

Shirenewton Community Council

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

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Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty - Section 6 (under Part 1) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on Welsh public authorities (including Community Councils) to seek, maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions (the s6 duty). They are required to develop a plan of action and prepare an annual report on what they have achieved in the year. The duty came into force on 21st May 2016. Hence the requirement for the Council to develop this Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).

To comply with the s6 duty public authorities should embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their early thinking and business planning, including any policies, plans, programmes, and projects, as well as their day-to-day activities.

Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 states that Welsh Ministers must prepare and publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats (the Section 7 lists), which in their opinion, are of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales. Public authorities, in complying with the Section 6 duty must have regard to the Section 7 lists, which provides a focus on species and habitats of principal importance.

As part of its s6 duties, the Council must produce a progress report every three years. The next report is due in 2022. However, the Council will provide updates in its Annual Report.

More information regarding the Council's duties under the act can be found at: [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016: biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems \(frequently asked questions\) | GOV.WALES](#)

Shirenewton Community Council (SCC)

The council represents the local views and interests of the residents of the Wards of Shirenewton, Mynyddbach, Earlswood and Newchurch West to Monmouthshire County Council, which in turn, refers to the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Community Council has 10 Councillors, the number Councillors for each Ward being: - Shirenewton (5), Mynyddbach (2), Earlswood (2) and Newchurch West (1). There is currently a vacancy in the Shirenewton ward which the Council is actively trying to fill.

The Council has a limited budget that is used to support local amenities (e.g., the recreation field, children's playground, community footpaths, etc). In addition, each year organisations in the community can apply for grant aid from the Community Council.

The Council serves approximately 1836 electors. The Precept for 2021 - 22 is £30,167.00

The Council has responsibility of several green spaces, including:

- The Shirenewton Recreation Field (which is leased to the Recreation Association)
- The Mynyddbach Village Green
- Friends Burial Ground
- The Earlswood Recreation Field (on an annual rental to a local farmer)
- Ground behind the Earlswood Recreation Field (which is leased to Natural Resources Wales to 2955 (a 999-year lease))

The Council is responsible solely for the biodiversity of these spaces in cooperation with any leasers, but not any other land directly, but will raise the awareness of biodiversity and its importance with the landowners and the wider community.

LBAP Objectives

The Council expresses its commitment to and responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Environment Wales Act (2016).

The Council also endorses the following objectives to maintain and enhance local biodiversity. These objectives are suggested by the Welsh Government and form part of the ongoing reporting procedure.

- Embed biodiversity into decision making and procurement
 - Reflect the commitment to biodiversity and local sites of interest in the councils 2021 /22 Annual Report
 - Taking biodiversity into account when considering:
 - Planning Applications
 - Footpath Diversion Orders
 - Neighbourhood service matters
- Raise awareness of biodiversity and its importance
 - Organise an annual 'eco-quiz' at the school to promote awareness amongst local children
 - Encourage the community to volunteer in the context of local assets and sites of interest
 - Post details of the actions SCC takes to help biodiversity on the website and social media
- Safeguard principal species and habitats
 - Contribute (with the community) to the management of assets, local sites of interest and protected species
 - Ensure no negative impacts incur
- Restore and create habitats and resilient ecological networks
 - Encourage the community to continue to provide roadside planters
 - Change SCC provided mowing regimes by reducing the frequency of cut to wildflowers and other pollinator friendly plants
 - Encourage MCC to do the same (see Locally Important Wildlife sites)
- Tackle negative factors: i.e., reduce pollution, use nature based/green solutions, address invasive species
- Use, improve and share evidence
 - Work with the Biodiversity Officer at MCC
 - Work with the Local Places for Nature Coordinator at One Voice Wales
 - Take advice from SEWBreC, NRW and Wales Biodiversity Partnership
- Support capacity and/or other organisations
 - Launch an annual award scheme to recognise the achievements of either a resident or local organisation who is championing environmental issues
 - Require any organisation receiving a grant from SCC to demonstrate how this will contribute to supporting biodiversity

Biodiversity Audit

A Biodiversity Audit is an overview of the sites the organisation is responsible for, and an evaluation of the types of habitats, plants and animals found there. The Council will investigate what audits have already been undertaken on the open spaces listed above and publish the results. In the case where no audit information is available, the Council will contact an appropriate third-party organisation, i.e., the Southeast Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBreC) or Gwent Wildlife Trust, to have an audit undertaken.

