

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 - Section 6
The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty
Report 2025

Pontypool Community Council

Introduction and Context

Pontypool Community Council has been in existence since 1985. It is one of the largest Community/Town Councils in Wales with a population exceeding 47,000 and a budget in excess of £750,000.

The council is made of 21 elected or co-opted members, representing the 16 wards of Pontypool. These members make decisions on a range of services and activities which support the local community, liaising with Torfaen County Borough Council when issues of interest or concerns arise.

In order for the Community Council to run smoothly and efficiently, a small and dedicated team of staff under the direction of the Clerk, work tirelessly to produce all the necessary administration, organisation and financial tasks that are demanded of them.

The Council has arrangements in place for the governance of its affairs and the management of its resources to meet legislative requirements and is subject to the delivery of the Well-being Future Generations (WFG) Act 2015.

Pontypool Community Council has helped biodiversity through many functions, such as, offering environment grants, educational activities, land management and building networks in the environment field. Governance arrangement around the delivery of our s6 duty are included in this report.

Action Report		
NRAP Objective 1:		
Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels		
Actions implemented to:		Monitored by:
Embed biodiversity action across our council's functions	<p>Incorporated biodiversity and the s6 duty into council business and planning by developing and monitoring the delivery of the s6 Action Plan on an annual basis.</p> <p>The Community Council established a Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee in 2023 to embed sustainability and support for biodiversity throughout the Council's working practice. From April 2025, this subcommittee has increased its frequency to meeting monthly, prior to this the subcommittee previously met on a bi-monthly basis.</p> <p>Ensuring functions across the council deliver biodiversity actions as business as usual, our general sustainability and support of biodiversity include: the embedding of office environmentally friendly practices (procurement, reducing photocopying and encouraging recycling) and the delivery of nature projects which will be evidenced throughout this report.</p> <p>Valuing biodiversity more effectively and for the longer term in decision making. Since June 2025, the council has added a sustainability and biodiversity agenda item to all council committees to ensure that sustainability and biodiversity is considered in council decision making.</p>	<p>Community Council Clerk</p> <p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee</p> <p>Community Council Clerk, Community Councillors and office staff</p> <p>Community Council Clerk, Community Councillors and office staff</p>
Raise awareness of biodiversity and its importance across our organisation	The Community Council ensured that the OVW voluntary biodiversity training modules 25, 26 and 27 were attended by the Chair of the Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee, the Officer championing biodiversity and other community councillors. In total three Community Councillors and the Biodiversity Champion Officer attended.	Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee

	<p>The biodiversity championing Officer delivered a presentation to the Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee on the biodiversity training modules providing information to highlight the importance and value of biodiversity and how this council is contributing to action as an organisation.</p> <p>The Community Council has embarked upon many collaborations with various environmental groups to raise the awareness of and support the implementation of environmental projects/initiatives across the Pontypool area, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep Wales Tidy, the SEECT Coordinator (Schools Environment Education Collaboration Torfaen) to engage all schools within Pontypool and District in biodiversity and sustainability initiatives and projects. ● Gwent Wildlife Trust, in a partnership to deliver a 3-year project creating Wildlife-friendly community spaces in Pontypool that serve as a sanctuary for local wildlife while engaging the community in sustainable practices. ● Stump Up for Trees, working together to develop a community woodland on 3 small plots of land that the council leases. ● Local Places for Nature (LPfN), liaise and engage on all nature projects, plus attended the Go Wild 2024 event held in Pontypool Park. ● Local Primary Schools, hosting an annual Eco Quiz event that has been running for over 20 years. ● Canal and River Trust (CRT), running an annual Forest Schools programme for primary school aged children. <p>The Community Council engages with all groups following events and projects to capture feedback, thus enabling continuous improvement and new suggestions/ideas.</p> <p>The Community Council continued to improve the Environment and Biodiversity page on our council's website to share details of projects and events.</p>	<p>Biodiversity Champion Officer</p> <p>Community Councillors and office staff</p> <p>Community Councillors and office staff</p> <p>Councillors and office staff</p>
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Additional information about objective 1 (measures / indicators, i.e., cost, benefits, impacts and outcomes)

