



Gethin Thomas

Year of call: 2017

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Gethin Thomas has a multidisciplinary practice, encompassing public law & human rights, environment & energy, procurement, commercial, financial services, regulatory and planning law.

Reflecting the breadth of his practice, Gethin has acted as sole or junior counsel in proceedings in the Court of Appeal, and in the High Court (in the Administrative Court, Commercial Court, Queen's Bench Division, and Technology & Construction Court).

He is ranked as a 'rising star' in environmental law by the Legal 500.

Gethin is a member of the Attorney General's C Panel of Counsel, and of the Welsh Government's B Panel of Junior Counsel.

Gethin graduated from the University of Oxford with a First Class law degree. Before joining the bar, Gethin worked as a research assistant in public law at the Law Commission for two years. Latterly, Gethin interned at the human rights charity JUSTICE. He worked in the administrative justice team.

Gethin is a contributing editor to the Environmental Law Bulletin (published by Sweet & Maxwell). He has also contributed to the latest editions of *Wilmot-Smith on Construction Contracts* (4th edition, May 2021), and *Shackleton on the Law and Practice of Meetings* (15th Edition, November 2020).

Areas of expertise

Administrative and Public

Environment and Energy

Planning

Commercial

Financial Services, Banking and Pensions

Regulatory and Disciplinary

Procurement

Inquiries and Investigations

Environment and Energy

Gethin specialises in environmental law. He is ranked as a 'rising star' in environmental law by The Legal 500 (2024).

Gethin is regularly instructed to advise on a broad range of environmental and planning matters. Gethin has extensive experience of environmental judicial review challenges, and climate change litigation. He has acted in a number of high-profile environmental cases.

He has also advised NGOs, central and local government, regulators, developers and other private companies on a broad array of environmental law issues. These include, for example, water resources, air quality, contaminated land, the Aarhus Convention, SEA, EIA, and Habitats assessments, as well as issues arising under other discrete statutory regimes such as, for example, the Animal Health Act 1981, Forestry Act 1967, and the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.

Gethin is a contributing editor of the Environmental Law Bulletin (published by Sweet & Maxwell). Gethin is a member of the Environmental Law Foundation, through which he provides pro bono assistance on environmental matters. He is also a member of LexisNexis' Q&A Expert Panel on environmental law.

Gethin also has a keen interest in energy regulation, including nuclear power and renewables.

Gethin was ranked as one of the 'Highest Rated Planning Juniors Under 35' by Planning Magazine (2020).

Notable recent instructions include:

- ***R (on the application of Jennifer Dawes) v Secretary of State and Anor* [2023] EWHC 2352 (Admin):** Acting on behalf of the Claimant, as junior counsel to Richard Harwood OBE KC, in a judicial review challenging the second grant of development consent for the re-opening of Manston Airport in Kent, on climate change and need grounds. Gethin previously acted on behalf of objectors to the scheme, instructed by the Environmental Law Foundation, in respect to its climate change impacts. Gethin also acted as junior counsel to Paul Stinchcombe KC and Richard Wald KC in a successful judicial review challenging the first grant of the development consent order in 2021. For more information on the first claim, please see [here](#).
- ***R (Greenpeace UK) v Secretary of State and the OGA* [2023] EWHC 2608 (Admin):** Acting on behalf of Greenpeace UK, in a judicial review challenging a series of decisions culminating in the launch of the 33rd UK Offshore Oil and Gas Licensing Round by the North Sea Transition Authority, with James McClelland KC and Alastair Richardson.
- ***R (Transport Action Network Ltd) v Secretary of State and National Highways* [2023] EWHC 860 (KB):** Acting as junior counsel in a judicial review challenge to the grant of a development consent order for the A428 Road Improvement Scheme, on biodiversity and climate change grounds, led by Estelle Dehon KC.
- ***R (on the Application of Tarian Hafren Severn Shield Cyf) v Marine Management Organisation* [2022] EWHC 683 (Admin):** Acting as junior counsel, led by David Wolfe KC, in a judicial review challenging a marine licence issued by the Marine Management Organisation, granting permission to dispose of mud, dredged during the course of the construction of Hinkley Point C nuclear power station, in the Severn Estuary. For more information, please see [here](#).
- ***R (Transport Action Network Ltd) v Secretary of State* :** Acting as junior counsel, in a judicial review challenging the Secretary of State's decision not to suspend the National Policy Statement for National Networks pending its review, led by David Wolfe KC and Peter Lockley.
- **All Wales (Rod Fishing and Net Fishing) Byelaws:** Acted as junior counsel to Richard Wald KC, instructed by Natural Resources Wales, in a four-week Inquiry concerning the implementation of byelaws for the conservation of salmon and sea trout stocks in Welsh rivers. For more information, please see [here](#).
- **Advice on Environmental Bill:** Advising ClientEarth, as junior counsel to Stephen Tromans KC, in respect of draft clauses of the Environment Bill. The advice was cited during the House of Lords second reading of the Environment Bill.
- **EIR:** Assisted Nigel Fleming KC in relation to a matter arising from the scope of the definition of 'public authority' pursuant to the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

- **Climate change and planning:** Assisted Peter Village KC in advising as to climate change's role in the planning system.
- **UNCITRAL arbitration:** Acting as junior counsel in an ad hoc arbitration in the energy sector, raising climate change issues, led by Gordon Nardell KC.
- **Appeal against revocation of environmental permit:** Acted on behalf of the EA in respect of an appeal against the revocation of an environmental permit for a waste operation.
- **SEA and Habitats Directives:** Advising the Civil Aviation Authority, in respect of the applicability of the SEA and Habitats Directives to the preparation of an Airspace Change Masterplan.
- **Renewables Obligation Scheme:** As junior counsel to Duncan Sinclair, advising as to issues arising under the Renewables Obligation scheme, administered by Ofgem.
- **Felling Licenses:** Advised Natural Resources Wales, as to issues arising in respect of its powers in respect of felling licenses.

Gethin has written articles, and delivered seminars and lectures on environmental matters, such as water resources, climate change, air quality, environmental impact assessments and habitats regulation.

Memberships

- Administrative Law Bar Association
- UK Environmental Law Association
- Environmental Law Foundation
- Commercial Bar Association
- Procurement Lawyers Association
- Association of London Welsh Lawyers

Qualifications

- 2014, BA Jurisprudence, Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford – First Class
- 2017, BPTC, BPP University – Very Competent

Additional Information

Scholarships and Awards

- 2016, Lord Edmund-Davies Award, Gray's Inn
- 2016, Residential Scholarship, Gray's Inn
- 2016, Excellence Award, BPP University
- 2017, ALBA Conference Scholarship

Pro Bono and Other Voluntary Work

- Gethin is committed to pro bono work.
- Gethin was formerly a Trustee of the Lord Edmund-Davies Trust, which is an independent charity established in 2013 to serve young people living in Wales or having a connection with Wales who are interested in entering the legal profession.
- Gethin is a member of the Environmental Law Foundation, through which he provides pro bono advice.

- Gethin has volunteered with Free Representation Unit, acting for claimants in social security appeals. Further examples of Gethin's pro bono experience include volunteering as an adviser at Bethnal Green Legal Advice Centre and as a researcher with Citizens Advice Bureau.
- He was a human rights education trainer with Amnesty International.
- Gethin has been a mentor on the Vocalise programme, where he taught debating in prisons.
- Gethin has also volunteered with Big Voice, a social mobility and youth empowerment charity

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