Nationally important wildlife sites (i.e., Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)).

- Coombe Valley Woods, Shirenewton
- Mwyngloddfa, Mynyddbach

These two sites are listed on the Natural Resources Wales Protected Areas of Land and Seas web pages, as SSSI's. The area covered by the Council does not include any Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, nor potential new candidate sites.

Locally Important Wildlife Sites

1. Gwent Wildlife Trust Fields (ex-SAMFAL Land)

The Shirenewton & Mynyddbach Fields Association Limited (SAMFAL) was formed in November 2006 to protect and enhance the biodiversity and special ecological value of the 'Green Wedge' between the two villages.

The management of the fields have recently been transferred to the Gwent Wildlife Trust (GWT) and the SAMFAL team has stepped down.

Prior to this management change, a full biodiversity audit was undertaken by the GWT. The outcome of the audit is available from the Clerk to the Council.

2. Castroggi Valley

The **Nedern Brook Wetland** is a flood meadow habitat near Caldicot, Monmouthshire, Wales, designated since 1988 as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site is of 44.5 hectares (110 acres) and is bridged by the M48 motorway.

This SSSI watercourse commences as the Castroggi or Cas-Troggy Brook from multiple springs in the vicinity of Cas Troggy on the northwest side of Wentwood which is within the Shirenewton Ward. It flows first northeast and then southeast through a series of entrenched meanders to the east of Wentwood. The brook then enters the broad vale in which Caerwent sits and passing under the A48 road at Cas-Troggy Bridge where it assumes the name Nedern Brook.

3. Bushes Bungalow

The property is set in an elevated position in the Earlswood Valley at Bushes Farm off Chapel Road and is located approximately 1 mile from the B4235. The land surrounding Bushes Bungalow has been designated as a Site of Interest for Nature Conversation (SINC) due to its biodiversity value

and rare neutral and marshy grassland. The farm is also supporting a colony of horseshoe bats as noted by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) during a recent planning application.

4. Wildflower Verges

There are two sections of verges nominated by Monmouthshire County Council as Wildflower Verges. One runs from Home Farm, Red House Lane towards The Cwm, and the other along the Crick Road from Coalpits to Runston Farm.

MCC has recently issued a draft Response to the Climate Emergency action plan which includes a section about expanding pollinator-friendly management work and reducing grass cutting frequency. The Council look forward to this becoming policy soon.

Section 7 Priority Species

The following is the list of Priority Species have been identified by the Welsh Government:

<https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/File/56/en-GB>

Sensitive Species have been removed.

Section 7 Priority Habitats

The following is the list of Priority Species have been identified by the Welsh Government:

<https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/File/57/en-GB>

The Council will compare the results of the Biodiversity Audit results with these lists to inform on how the Ward supports the Welsh Government priorities

National Biodiversity Programmes

1. Local Places for Nature

Local Places for Nature is a Welsh Government funded programme which is designed to create 'Nature on your doorstep'. Its goal is to restore and enhance nature where people live, work and access public services.

There are three Local Places for Nature Scheme Managers:

- £2m National Lottery Heritage Fund Capital Grant

NLHF offer capital grants £10,000-£250,000. Town and Community councils may submit a project that meets the criteria. The Council will investigate this possible source of funding for the Recreation Field Hard Path project.

More information can be found at: [Local Places for Nature | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)

- £5m Pan-Wales Local Nature Partnerships.

There are 25 Local Nature Partnerships across Wales. Each local authority has a dedicated LNP Co-Ordinator who is a biodiversity expert who can advise on potential projects. The Monmouthshire County Council LNP Manager is Ms Sally Palmer. The Council Environment Officer (Cllr Andy Williamson) will introduce himself to Ms Palmer to see what Local Nature projects would be applicable to the Shirenewton Ward.

More information can be found at: [Wales Biodiversity Partnership - Local to You \(biodiversitywales.org.uk\)](http://biodiversitywales.org.uk)

- £1.8m Keep Wales Tidy Packages to create Nature gardens.