Tangible benefits and measures of the actions listed above:

Action/activity	Cost	Benefit	Impact
Increasing the Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee from bi-monthly to monthly	nil	Enabling the progression of projects, as decision-making and approval of spends were achieved more promptly.	Project progression.
Adding a sustainability and biodiversity agenda item to all council committees since June 2025	nil	19 committees have discussed and recorded ' <i>How has this meeting contributed to the Council's duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems?</i> '.	This was a useful tool for engaging and supporting participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.
The collaboration with environmental groups:			
-Gwent Wildlife Trust Partnership	£5,000	Development of a wildlife-friendly garden in the town centre and the creation of a youth volunteer group.	The sustainable youth group to further develop other green spaces in Pontypool for years 2 and 3 of the project.
-Keep Wales Tidy (SEECT)	nil	Attended 5 SEECT meetings	Building stronger relationships within the environment network, sharing information and raising awareness of projects/initiatives.
-Canal & River Trust Forest Schools Programme (2024 and 2025)	£7,260	<u>2024</u> : 240 young people attended 8 sessions. <u>2025</u> : 300 young people attended 10 sessions. 5 feedback forms	In 2 years, 540 young people attended forest school sessions hosted by the CRT. This great collaboration has grown and there is a demand for additional

			were received all of which scored the session 10/10.	sessions. All primary schools, home-educated pupils and well-being groups are invited each year.	
	-Annual Eco Quiz with local primary schools	£1,862 (last 3 years) for	Since 2001 PCC have hosted an annual Eco Quiz for Pontypool primary schools. The winning school receives £200 prize money, trophies and certificates for winning team members.	Raise awareness of biodiversity and its importance.	
	-Stump Up for Trees, Varteg Community Woodland project	nil	Drawing upon expertise and guidance to enable the development of a management plan for the woodland.	Collaborative working to share knowledge and raise awareness of environmental issues.	
	-Local Places for Nature, Go Wild event 2024	£50	Attended Go Wild 2024 in Pontypool Park. Conducted a survey with a QR code to seek ideas from the public on what they want from the community council in terms of biodiversity. Received 17 responses, 9 of whom provided contact details.	Raise awareness of biodiversity and its importance.	
	School Environment and Community Green Grants (2023 – 2025)	£29,000	<u>2023</u> : 9 applications were made, £9,000 awarded (school env grants) <u>2024</u> : 10 (school) applications were made, £10,000 awarded	Grant/award holders received funding to enable the development of their environment project. Raising awareness of biodiversity and its importance.	

		and 4 (community) applications were made, £2,000 awarded. <u>2025</u> : 8 (school) applications were made, £7,000 was awarded and 2 (community) applications were made, £1,000 awarded.	
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NRAP Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management		
Actions implemented to:		Monitored by:
Safeguard special species and habitats listed on the section 7 biodiversity lists	<p>The Community Council provides and improves suitable managed habitats by having a management plan in place for a small parcel of land in the Pontypool area (Varteg Community Woodland) identified as having diverse habitats listed in section 7 of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016. In collaboration with many of the local government teams, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Stump Up for Trees and local farmers to the area, this council has a short-medium- and long-term management plan developed to protect and enhance the woodland.</p> <p>This council is working in partnership with Gwent Wildlife Trust to create a wildlife garden in Pontypool town centre, this improving habitat management for bees specifically. This project has developed a bug/bee hotel situated in a small green space where pollinators such as wildflower seeds and seed bombs have been planted.</p> <p>This council has implemented a small pilot project, installing a number of swift bird boxes on buildings in the town centre. The bird boxes have 'swift' callers attached to attract the African migrant species to nest in them whilst visiting the UK between April and August.</p> <p>In Spring 2024, the council commissioned a maintenance survey for the 11 ancient Sweet Chestnut trees in Pontypool Park, which enabled works to be scheduled and completed accordingly.</p>	<p>Community Councillors and office staff</p> <p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee</p> <p>Community Councillors and office staff</p> <p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee</p>
Contribute to the management of protected sites and species	The Community Council contributes to the management of wildlife sites by ensuring these sites are valued in decision making, the Varteg Community Woodland Project has an established Stakeholder group (consisting of internal and external members) to progress the management of the site.	Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee

