

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

Reporting on Section 6

Betws Community Council

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The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2022

**Name of Town or Community Council: Betws Community Council,
Carmarthenshire**

Introduction and Context

- Betws is a small community in Carmarthenshire, with just over 2,000 residents. It is an old coal mining village with the associated underground workings which altered the water table of the area once the pumps were stopped when mining ceased. There are a few streams which flow through the village, including Nant Melin, Nant Glynwarch, Nant Y Ffin and Nant Y Cadno. A small industrial area and many residential areas with property that has been built over time in varying styles and designs with varying garden sizes making it a vibrant and diverse village.
- There a wide range of ecological habitats within the village, including farm land, common-land bordering Betws Mountain, a number of footpaths. There are a range of garden environments throughout the village, as well as verges and grass areas, some of which are managed by Carmarthenshire County Council.
- The Council controls three areas of land – the playpark on Maesquarre Road, the grass area and hard standing play area on Heol y Felin Road, and Betws Park. This area, which borders the river and includes a formal planted area at the front, now also contains a nature garden, constructed with a National Lottery Grant in 2022 and maintained by the volunteer group 'Friends of Betws Park'. (Please see <https://www.onevoicewales.wales/app/uploads/2025/01/Betws-CC-Ffrindiau-Betws.pdf>)

Action Report

Action carried out to:		Monitored by:
-embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. When considering planning applications and other changes within the village such as footpath diversion, effects of water run off etc.2. Consider biodiversity in the development plans for the parks.3. Ensure this is covered in the Annual Report and monitored regularly with this document being updated as and when changes are made/and every 3 years from 2019 as required under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.	Clerk and Council Chair
-raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Publicity and signage around the Nature Garden in Betws Park, including promotion of the green flag award.2. Keep up to date with biodiversity information provided by external bodies to inform our decisions and share with the community3. Support and share information published by volunteer groups, including 'Ffrindau Betws', and support their work in community outreach promoting awareness of biodiversity.	Parks and Recreation Committee
-safeguard principal species and habitats	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Consider any impact of planning application on habitats	Full council

	<p>2. Encourage local residents to take part and identify local wildlife/plants etc and promote local people getting involved with the national recording scheme such as RSPB garden bird watch or Butterfly Conservation butterfly recording weekend</p> <p>3. Engage with the Carmarthenshire bat project audits and any other opportunities to map biodiversity.</p>	
-restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks	<p>1. Encourage biodiversity within the local park, playgrounds, verges through planting and through liaising with contractors about mowing and maintenance plans.</p> <p>2. . Change mowing frequency to allow wild flowers and grasses to seed within the park and verges around the village,</p> <p>3. Maintain a development plan for the nature garden in Betws Park which provides opportunities for the creation, restoration and maintenance of specific habitats</p>	Parks and Recreation Committee
-tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature based solutions, address invasive species	<p>1. To use pesticides only where necessary to control the spread of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed in Betws Park.</p> <p>2. Creation of two large compost areas to enable volunteers to create compost, and use it on new raised beds as part of community gardening.</p> <p>3. Support the volunteer group in working with local businesses to donate useful waste products, such as coffee grounds and wood chip.</p>	Parks and Recreation Committee
-use improve and share evidence	<p>1. Work with groups such as the National Botanical Garden of Wales in planning and in any research work</p> <p>2. Support opportunities to share good practice from Betws, especially in the work of the Volunteers and Nature Garden.</p>	Parks and Recreation Committee

<p>-support capacity and/or other organisations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work with Betws School and other community organisation to use the green spaces in Betws to encourage engagement with and awareness of nature, biodiversity and the benefits to wellbeing and physical and mental health2. Support the 'Friends of Betws Park' volunteer group to encourage new members and new activity3. Work with One Voice Wales and other organisations to link with other councils and projects to encourage and promote biodiversity.	<p>Full Council</p>
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Review of s6 duty

What has worked well?

Having control of three green spaces in the community has given us the space and opportunity to engage in thinking and actions with regard to Biodiversity. Having the Nature Garden in Parc Betws provides a focal point for community engagement, for working with volunteers and the wider community on growing veg and engaging with nature, and as a space to promote biodiversity and the benefits of nature. We have seen more interest in and understanding of biodiversity through educational signage, posts on social media and through engagement with community members as they visit the park.

Working with and supporting active community groups has allowed the council to have an impact beyond what would be possible working alone. We have seen this in the number of schools, college and specific group who have used the nature garden as a base for learning, art projects and for new developments in the nature park.

What have the barriers been?

Our original plan was ambitious and included work that was actually beyond the scope or remit of this council. Since the original plan was published a clearer focus on narrower objectives with specific benefits has allowed the council to fulfil its duties more effectively.

What will you change?

There are no significant changes planned. We will continue to work the volunteer groups, Parc Betws school and others to ensure that we get the maximum value from Parc Betws, the nature garden and our other green spaces. We will include questions about these areas in future community surveys to help provide an evidence base for community engagement in these issues. We will continue to provide a dedicated budget for the maintenance and development of the parks and green spaces in Parc Betws.

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

Work will continued to be planned and monitored by our parks and recreation committee, with full council considering the impact of biodiversity in the development of long term plans, and in our responses to planning in the village.

We will update and review the plan at least every three year (sooner if required by legislation). The next review point is Autumn 2028