Starter or Development packages for several Local Places for Nature projects such as:

- Wildflower meadows
- Native tree orchard
- Drinking fountain/refill station in park or community/recreation hall
- Wetland or bog garden/pond

All resources are provided along with the support of the Councils local KWT project co-ordinator.

More information can be found at: [Local Places for Nature | Keep Wales Tidy](#)

All Local Places for Nature projects must show that nature will be enhanced in the community, biodiversity increased and meet at least one of the 'Modest measures' set out by the First Minister.

One Voice Wales has recently employed Ms Rachel Carter as their full time Local Places for Nature coordinator. Cllr Williamson has made contact and has joined the OVW Green Hub which currently has 87 Town and Community Council members. The Hub is a virtual meeting and sharing place for all things environmental for all Welsh Town and Community Councils.

Local Biodiversity Projects

The following biodiversity projects are either active in the Council Ward area, or could be if the local community brought them to the Councils attention, as an area of interest:

1. Nature Isn't Neat

This is MCC's approach to the decline in biodiversity and climate change. The principal aim is to create environments for bees, butterflies, and birds to prosper allowing them to do their work in making the natural surroundings better for future generations. The Wildflower verges in Shirenewton are examples of this approach.

2. Annual Litter Pick

In 2019, the Council organised a 'Litter Pick' which it planned to be an annual occurrence, but due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this activity has been put on hold. The Council plans to re-start this activity when the community feels it is appropriate and safe to do so.

3. Local Places for Nature

The Council will use this programme to deliver several projects as listed previously, to provide more local 'nature spaces' for the community.

Partnerships

A Local Biodiversity Plan cannot be created, maintained, and acted upon by the Council alone. Several supporting partners have been identified so far. These are:

- Monmouthshire County Council

MCC have developed a county-wide LBAP in 2005 and as also complied with the Environment Wales (2016) Act by developing a Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan in 2017. This latter plan was reported upon in 2019, as per the Act and will do so again in 2022. As both plans are county-wide, they obviously cover the Shirenewton Ward. Hence the need to partner with MCC.

The Forward Plan can be found at: <https://www.monlife.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Biodiversity-Ecosystem-resilience-forward-plan-1.pdf>

- One Voice Wales

OVW has a full time Local places for Nature Coordinator who will advise the Council on all aspects of the programme and can assist in the process when applying for funding or applying the resources available under the Keep Wales Tidy project.

- Wales Biodiversity Partnership

The Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP) brings together key players from the public, private and voluntary sectors to promote and monitor biodiversity and ecosystem action in Wales. WBP provides a leadership role and an expert steer on priorities for action on biodiversity and ecosystems in Wales.

More information can be found at: <https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/>

- Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Natural Resources Wales is the largest Welsh Government Sponsored Body - employing 1,900 staff across Wales with a budget of £180 million. It was formed in April 2013, largely taking over the functions of the Countryside Council for Wales, Forestry Commission Wales and the Environment Agency in Wales, as well as certain Welsh Government functions.

At the start of each financial year, NRW receives a [Remit Letter](#) setting out what the Welsh Government wants the organisation to achieve during that year.

More information regarding NRW can be found here: <https://naturalresources.wales>

- Southeast Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBreC)

Southeast Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) is the centre for the collation, management, and dissemination of biodiversity data for Southeast Wales. Its aim is to make appropriate local biodiversity information available to all those who need it, to help ensure that decisions which affect local biodiversity are made using best available data.

More information regarding SEWBreC can be found at: <http://www.sewbrec.org.uk/>

- Ordnance Survey (OS)

The main function of OS is to create, maintain, and distribute detailed location information for Great Britain. It records and keeps 500 million geospatial features in the Ordnance Survey (OS) master map up to date.

From blue lights to streetlights more than 5000 public sector organisations use OS data for public good, from delivering local services through town and parish and community councils. SCC wishes to partner with OS to gain access to The [Public Sector Geospatial Agreement \(PSGA\)](#) which is a contract between [the Geospatial Commission](#), on behalf of the public sector in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ordnance Survey. It provides the route for public sector members to access, use and share OS constantly evolving location data.

More information about OS can be found at: <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/>