

**Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6
The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty**

Gelligaer Community Council Report

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The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2022

Name of Town or Community Council: Gelligaer Community Council

Introduction and Context

Gelligaer Community Council represents and serves 8 small villages in South East Wales: Gelligaer, Penybryn, Glyngaer, Penpedairheol (Cascade), Tiryberth, Glanynant, Cefn Hengoed, Hengoed and a delightfully bustling town – Ystrad Mynach (which includes Tredomen and Penallta).

Gelligaer Community Council is proud to play an active role in enhancing biodiversity across our communities. With a dedicated team of 13 elected members and a precept of £143K, we serve residents in villages rich within a landscape of exceptional environmental and cultural heritage. The area is home to designated conservation zones, ancient commons and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that support diverse habitats and species.

We collectively have an overall responsibility for the well-being of our area, aiming always to bring direct benefit to our inhabitants, socially, economically, and environmentally.

In recent years, the Council has taken meaningful steps to embed biodiversity into our operations, partnerships, and public life. Notably, we have a Service Level Agreement with Keep Wales Tidy, enabling delivery of biodiverse projects on land owned by Caerphilly County Borough Council. This partnership empowers us to support habitat creation, improve pollinator corridors, and promote green volunteering in our area.

We also recognise that biodiversity is about more than landscapes—it is about learning and legacy. Through educational initiatives, school partnerships, and visible signage in community green spaces, we are fostering deeper public awareness and pride in our local ecosystems. Our grant funding supports grassroots efforts, from wildflower planting to community gardening in our town and village green spaces.

Action Report

Action carried out to:		Monitored by:
-embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement	Gelligaer Community Council ensures biodiversity is embedded in the way we operate and is at the forefront of our early thinking and business planning, including policies, plans programmes	Clerk to the Council

	<p>and projects as well as day to day activities.</p> <p>Biodiversity in Planning: The council considers biodiversity when reviewing planning applications and the Local Development Plan, making formal objections or representation where necessary to protect local ecosystems.</p> <p>Procurement: Wherever possible materials are sourced and purchased locally, with priority given to eco-friendly materials.</p>	
<p>-raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance</p>	<p>Gelligaer Community Council proudly champions biodiversity through a blend of education, community engagement projects and digital outreach.</p> <p>Website: our website includes a biodiversity statement/plan, as well as a dedicated section on the website stressing the importance of biodiversity and details of the projects which have been carried out.</p> <p>School Engagement: We invite our 9 schools to plant a wheelbarrow, all of which are displayed in the town during the summer months, building connections to nature and pollinators.</p> <p>Habitat Boxes & Wildlife Cameras: These resources spark curiosity and help young minds observe local wildlife.</p> <p>Community Orchards: Our newly planted orchards offer habitat and harvest—bringing biodiversity to life on public land.</p> <p>Social Media Awareness: Through seasonal posts and project updates, we share tips, celebrate successes, and grow community pride.</p> <p>Keep Wales Tidy carried out a community engagement activity at Barry Close, which showed residents were very keen to see the green space</p>	<p>Clerk to the Council</p>

