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Donald Insall Associates

Ers 2020, mae DIA wedi cadw egwyddorion Siarter Creu Lleoedd Cymru wrth wraidd ein gwaith. Creodd ein dyluniad ar gyfer Beics Antur Waunfawr yng Nghaernarfon, ganolfan gynhwysol wedi'i llunio gan anghenion y gymuned, gan ailddefnyddio tir yn effeithlon o fewn Safle Treftadaeth y Byd UNESCO wrth feithrin cydraddoldeb a lles. Adferodd Pier Fictoria Bae Colwyn dirnod gwerthfawr, gan ailgysylltu'r dref â'i glannau, gan barchu hunaniaeth a threftadaeth, a gwella hygyrchedd, teithio egnïol, a safleoedd cyhoeddus. Mae'r prosiectau yma yn enghraifft o'n hymrwymiad i ddylunio sy'n canolbwyntio ar bobl, cadwraeth treftadaeth ac ymgysylltu â'r gymuned. Lle bo modd, rydym yn gweithio gyda briffiau ein cleientiaid i greu lleoedd bywiog a gwydn gydag arwyddocâd diwylliannol a chymysgedd o ddefnyddiau sy'n cefnogi lles cenedlaethau'r dyfodol, boed hynny trwy gyfleoedd cyflogaeth, mynediad at natur, neu welliannau i'r parth cyhoeddus.

“Rydym yn dylunio lleoedd sydd yn dathlu treftadaeth, grymuso cymunedau ac ymgorffori ysbryd cynhwysol a chynaliadwy Siarter Creu Lleoedd Cymru.”

Over the past five years, Hammond Architectural Ltd has embedded the Placemaking Wales Charter within our design approach. We use the Charter as both a framework for shaping vision and a measure of quality throughout concept, development, and delivery. Its six principles guide our projects, ensuring they respond to local character, prioritise people and movement, integrate green infrastructure, and create sustainable, inclusive communities. The Charter also serves as a visual reference, helping teams and stakeholders focus discussions. Importantly, it provides a shared language for engaging with clients, consultants, and local authorities. This common framework aligns aspirations, supports collaboration, and evidences placemaking outcomes, ensuring projects remain distinctive, viable, and resilient, with quality embedded from the outset.

“Using the Charter,
we frame vision,
guide design,
and ensure quality
from concept
to delivery.”





Knight Architects

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Knight Architects

As architects specialising in transportation infrastructure, the Charter's approach to people and place is at the heart of everything we do. We work on major projects where multiple structures must respond to sensitive landscapes, such as the A465 'Heads of the Valleys' road through the Brecon Beacons. This work went beyond the design itself, requiring a compelling architectural narrative that brought clarity to complexity, allowing communities and stakeholders to understand the rationale behind the scheme.

We also design unique bespoke bridges which add placemaking value and unlock public realm development potential. Our moveable footbridge across the Llangollen Canal will add an accessible link to the UNESCO World Heritage site, reflecting its identity and character, enhancing the visitor experience of the neighbouring Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

“The Charter's principles are embedded in our place-sensitive design approach, generating economic, social and ecological value for communities.”