	<p>This council has had two reports commissioned in recent years in respect of the Varteg Community Woodland; in November 2023 a Biodiversity Report assessed the habitats of the woodland and in November 2025 an Ecological Survey of the woodlands to identify habitat and woodland management recommendations Report.</p> <p>The Varteg Community Woodland management plan includes applying for the site to be recognised as a SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation).</p> <p>This council has 16 Norway spruce live Christmas trees planted throughout Pontypool and district in November 2024. The council has a 3-year tree maintenance plan/contract in place to ensure all 16 trees are protected and maintained.</p> <p>This council has included the following question on all grant application forms: <i>‘What steps has your school taken or is going to take to reduce its environmental impact?’</i></p> <p><i>Your answer could include but is not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>encouraging people to car-share or use public transport</i> • <i>reducing the use of pesticides or leaving areas to grow wild</i> • <i>reducing heating and electricity bills by installing insulation or low energy light bulbs’.</i> 	<p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee</p> <p>Biodiversity Champion Officer</p> <p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee</p>
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Additional information about objective 2 (measures / indicators, i.e., cost, benefits, impacts and outcomes)

Tangible benefits and measures of the actions listed above:

Action/activity	Cost	Benefit	Impact
Varteg Community Woodland Survey and Management Reports (2023 and 2025)	£1,567	Two reports from 2 surveys of the woodlands have been conducted, which the development of a management plan was based upon.	To enable the management of protected sites and species.
Varteg Community Woodland rent for lease of 2 plots of land	£591	Two small plots of land (0.20 and 1 hectare) are leased to PCC for £197 per annum and have been since 1990 and 1995 respectively.	Protection from grazing and self seeding from nearby sites has created a 20yr old mixed mosaic woodland with intermittent heath and tree cover.
Gwent Wildlife Trust, Wildlife Garden Project	£5,000	2025 was the first of a 3-year project and saw the development of a wildlife-friendly garden in Pontypool town centre and the creation of a youth volunteer community.	Development of a wildlife garden for the local community that safeguards special species, such as bees/bugs.
Swift Bird Box Project	£3,700	12 bird boxes were made and erected in Pontypool town centre with 4 cameras live streaming onto the PCC website. Data from RSPB informed this project as it stated a decline of swifts nationally and globally.	Boxes made available to encourage swifts to nest and habitat, protecting these special species.

Sweet chestnut tree management plan & works.	£3,750	11 ancient sweet chestnut trees in Pontypool Park were included in the management plan for maintenance.	All 11 trees were maintained according to the plan, managing the protected species and sites.
Christmas tree maintenance plan/contract.	£1,000	The first annual health check was carried out and any remedial work completed in July 2025.	Contributed to the management of protected sites and species.

Councillors and office staff

Additional information about objective 3 (measures / indicators, i.e., cost, benefits, impacts and outcomes)

Tangible benefits and measures of the actions listed above:

Action/activity	Cost	Benefit	Impact
The Varteg Community Woodland and the GWT Wildlife Garden Projects		Already outlined in objective 2 (above).	
Local Places for Nature (LPfN)	nil	LPfN is one of the key consultees in all our environment / nature projects to ensure that improving the diversity of areas of habitat contributes to the Wales Resilient Ecological Network (WaREN) framework.	Enables PCC to create or contribute to Resilient Ecological Networks.

