

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6

The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2019

Name of Town or Community Council: Goetre Fawr Community Council

Introduction and Context

Goetre Fawr is a small Community Council (CC) in Monmouthshire in South Wales with a precept of £31,500 (financial year 2019/20). There are just under 2000 residents on the electoral role in the villages of Penperlleni, Little Mill, and hamlets of Mamhilad and Nantyderry. The CC owns a small paddock (c1 acre) on which horses are grazed and which is land-managed in accordance with best practices. However, the majority of the CC's influence will be through decisions taken at Council and Planning meetings to ensure the promotion and protection of biodiversity within the Community. The CC has already started an informal partnership arrangement with Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) to identify biodiversity opportunities on public and community spaces and is also looking to work with the Canal & Riverside Trust – The Brecon and Monmouthshire Canal runs through the ward and is a major wildlife asset. It is intended to appoint a Councillor(s) with specific responsibilities for overseeing the CC's actions to support biodiversity, with regular quarterly updates to full Council.

Action Report

Action carried out to:		Monitored by:
-embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The impact on biodiversity to be considered in all decision making, planning applications and in particular the awarding of CC contracts.2. 'Appoint' biodiversity reps to implement plan, liaising with Clerk / Full Council3. Explore obtaining GFCC getting bee friendly accreditation through MCC?	Clerk, Full Council / Bio reps - based on formal commitments given and responses to Planning applications
-raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work with influential groups (esp. Community Garden) to promote biodiversity / ecological sustainability2. Promote initiatives via the village Facebook site.	Full Council / Bio reps – feedback received from Council members and residents
-safeguard principal species and habitats	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensure hedgerows are protected, especially as part of any planning applications, with restoration of any hedges / trees removed or damaged during construction2. Ensure hedgerows are managed in the winter months when the woody growth is dormant. All work during the bird nesting season (March to August) to be avoided3. Create habitat piles - dead wood and piles of leaves are good for a range of species4. Look for opportunities to erect bat and bird boxes or to build a bug hotel (provide boxes for local organisations to erect)5. Liaise with the Canal & Riverside Trust to explore opportunities - the canal is a haven for wildlife	Planning Committee / Full Council Bio Reps Record any specific activity / sites or species protected
-restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Create meadow area / wildflower area in Goytre park.2 Arrange for bulb planting alongside hedges, verges and under the trees in the park	Full Council Bio Reps Identify areas of habitat which have been

<p>-restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks – continued.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Plant park and OPS tubs with pollination friendly flowers / shrubs 4 Explore different mowing regimes with MCC to allow low growing species like daisies, clover and selfheal to flower and increase the number of flower-visiting insects, helping pollinators. 5 Identify any areas of grassland where the landowner can be asked to let the grass grow long and manage like a hay meadow. 6 Emphasise that for biodiversity projects ‘tidiness’ is not a priority, sometimes just leaving a small area go wild can be beneficial – to Counter any possible negative resident reaction) 	<p>created / increased / protected</p>
<p>-tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature based solutions, address invasive species</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Review the use of pesticides in the village to tackle weeds, particularly along the dog exercise area and roadside verges 2 Identify and remove invasive species 3 Ensure any composts used by the CC are peat free 4 Organise regular litter picking to keep the lanes free and support wildlife 	<p>Full Council (liaise with MCC as necessary) Invasive species addressed Usage of pesticides</p>
<p>-use improve and share evidence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Liaise with the Community garden team / other volunteers to share best practice / ideas for householders re the planting of flower beds / containers & hanging baskets etc to encourage the use of pollinator-friendly shrubs, annuals and perennial plants. 2 Encourage the school / GASC to undertake projects on wild flowers / wildlife that lives in the park etc (provide ‘sponsorship’ if required). 	<p>Full Council Bio Reps Use of Community garden and other local ‘expertise’ Activity from local residents / community groups</p>
<p>-support capacity and/or other organisations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Create meadow area / wildflower area in Goytre park. 2 Arrange for bulb planting alongside hedges, verges and under the trees in the park 3 Plant park and OPS tubs with pollination friendly flowers / shrubs 4 Explore different mowing regimes with MCC to allow low growing species like daisies, clover and selfheal to flower and increase the number of flower-visiting insects, helping pollinators. 5 Identify any areas of grassland where the landowner can be asked to let the grass grow long and manage like a hay meadow. 6 Emphasise that for biodiversity projects ‘tidiness’ is not a priority, sometimes just leaving a small area go wild can be beneficial – to Counter any possible negative resident reaction) 	<p>Full Council Bio Reps Identify areas of habitat which have been created / increased / protected</p>

Review of s6 duty

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

Prior to the summer of 2019 all planning applications were considered at Full Council meetings. Time limitations at these meetings meant that it was impossible to consider the wider environmental impact of any applications being put before Council. During the summer 'recess' period, a new planning committee was established to consider applications in the absence of an August meeting. This dedicated committee has enabled a much more detailed examination of planning proposals, and as a result it was agreed that the Committee should be made permanent and meet to consider all future applications.

To date the Committee has highlighted the following issues when considering planning applications, and ensuring that these are properly considered by the relevant planning authority (Monmouthshire County Council and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority) as part of any 'approval'

- The prevention of the removal of hedgerows and trees (with any unavoidable damage caused by construction equipment etc made good)
- The impact of development on watercourses
- The potential for pollution from sewage or other 'noxious' run-off

The responsibilities for biodiversity are now to be extended with a more detailed action plan as outlined on pages 1 & 2 of this document.

- How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan?

The duty will be monitored through the appointed Community Council Environmental lead and other individual officers reporting back to the council on the success or otherwise of the actions - taken through regular assessments, and more formal six monthly and annual updates.