Lovell Partnerships

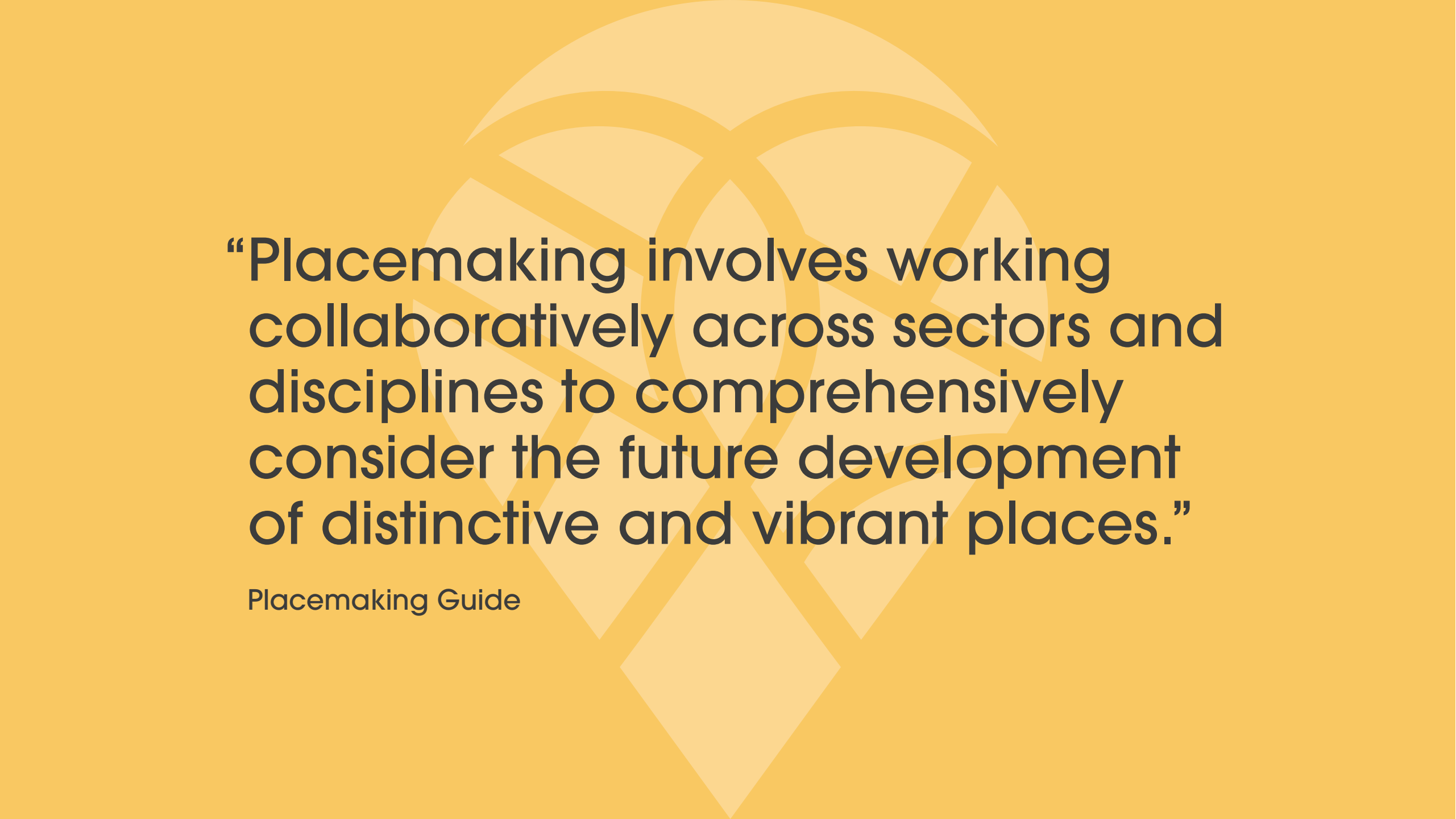
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LOVELL

Lovell has continually embraced the Placemaking Wales Charter over the last five years and have many examples that demonstrate this. One example in particular was when a scheme already had a design code set but we felt that due to the evolution of the placemaking agenda it was no longer meeting the required standards. We have learnt that by taking a step back and engaging with a secondary consultant to provide a peer review of the project proved to be a major success of both the planning and design process. This allowed for the scheme to be revaluated and overall resulted in a far better design as well as an optimised scheme delivery and created a place that people love living in.

“We’re very proud to have signed the Placemaking Wales Charter. At Lovell, we put placemaking and people at the heart of all our developments and pride ourselves on creating brand new, thriving communities which people can feel proud to call home.”





“Placemaking involves working collaboratively across sectors and disciplines to comprehensively consider the future development of distinctive and vibrant places.”

Placemaking Guide



Natural Resources Wales

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Place names are important to local distinctiveness in Wales, providing an insight to land-use, archaeology and history of Wales. As part of our response to the Charter, NRW has been working with partners to provide internal guidance on how to consult the List of Historic Place Names.

