

Reporting on Section 6

Community and Town Councils

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

The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2025

Name of Community or Town Council:	Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council
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Group:	2
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Cowbridge

Cowbridge is a rural town with an area of 43.07km² covering four wards; Cowbridge, Aberthin, Llanblethian West and Llanblethian East. Cowbridge has a population of 4,285 residents, as detailed in the 2021 census. Our precept for 2024-25 was £335,496.

Cowbridge is a historic market town situated around 6 miles from the coast, 20 miles from the capital city Cardiff and is the smallest of four Town Councils within our Vale of Glamorgan borough. The Town provides local produce as a farming community. The Town is built upon a Roman settlement and is surrounded by picturesque countryside and is a designated conservation area with several listed buildings around the town.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council

Cowbridge Town Council has 15 Councillors and employs a full time Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officer, Amenities Supervisor and a part time Caretaker.

Cowbridge Town Council manage the Grade II Listed Town Hall, the Limes Cemetery, the Holy Cross Churchyard, two play parks - Twt Park and Llanblethian Playing Fields - Southgate Park and other outdoor spaces.

The Council holds a May Day Festival, Remembrance Parade and Christmas Parade every year throughout the town as well as Civic events.

Biodiversity

Cowbridge Town Council is working towards achieving resilience by maintaining and enhancing a biodiverse natural environment with health functioning ecosystems, as set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.

The Council's aim is to promote biodiversity in its open spaces with rewilding, maintenance of bat boxes and bird feeders, by planting trees and maintaining planters and flower hanging baskets.



Cowbridge's biodiversity includes a rich mix of native plants, trees, and wildlife, with species records showing over 200 varieties in the area including Sycamore maple, European beech, common hawthorn and dogwood. Ferns and ground flora thrives in shaded woodland paths, adding to Cowbridge's ecological diversity. Domestic horses, birds, and small mammals are part of the rural landscape, alongside pollinator-friendly plants that support bees and butterflies. The Council have promoted and communicated schemes such as the recent re-introduction of water voles have been re-introduced to the local River Thaw which is significant due to their crucial role in maintaining the health of river habitats and creation of conditions for other animals and plants to thrive. Conservation efforts are being made to reduce their decline. The Council commits to increasing links and partnership working with these schemes.

Action Report 2023 - 2025

NRAP Objective	Action carried out to...		Monitored by:
1	<i>-embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement</i>	• Ensure biodiversity is a regular item on the agenda for the Town Council's Leisure & Amenities Committee to make recommendations to Full Council. • Include biodiversity considerations in procurement of new contracts, such as street cleaning and park maintenance. • Implement a scheme of replacing a new tree when a tree is lost, such as when trees were lost to Ash Dieback and new saplings were planted in their place.	• Deputy Chief Officer • Chair of Leisure & Amenities Committee.
	<i>-raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance</i>	• Officers of the Council are using the Council website and social media platforms to raise awareness in the local community and encourage residents to take part in planting and rewilding activities. • Promote and interpret biodiversity themes at parks and town events. • Provide and promote recycling messaging and bins at Council-run events. • Communicate biodiversity information - including local species and	• Chief Officer

		conservation projects - on Council website and social media platforms. • Promote the Vale Nature Partnership and Restore the Thaw Landscape Project, an environmental initiative aimed at enhancing biodiversity and engaging the community in conservation efforts along the River Thaw, which runs through Cowbridge. • Host biodiversity events in Cowbridge open spaces and within Town Hall, such as Restore the Thaw Landscape Project and the Eastern Vale Water Vole Partnership.	
2	<i>-safeguard principal species and habitats</i>	• Advice is taken prior to any activities such as hedge cutting and grass cutting that could have an adverse effect on local species and habitats. • Hedges are pruned outside of nesting season to avoid disrupting nesting wildlife.	• Amenities Supervisor
3	<i>-restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks</i>	• The Council has 78 flower hanging baskets and 24 planters with begonias and geraniums flowers throughout Cowbridge from May until September. These flowers have been selected for their resilience, being drought and wind tolerant and free flowering. • Continue to promote creating habitats, such as applying for grants and accepting donations for Town Council owned land, such as receiving a donation of three trees from a Cowbridge resident, which we planted in Southgate Park. • Wales-native fruit trees have been planted in Llanblethian Playing Fields, donated through a Vale of Glamorgan Project. • Bird and bat boxes are placed in the town to provide safe nesting and roosting sites, support biodiversity,	• Amenities Supervisor