NRAP Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats		
Actions implemented to:		Monitored by:
Address key pressures	<p>The Community Council has established a Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee to embed sustainability and support for biodiversity throughout the Council’s working practices. This includes nature projects, reducing office energy use, phasing out single use plastic, reducing water, reducing paper use including photocopying and encouraging recycling.</p> <p>The Community Council is promoting sustainability by building relationships with local groups that manage green spaces. Through these relationships, the Community Council is supporting groups managing these spaces in a way that safeguards species and habitats.</p> <p>The Community Council is working in partnership with Gwent Wildlife Trust to institute a Pontypool based environmental Youth Group, providing local green spaces for communities and visitors to improve health and well-being outcomes.</p> <p>The Community Council has developed a Stakeholder group to progress the delivery of the Varteg Woodland Management Plan, providing local green spaces for communities and visitors to improve health and well-being outcomes. The Community Council works in collaboration with the CRT to host the annual Forest Schools Programme, which provides local green spaces for the children to improve health and well-being outcomes.</p> <p>The Community Council attended and showcased nature / biodiversity projects at the borough (Torfaen County Borough Council) Climate Action Conference 2025.</p>	<p>Community Council Clerk, Community Councillors and office staff</p> <p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee</p> <p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee</p> <p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee</p> <p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee</p>
Utilise biodiverse and native nature-based	Not applicable currently but will be considered for ongoing native biodiverse green spaces, ie, woodland and wildlife garden.	

solutions wherever possible		
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Additional information about objective 4 (measures / indicators, i.e., cost, benefits, impacts and outcomes)

No measures or indicators to report that haven't already been reported above.

	<p>The Community Council continues to improve the Environment and Biodiversity page on our council website to share details of projects and events. The Community Council attended a Torfaen Climate and Nature Emergency Gathering recently, showcasing the nature project and progress within this past year.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Champion attends the Keep Wales Tidy SEECT (Schools Environment Education Collaboration Torfaen) bi-monthly meetings to update on projects and share good practices with local environment groups.</p>	<p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee Biodiversity Champion Officer</p>
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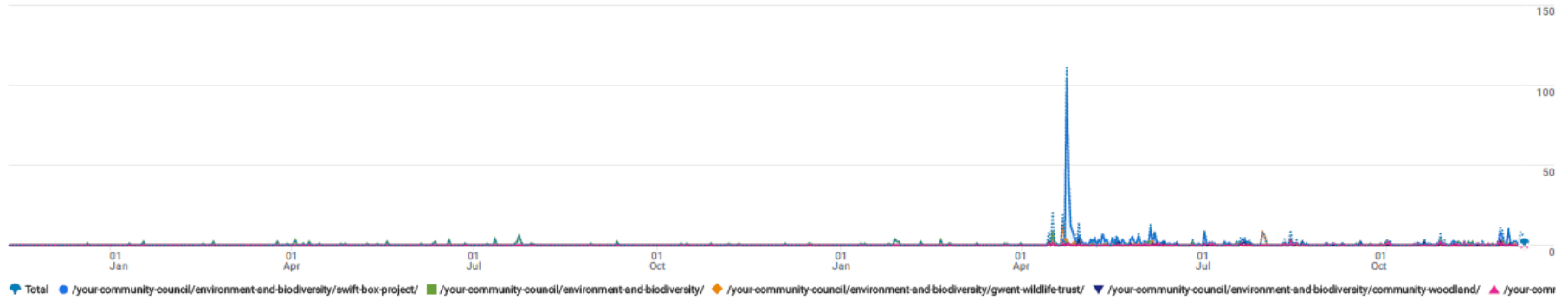
Additional information about objective 5 (measures / indicators, i.e., cost, benefits, impacts and outcomes)

Tangible benefits and measures of the actions listed above:

Action/activity	Cost	Benefit	Impact
Environment Grants Presentation Afternoon	£125	4 schools and one community group grant awardees attended the session and presented their respective projects.	Shared evidence and success of projects.
Biodiversity and Sustainability added to staff and committee agendas.	nil	Raises awareness of biodiversity and supports/encourages innovative thinking about improving our environment.	Shared evidence accessibly.
Provided quarterly updates to Torfaen Borough Councillors on projects.	nil	Raises awareness of biodiversity and supports/encourages innovative thinking about improving our environment.	Shared evidence accessibly.

Community Council’s website, environment and biodiversity pages: the graph below illustrates how the views have increased since the new Biodiversity webpages and project updates were launched in April 2025.