“Place names are important to local distinctiveness in Wales, providing an insight to land-use, archaeology and history of Wales.”

The List of Historic Place Names of Wales is held by RCAHMW and is a groundbreaking and innovative resource that contains hundreds of thousands of place names collected from historical maps and other sources.

[Home - Historic Place Names of Wales](#)

Working alongside the Welsh Language Commissioner and RCAHMW, the guidance helps NRW with its statutory duty to consult and add to the List of Historic Place Names.

Open Spaces Society

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The Open Spaces Society, as one of the Charter's signatories has actively embraced its principles to advocate for prioritising open spaces in planning and calling on communities to engage in local decision-making.

The society has: opposed inappropriate developments, successfully campaigning against fencing at Rhos Gelli Gron Common in Ceredigion thereby defending the natural landscape and public access, and has helped communities save their spaces, including Cwtin Field in Penygroes, Gwynedd, the only free playing-field in the village.

The society continues to:

- > Promote and protect paths and open spaces for public access aligning with the Charter's people-centred and inclusive values.
- > Campaign for village green registration by encouraging landowners voluntarily to register town or village greens, offering legal protection from development and preserving them for community use.

"The Open Spaces Society has embraced the Charter's principles to deliver grassroots action protecting community access to Wales's natural heritage."





Pentan Architects

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pentan
architects

Pentan Architects were among the first signatories of the Placemaking Wales Charter, which has become a vital benchmark for our work. Placemaking is central to our design approach and was key to winning the RIBA MacEwen Award for “architecture for the common good.” The Charter has helped demonstrate the social benefits of great placemaking for clients and residents, making its value tangible and securing stronger client buy-in. It has also raised ambitions, improved understanding, and driven continuous improvement across our work. By placing placemaking at the centre of every project, we create homes and communities that enrich lives, and we see the Charter continuing to play a crucial role in shaping better design across Wales.

“Great placemaking guides our work, helping clients, residents, and communities thrive while continually raising architectural standards across Wales.”

PER Consulting

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Placemaking Wales matters to me because I believe it's not just about buildings or design, but about creating a sense of identity for towns.

I value how Placemaking Wales focuses on well-being, sustainability, and a sense of belonging, because those are things that touch everyday life. It's about celebrating local character, giving communities pride in where they live, and making sure people feel part of something bigger.

I find it inspiring that placemaking is about bringing people together to create healthier, livelier and more exciting places. Personally, it motivates me to think about how we can shape communities that are both caring and economically resilient. This embraces a lot of my wider work in stimulating economic recovery and growth and delivering ideas to connect communities.

“Placemaking isn't necessarily about big interventions but opportunities for communities to flourish and collaborate around their own sense of place.”

Shared Community Kitchens

Good Practice Guide & Community Tool Kit

July 2025

FOOD *Vale*





Play Wales | Chwarae Cymru

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Playing supports children to feel part of their neighbourhoods and wider communities-learning about the world around them, making connections, developing a sense of identity and belonging. The aim of achieving wellbeing through placemaking shows a desire to move beyond formulaic and technical approaches to planning for play.

Placemaking Wales Charter has enabled Play Wales to highlight that play is not just an activity that takes place in designated spaces and at designated times. Through events and guidance, we have promoted the principle of spatial justice for children.

By encouraging hyper-local research and engagement with children, there is greater recognition that better planning can support children's fair and just access to – and participation in – what public space has to offer for their everyday opportunities to play.

“Play-friendly neighbourhood planning goes beyond parks and playgrounds; the focus is on enhancing opportunities for children to play and socialise throughout communities.”

Pobl Group


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As a proud Welsh organisation, Pobl is committed to creating sustainable, people-focused places that deliver lasting value for communities. The Placemaking Wales Charter shapes every new development, ensuring our homes and neighbourhoods reflect their context, strengthen identity, and support wellbeing. At Gwynfaen in Swansea and Chartist Garden Village in Caerphilly, we've delivered low-carbon, mixed-tenure communities with active travel links, green infrastructure, and inclusive design. By embedding the Charter's principles, we prioritise tenure-blind layouts, safe movement, and welcoming public spaces enriched by biodiversity. Sustainability and innovation are central, with energy-efficient homes and renewable technologies helping residents to thrive. For us, placemaking goes beyond building homes; it's about creating communities where people feel connected, supported, and proud to belong.

“For Pobl, placemaking means shaping neighbourhoods that inspire pride, connection, and a true sense of belonging.”





“Everyone engaged with or operating within the planning system in Wales must embrace the concept of placemaking... to achieve the creation of sustainable places and improve the well-being of communities.”

Planning Policy Wales



Roberts Limbrick Architects

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Roberts Limbrick have embraced the Placemaking Wales Charter. Its 6 placemaking principles have helped to shape our approach to projects of all sizes, offering a great starting point and a benchmark for checking evolving designs against.

For example, during the design of our recent Aberavon Masterplan, the existing community played a vital role in shaping the final designs: A fully inclusive movement strategy linking with proposed active travel routes; An enhanced public realm that helps to define places, spaces and different uses; A mix of complimentary uses to suit all visitors of different backgrounds and ages, including the existing community, in this fantastic seafront location; Reinforcing the unique identity of the place, its coastal location, its historic seaside destination.

“The Charter has been a fantastic tool, helping us to set good placemaking at the heart of all our projects.”

As an architect, I have always sought to design in response to a sense of place. Whether a project is in a rural landscape or urban setting, I believe it is important to have a deep understanding of the context, to inform a proposal that celebrates and is sensitive to local environment and communities. The Placemaking Wales Charter validates this approach. I've found it sets out a framework which cultivates conversations, common understanding and shared ambitions around good design across the built environment.

Our practice spans the fields of architecture, arts, landscape and community engagement, but creative placemaking is the thread which unites everything. Recently, the principles of placemaking have informed the direction and branding of the practice – even the name Situated Studio!

“Our practice spans the fields of architecture, arts, landscape and community engagement. Creative placemaking is the thread which unites everything.”





Transport for Wales

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TfW was one of the original signatories of the Placemaking Wales Charter back in 2020 and were founder members of the Placemaking Wales Partnership. Since then, we have worked closely with the Design Commission for Wales to support and enhance our understanding and application of Placemaking principles and practices. This includes creating a Design Office with specific skills in urban design and place quality.

Our vision is for TfW to be Wales' favourite way to travel, using an integrated multimodal transport network of trains, buses, walking, wheeling and cycling called the T Network. That includes creating an accessible, connected, warm and welcoming network.

The charter is core to our mission to encourage people to travel more sustainably and has directly shaped our work practices. For example, we have our own TfW placemaking principles,

recently updated to more closely align them to those in the Charter, and have incorporated these principles to key internal documentation such as our upcoming Stations Blueprint toolkit which will inform the design and management of public spaces within our transport hubs.

We also recognise the leadership role that TfW can play, working with partners to help deliver better places across Wales.

“We help people travel in ways that are good for the planet, good for the pocket and good for real life.”

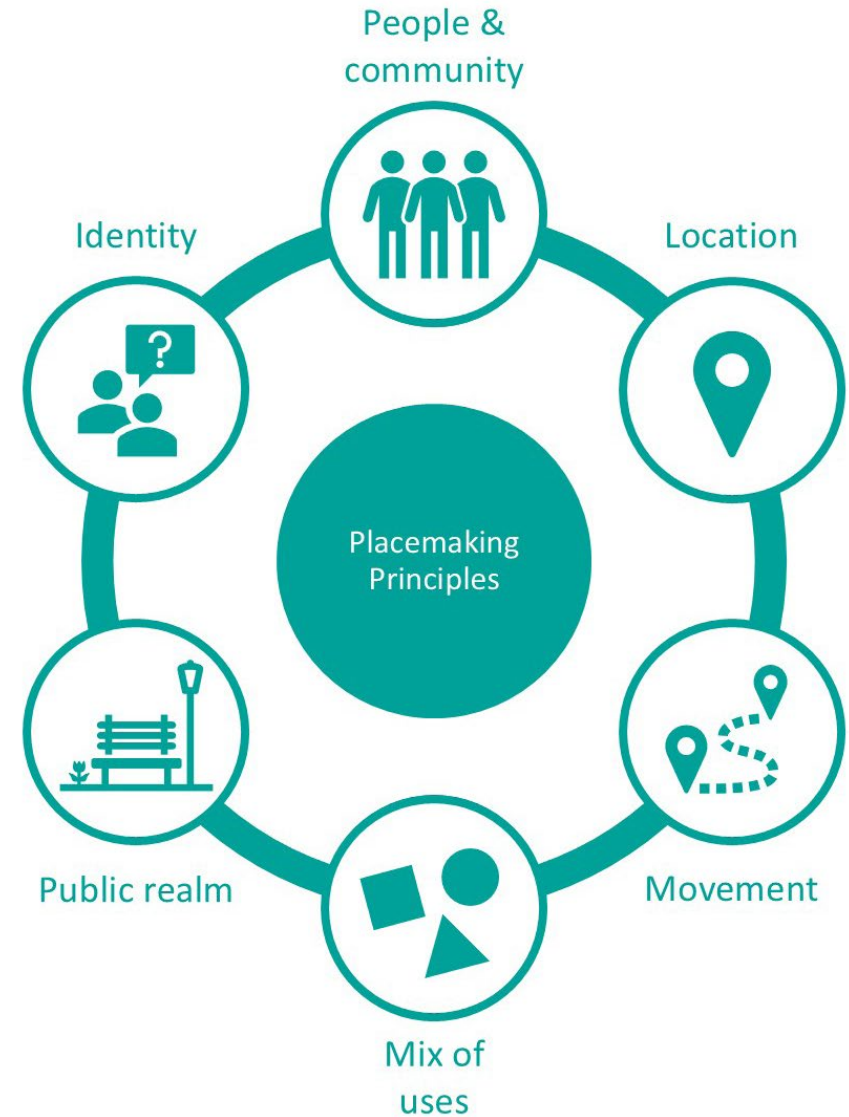
The means

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themeans

Placemaking is more than urban design – it is a philosophy and process that transforms spaces into meaningful places where people want to live, work, and connect. At its core, placemaking is the collaborative process of shaping spaces to reflect the identity, needs, and aspirations of the community. At The means we have continued to collaborate across disciplines and specialisms - working together to deliver integrated solutions that reflect the Charter's holistic ethos. We have been proud to play our part in the strengthening focus on placemaking in policy and practice in Wales. We remain committed to support and promote the six principles and bring to bear our expertise around people, communities and identity.

“Placemaking is more than a method – it is a mindset.”





United Welsh

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Here at United Welsh, we believe that good placemaking should take pride of place in all our developments. We are delighted to be a signatory to the Charter and see it as a very important set of guiding place principles which help to improve the lives of our customers and their families.

“The Charter has helped us promote the benefits of good placemaking, improving the lives of our customers and their families.”

We insist on all our design consultants working to the 6 placemaking principles which the Charter promotes. This has clearly helped, for example, Roberts Limbrick Architects in their design approach for two of our sites at Sanatorium Road, Cardiff and Austin Grange, Caerphilly. These sites offer placemaking based design solutions to challenging sites, including positive interfaces with the existing streetscape and quality amenity space for all residents ranging from gardens to useable balconies.

The Urbanists

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At The Urbanists, understanding the nature of a place and its meaning to communities has been our core focus for 20 years. The Placemaking Wales Charter perfectly aligns with this vision, helping us create spaces people truly connect with. We leverage the Charter to guide community engagement, shape design analysis, and craft bold place visions, strategies, and development plans. By focusing on the powerful principles of Community and Identity, we ensure our work is locally led, impactful, and built for long-term success.

theurbanists

“The Urbanists create people-focused places by applying the Placemaking Wales Charter, ensuring community-led, impactful, and sustainable designs.”





Creu Lleodedd Cymru
Placemaking Wales