		provide safe nesting and roosting sites, support biodiversity and allow communities to observe wildlife up close. • Hedgehog houses are placed in outdoor spaces to provide safe shelter for hedgehogs, allowing them to rest, hibernate and raise their young. This helps to improve declining populations.	
4	<i>-tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature-based solutions, address invasive species</i>	• No chemicals such as pesticides and weed killer are used in our areas and due regard is taken of any area with invasive species which are cleared regularly. • Support and promote recycling efforts.	• Amenities Supervisor • Chief Officer
5	<i>-use improve and share evidence</i>	• The Council works closely with the 'Nature for Spaces' partnership to access support and advice, whilst sharing its achievements. • Communicate and share findings from biodiversity projects on the Council website and social media platforms.	• Chief Officer
6	<i>-support capacity and/or other organisations</i>	• The Council liaises with Cowbridge volunteer gardeners and local litter picker group. • Fund local biodiversity and environment focused groups through the Council Grant Aid scheme. • Encourage volunteer engagement in biodiversity and habitat maintenance.	• Chief Officer

Review of S6 duty actions for 2023-2025	
What has worked well?	• Encouraging local people to get involved is working well. • Communicating and encouraging biodiversity via Council website and social media platforms. • Maintaining bird boxes and hedgehog houses around Cowbridge.
What have the barriers been?	• Maintaining schemes such as the planters and flower hanging baskets from May to September has been logistically challenging in terms of watering multiple times a week.
What will you change?	• The Council is considering how to improve processes for watering the numerous planters and flower hanging baskets around Cowbridge. • Wildflowers were planted in Limes Cemetery, but these did not flower, as hoped or expected. The failure of the wildflowers resulted in weeds growing in their place. We are presently considering what to plant in its place ready for the new spring and summer season. • The Council is considering future schemes through Placemaking in collaboration with Cowbridge Town Council to promote biodiversity, such as planting enhancements including pollinator-friendly planting, increasing opportunities for nature and biodiversity, opening up the River Thaw allowing for increased planting opportunities and introducing more green infrastructure and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) which promote local biodiversity, create diverse habitats and tackle climate change challenges.
How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?	• The s6 duty will be monitored regularly at the Council's Leisure & Amenities Committee meetings.



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Group	Description of organisation relative to biodiversity. Organisations:	Minimum Actions	Examples	NRAP objectives for Action Reporting (see template Annex 1)
1	- that own or occupy an office building only and - whose functions are not directly connected to biodiversity and/or land management.	Actions related to buildings management, procurement, sustainability, awareness raising, training, or in partnership with other organisations	Commissions, DVLA	NRAP objectives 1, 4, 6
2	- that own, occupy or manage land their own buildings and grounds, - whose functions are connected with biodiversity and/or land management, or - that can influence those who own or manage land.	As per Group 1 above PLUS grounds management, cascading funding criteria, providing education and training	Public Health Wales, Universities, Sport Wales	NRAP objectives 1,4,6 as above NRAP objectives 2, 3, 5 relating to own grounds
3	that own or manage land beyond their own grounds, whether their functions are connected with biodiversity and/or land management or not.	As per Groups 1 and 2 above PLUS land management to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and promote the resilience of ecosystems.	Dŵr Cymru, Local Authorities, NRW, Welsh Government	All NRAP objectives

The **Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales (NRAP)** sets out six objectives for reversing the decline of biodiversity which should be used to help develop and guide actions to comply with the section 6 duty:

The **6 objectives** to maintain and enhance biodiversity are:

- Objective 1:** Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels
- Objective 2:** Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management
- Objective 3:** Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation
- Objective 4:** Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
- Objective 5:** Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring
- Objective 6:** Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery