

Environmental (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1
Section 6 – The Biodiversity a Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT/PLAN

Overview

Community and Town Councils are subject to the biodiversity and ecosystems resilience duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, known as the S6 duty.

To comply with the S6 duty we must prepare and publish a plan setting out what we are currently doing, proposing to do and actually doing to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience.

Complying with the S6 duty will help maximize our contribution to the Well being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

This Statement/Plan will steer the Council in achieving its biodiversity goals and will be subject to an annual review.

Introduction

Gelligaer Community Council comprises of 13 elected Community Councillors serving approximately 8,114 dwellings and one paid member of staff within the Caerffili borough.

In 2021/22 a precept of £132,687.31 was raised, which meant an increase of 3% on the previous year and an increase of 0.62p to £21.13 per Band D equivalent household, with approximately £50K in reserves and other expenditure earmarked for potential environmental schemes

Apart from an office building and pathway to the periphery and small garden to the rear, the Community Council does not own nor maintain any land. However annually we do install and maintain hanging flowering baskets and planters within our town, promoting the use of native pollinator friendly flowers.

Gelligaer and Merthyr Common occupy nearly 8,000 acres of upland landscape partly within the geographical area of Gelligaer Community Council, “an expanse of bleak but beautiful upland moor sandwiched between the Taf and Rhymney Valleys”.

Gelligaer is a designated conservation area due to its ancient medieval and Roman remains.

It is difficult to imagine but in the 1900’s until only 30 years ago Penallta Colliery dominated the landscape and notably had two of the deepest shafts within the South Wales Colliery. Carved from a former coal tip is a country park, Parc Penallta, with one of the largest figurative sculptures in the country, an observatory from the highest point, with spectacular views, and a mixture of ponds, marsh, woodlands and grasslands on the lower plateaus.

Action Plan

Gelligaer Community Council will continue to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of our functions and in doing so, promote the resilience of ecosystems:

Tackle negative factors (e.g. pollution)

- Source locally
- Recycle materials wherever possible
- Support energy saving initiatives within the community
- Aim to go paperless – send agendas electronically, online banking

Support capacity and/or other organizations

- Equip our volunteer litter pickers with protective clothing, equipment and insurance
- Encourage and support local halls to go GREEN
- Work with the Local Authority (LA) in implementing GREEN initiatives such as installing electric charging points, solar panels on public buildings, reducing the frequency of mowing, encourage swathes of grass meadow growing to provide cover for small mammals and reptiles.
- Actively support our allotments
- Request local organizations receiving a grant how it will contribute to supporting biodiversity as part of their project
- Collaborate with other bodies such as the Welsh Government and Keep Wales Tidy to implement planting projects and installing habitats e.g. for birds, bats and hedgehogs. Having already installed native fruit trees and bushes in Hengoed and looking to install a bigger development package at Tiryberth alongside the community.
- Working with the community to plant more native fruit trees and bushes in the locality to encourage GROW EAT COOK initiative.

Embed biodiversity into decision making, policy and procurement

- Take into account biodiversity considerations when considering planning applications and other associated matters and make formal objections/representation in relation to applications from developers on green field sites, impacts of developments on public rights of way, footpath diversion orders, tree preservation and the safeguarding of SINCs.
- Use local suppliers wherever possible

Raise Awareness of Biodiversity and its Importance

- Engage and encourage the community to volunteer on nature projects
- Encourage and support Eco projects within our schools
- Use social media
- Promote and encourage residents to plant native pollinator friendly flowers

Safeguarding Principal Species and Habitats

- Plant native bulbs
- Safeguarding principal species and habitats including Local Wildlife Sites / Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
- Ensuring no negative impact on protected species
- Work with LA's Ecologist Officer

What happens next?

- Council will continue to work on existing opportunities and identify new ones to embed biodiversity and eco systems into its activities.
- This Statement/Plan will be reviewed annually
- Pethau Bychain - One Voice Wales is launching a Green network Forum with Community and Town Councils throughout Wales – Clerk and members will be encouraged to attend fortnightly sessions to discuss environmental projects, share good practices, ideas, potential funding streams and all topics Nature!

23/07/2021