	<p>improved. As a result, a native hedge, wildflowers, fruit trees/bushes were planted and insect boxes made from gabion baskets installed, highlighting the importance of biodiversity.</p> <p>Together, these initiatives raise awareness by turning biodiversity into a shared experience—rooted in learning, growing, and caring.</p>	
<p>-safeguard principal species and habitats</p>	<p>Gelligaer Community Council safeguards species and habitats through implementing six targeted actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better planning & rules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making sure new developments consider wildlife protection responding accordingly to planning applications 2. Monitoring and researching wildlife: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regularly checking species health and local habitats to spot threats early. - Working with experts and local volunteers to gather useful data. - Adjusting strategies based on what is working and what needs improvement. 3. Improving and restoring natural areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planting trees, creating wildflower spaces, and protect waterways. - Setting up wildlife-friendly zones. - Removing harmful invasive species that disrupt ecosystems. 4. Making green choices in buying and decision-making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prioritising buying from suppliers who follow sustainability principles. - Prioritising biodiversity in council decisions alongside cost and social benefits. - Always checking environmental impacts before approving projects. 5. Involving the community: 	<p>Clerk to the Council</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educating people on why protecting biodiversity matters. - Organising clean-ups, planting events, and conservation efforts. <p>6. Securing funding and building partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applying for grants and funding to support biodiversity work. - Partnerships with conservation groups and government programs. - Working together with different agencies to share knowledge and resources. <p>By implementing these varied strands of work, Gelligaer Community Council aims to ensure the enhancement of our green spaces into thriving havens for local wildlife and communities.</p>	
<p>-restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks</p>	<p>Gelligaer Community Council continues to restore and create habitats and resilient ecological networks across its green spaces through actions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing and installing habitat boxes to support endangered species, such as hedgehogs and bats and red list birds - Creation of hedges to create wildlife corridors - Orchards- encouraging urban food forests for the community. - Tree planting - Wildflower planting – creating wildlife corridors along roadsides and parks etc to support pollinators. - Erecting hanging baskets, rail, and pavement planters in our communities for pollinators . <p>Our partnership with Keep Wales Tidy has enabled Project Officer Andrew King to work with members and volunteers to deliver many environmental projects within our communities. These include:</p>	<p>Clerk to the Council</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Installing 4 Hedgehog houses in the grounds of St Catwgs Church, Gelligaer, identified by Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) as a good habitat for hedgehogs. A beneficial way to support an existing local population.• Installing sparrow Terraces and a multi-species bat box and bee hotel on the Community Council building.• Planting at various sites across the community council area, including Glyn-Gaer, Glan Y Nant, Gelligaer and Cefn Hengoed. By using a seed mix of annuals and perennials the display will be bold in the first year and develop into a well-established floral display when managed correctly. The seed mix contained 24 species found on the RHS Perfect for pollinators list.• Planting 2500 spring flowering crocus bulbs for green spaces in Gelligaer, to provide sustenance for pollinating insects early in the year.• 6 Prunus Royal Burgundy Trees planted on land to the east of Penybryn Community Centre on Trosnant Crecent. The Prunus Royal Burgundy is a great tree for pollinators with early spring flowers and a great statement of colour throughout the rest of the year.• Sowing wildflower seed on the Oak Leaf roundabout and nearby stone planters in Ystrad Mynach. Managed by CCBC Highways with regular grass cutting the Oak Leaf Roundabout and nearby planters had no significant environmental value. The species mix was recommended by the Councils principal ecologist as it	
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	<p>contains the species you would expect to see in the area, particularly on roundabouts, meadows, and verges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planting spring flowering daffodil bulbs on the grass bank adjacent to the Penybryn entrance sign on Penallta Road. The grass bank had very little value as a habitat but adding spring flowering daffodil bulbs will create an early food source for local pollinators. Wildflower turf and seed were disregarded due to the steepness of the bank.• Planting a new standard tree to replace a dead one outside the main entrance at Greenhill Primary School to improve the biodiversity of the area and brighten up the school entrance.• Planting 20 fruit trees to create a new community Orchard on the land to the SW of Cefn Hengoed Community Centre. A water butt and signage were also added.• Installing 5m² wildflower turf and sowing 5m² wildflower seed with the children at Glyn Gaer primary school so they can undertake monitoring of each site. The school wanted ideas on ways they could improve the grounds of the school for biodiversity. A site meeting was held with the eco teacher where several ideas were discussed, with the creation of a meadow area that the children could monitor being the best option. Information sheets e.g. identification guides and bat boxes were given to the school.• 300 Oxeye daisy plugs planted along Hengoed Avenue, Cefn Hengoed.• A number of projects have also been undertaken at an area opposite Portofino, Ystrad Mynach. The area is managed as a nature area with signs	
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informing the public of the plants that are growing on the site. Actions include planting a selection of wildlife friendly shrubs, installing wildflower turf and fruit trees recommended by Horticulture expert Kevin Revell at Caerphilly Garden Centre - Morello cherry, Conference pear, Bramley Apple, Bountiful Apple and Damson Merryweather, installation of a free-standing bug hotel and bulb planting.



Figure 1: Tree planting the community orchard in Cefn Hengoed.



Figure 2: Bird, bat and bird boxes on the Gelligaer Community Council building.

	 <p>Figure 3: Planting in Gelligaer</p>	
<p>-tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature based solutions, address invasive species</p>	<p>Gelligaer Community Council tackles negative factors through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only using peat free compost - Supporting local groups that litter pick with equipment. - Composting - Adhering to proper recycling practices - Supporting sustainable transport: walking, cycling and public transport. - Promoting safe routes to school - Planting orchards - Reducing carbon emissions – solar on schools and community centres - Supporting tree planting and green roofs to improve air quality. 	<p>Clerk to the Council</p>
<p>-use improve and share evidence</p>	<p>Working in partnership, sharing case studies and best practices from other groups, using effective social media to raise public awareness and encourage grassroots activism.</p>	<p>Clerk to the Council</p>
<p>-support capacity and/or other organisations</p>	<p>Gelligaer Community Council supports local groups in our area that litter pick, volunteers that help with our Wales in Bloom and other greening activities, as well as supporting schools with green initiatives.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council also fully supports our allotment associations with</p>	<p>Clerk to the Council</p>

	<p>annual grants and various project in our community as we fully appreciate the health and social benefits derived from maintaining a plot. Our allotments are great for Biodiversity too, as they support a range of wildlife, including bees, butterflies, birds, works and slugs etc by providing habitats and food sources. Composting and organic practices, which we encourage, can improve soil quality, thus reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.</p>	
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Review of s6 duty

- What has worked well? What have the barriers been? What will you change?

Gelligaer Community Council has made positive progress in meeting its Section 6 Biodiversity Duty by embedding biodiversity considerations into both daily operations and long-term planning.

What has worked well?

Partnership work with Keep Wales Tidy has been key to delivering on the ground, enabling awareness raising, habitat creation/restoration and environmental improvements in cooperation with both the Community Council and local residents. This has amplified the number of tangible, practical projects we are able to deliver whilst enabling us to maximise the limited resources available.

What have the barriers been?

Barriers include limited staff time and capacity will always remain a challenge; however partnership works helps to alleviate this. We have also experienced low level vandalism on two sites, so must continue to publicise the benefits of biodiversity and the project being carried out.

What will you change?

As we move forward, Gelligaer Community Council remains committed to expanding its biodiversity impact through targeted projects that restore and protect habitats, accessible educational activities for all ages, grant support for residents and groups with eco-minded ideas, continued collaboration with Keep Wales Tidy and local stakeholders.

- How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?
- The S6 plan is continuously monitored by the Clerk to the Council.

- The S6 plan will be reviewed regularly by Gelligaer Community Council
- A new template will be formed and used regularly to ensure that all data is ready for when the next report is due in 2028.