Views by Page path and screen class over time



environment-and-biodiversity

Page path and screen class	Views	Active users	Views per active user	Average engagement time per active user	Event count	Key events	Total revenue
Total	667 1.35% of total	357 1.67% of total	1.87 Avg -18.93%	39s Avg -5.94%	2,025 1.36% of total	0.00	£0.00
1 /your-community-council/environment-and-biodiversity/swift-box-project/	360 (53.97%)	193 (54.06%)	1.87	39s	1,058 (52.25%)	0.00 (-)	£0.00 (-)
2 /your-community-council/environment-and-biodiversity/	150 (22.49%)	98 (27.45%)	1.53	36s	440 (21.73%)	0.00 (-)	£0.00 (-)
3 /your-community-council/environment-and-biodiversity/gwent-wildlife-trust/	56 (8.4%)	46 (12.89%)	1.22	12s	219 (10.81%)	0.00 (-)	£0.00 (-)
4 /your-community-council/environment-and-biodiversity/community-woodland/	44 (6.6%)	30 (8.4%)	1.47	44s	127 (6.27%)	0.00 (-)	£0.00 (-)
5 /your-community-council/environment-and-biodiversity/action-plans/	37 (5.55%)	32 (8.96%)	1.16	17s	135 (6.67%)	0.00 (-)	£0.00 (-)
6 /your-community-council/environment-and-biodiversity/live-christmas-trees/	20 (3%)	15 (4.2%)	1.33	20s	46 (2.27%)	0.00 (-)	£0.00 (-)

NRAP Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery		
Actions implemented to:		Monitored by:
Ensure governance for biodiversity within our council	<p>The Community Council has established a Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee to embed sustainability and support for biodiversity throughout the Council's working practices. The Planning & Environment Committee are asked to approve the minutes of each subcommittee.</p> <p>The Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee ensures the s6 duty is monitored and reviewed.</p>	<p>Council Clerk</p> <p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee</p>
Provide capacity for biodiversity	<p>The Community Council continues to build and continue relationships with local nature & environmental groups with the aspiration to support new and develop existing community projects and has set aside capital to do so. Ensuring that ecological expertise is drawn upon, particularly from Torfaen Councils' Ecologist and LPfN.</p> <p>Sustainability and biodiversity have been added as an agenda item to the agenda of all staff meetings. To ensure sustainable ways of working are embedded smoothly and provide an opportunity for staff to ask questions and provide feedback.</p> <p>From April 2024 and December 2025 sustainability and biodiversity projects have been supported with 15 numbers of staffing hours per week.</p>	<p>Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee</p> <p>Council Clerk</p> <p>Biodiversity Champion Projects Officer</p>
Support biodiversity action through funding and/or partnerships	<p>The Community Council has applied for and received funding from LPfN for the swift bird box project.</p> <p>The Community Council offer two environment grants for use within the community of Pontypool:</p>	<p>Biodiversity Champion Officer</p> <p>Council Clerk</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schools Environment Grants ● Community Green Grants <p>The Community Council working in partnership with Gwent Wildlife Trust illustrates how this council supports other environmental organisations with projects, this has cost this council £5,000 for the first of a 3-year project.</p>	Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee
<p>Additional information about objective 6 (measures / indicators, i.e., cost, benefits, impacts and outcomes)</p> <p>No measures or indicators to report that haven't already been reported above.</p>		

Review of s6 duty

What has worked well?

Since April 2024 having a part time Biodiversity Champion role within the community council has enabled the progression of many projects/initiatives. The Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee has increased the number of meetings to accommodate the decision-making that has been required by Councillors. The relationships and collaborations with other environment groups has benefited the delivery of the s6 action plan.

What have the barriers been?

The main barrier experienced is the number and variation of consultees required within the local authority to deliver any of the projects/initiatives.

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

The s6 duty and plan is monitored by the Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee and Full Council.

To ensure Pontypool Community Council achieves progress against the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystem plan 2026:

- The Biodiversity and Sustainability Champions (nominated Councillor and Projects Officer) will meet monthly to review progress against the Plan.
- The Projects Officer will report on progress against the Plan and other environmental projects at every Biodiversity Sub Committee meeting.
- On a regular basis a summary of the activities of the Biodiversity and Sustainability Subcommittee will be shared with the Full Council.
- The plan will be formally reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the objectives remain impactful, achievable and cost effective.
- The Biodiversity and Sustainability projects and outputs are communicated and shared to the Borough Council Councillors and to the Borough Climate and Nature Group.