

Reporting on Section 6

Community and Town Councils

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6

The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

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Report 2025

Name of Community or Town Council:	Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council
Group:	Group 1

Introduction and Context

Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council represents people of our local area at the grass roots level and covers five wards – Abertillery, Aberbeeg, Cwmtillery, Llanhilleth & Six Bells. We have approximately 11,422 people on the electoral register.

- For the 2023/24 financial year, council had an overall budget of £376,451 and a precept of £289,000. For the 2024/25 financial year, council had an overall budget of £431,131 with a precept of £381,131. For 2025/26, council has a budget of £464,023 with a precept of £434,023.
- ALCC is not responsible for any land, buildings or playgrounds. However, we always look to incorporate biodiversity into our decision making and look to integrate it into our policy making.

Action Report 2023 - 2025

NRAP Objective	Action carried out to...		Monitored by:
1	<p>-embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement</p> <p>Grant applicants are asked to consider and address biodiversity in their grant applications. Planning applicants have to consider the effects on biodiversity. For example, our Planning, Commerce and Environment committee (PlaCE) contacted the borough council with concerns over the development of new properties and any potential issues with excess water/draining issues on hardstanding's. To combat this, either the surface must be porous or permeable or designed as such that water runs off to a permeable or porous area within the boundary of the property.</p> <p>However, where there is an existing impermeable hardstanding to the front of a house which leads to a highway, there is an allowance to replace a small area (up to 5sqm) in any 6 months period without needing to comply to the restrictions above.</p> <p>We also have a number of planning applications for wind farms in the area and we have queried how this will affect local wildlife, for</p>		Clerks & Councillors.



	<p>example, bat and bird strikes and the disruption to nesting animals, the local habitat and migration routes.</p> <p>We choose to bank with Unity Trust. Unity Bank demonstrates a commitment to supporting biodiversity, particularly through its Unity Impact Grant program, which funds organizations focused on environmental protection and access to green spaces. Additionally, the bank emphasizes Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals and recognizes its role in protecting the environment.</p>	
<p>-raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance</p>	<p>We have a Town in Bloom project which has been running from 2021. This has grown year-on-year and involves a lot of the community who have adopted tubs as part of the scheme.</p>  <p>This year, we entered the Wales in Bloom competition and this involved various community groups, local schools and councillors.</p>  <p>As a whole, the community has had good success with the competition and those who entered enjoyed taking part. The results are as follows –</p> <p>Abertillery Town – Silver Gilt</p> <p>Cllr. Ralph Henderson MBE – Wales in Bloom Community Champion, one of only 4 in Wales.</p>	<p>Clerks & Councillors.</p>



	<p>Ebbw Fach Community Group – It's Your Neighbourhood, Level 4 Thriving Six Bells Hotel and Ty Ebbw Fach – both silver awards Abertillery Learning Community – Level 3, Branching Pentref Tyleri Community Group – Level 5, Outstanding for the second year running.</p> <p>The school children have started growing vegetables and flowers in their own polytunnels. In 2024, we also designed and produced biodiversity leaflets to give to our community tub involvement partners which illustrated the effects of biodiversity and, the importance of wildlife and choosing native plants. This was done in conjunction with advice from One Voice Wales and resident Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council ecologist, Nadine Morgan.</p> <div data-bbox="457 759 770 1347"> <p>Image credit: Cllr. Julie Holt</p> <p>The 5 Pillars of Nature Action – One Voice Wales, Community and Town Council Nature Recovery Guide, 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create & protect habitats • Provide forage • Provide water • Create connections • Spread the word – Share information with friends and neighbours on wildlife friendly gardening. • Stop using slug pellets! – These can poison wildlife and kill their main food sources. <p>Top Tip! Reduce mowing to allow native wildflowers and fine grasses to thrive and bloom.</p> <p>Many of these species such as dandelion provide huge amounts of essential nectar.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="770 759 1071 1347"> <p>What plants should I be using?</p> <p>It's important to choose flowers that not only look pretty but will also encourage insects. Nectar is massively important. Bees, butterflies and moths all need it to survive. These insects will enjoy travelling from flower to flower, pollinating as they go and ensuring the survival of both plants and wildlife. Choose native species that are suited to the habitat and local area. Many cultivated species do not provide much nectar.</p> <p>*It is important to use a peat free compost and for wildflowers, a nutrient poor substrate is better *</p> <p>For flowerbeds and tubs, use wildlife and bee friendly varieties such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lavender • Autumn Crocus • Primrose • Cowslip • Snapdragon • Borage • Wallflower • Purple Coneflower • Hebe – Provides night time nectar and are good for moths, which in return will attract bats. <p>Perennials will continue to flower every year. For a more informal or larger space, native wildflowers to use include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ox Eye Daisy • Ragged Robin • Red Campion • Musk Mallow • Knapweed • Wild Daffodils • Bluebells • Yarrow </div> <div data-bbox="1071 759 1389 1347"> <p>Water, Water, Water!</p> <p>Water is vital to life. When we think of water for the garden, it's important to remember it's not only for the plants but for all the wildlife too. Collecting rain water is a great way to save water during dry spells. Water butts are a great option for this.</p> <p>Why not create a wildlife pond or rain garden?</p> <p>Water filled containers are great habitats for wildlife. Use shallow ones for smaller pollinators such as bees and add a few pebbles to stop them drowning. Using different depths is good, with escape ramps for small mammals such as hedgehogs. Larger containers with stones are good for frogs and also a place for dragonflies and damselflies to lay eggs.</p> <p>If you have space, a pond with a sloping edge will benefit all wildlife and you can sit back and enjoy nature at its best.</p> <p>Did you Know?</p> <p>Wild bees need water to survive. Not only to drink, but to cool down the hive when it's hot!</p>  </div>	
4	<p>-tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature based solutions, address</p> <p>In 2022, Council adopted a single use plastic policy. For recycling, we use split bins; metal & plastic and cardboard & paper. We also choose to recycle the plastic wrapping wherever possible and drop this off to a local collection point. We actively encourage all of our councillors to use a laptop wherever possible to stop the needless printing of documents and paper wastage.</p>	Clerks & Councillors.

invasive species	<p>Councillors do voluntary work with Environment groups locally, and a part of that an invasion of Himalayan Balsam has been brought under control.</p> <p>Lights, switches and computers are all switched off when not in use.</p> <p>Council is in receipt of an annual £35,000 grant from the local Solar Farm company which we distribute back to the community through grants. The funding should be allocated to community projects which are sustainable, have a lasting legacy, are environmental in nature and are for wide community benefit.</p> <p>One such recipient of the solar farm grant is Ebbw Fach Community Group when in 2023, they received £15,000. Part of the money awarded purchased an outdoor hub which provided a warm, safe, calming space where community members could meet and be encouraged to join in with the various activities they have in their gardens and community growing spaces. The group worked hard on a local area known as Aberbeeg Park & Woodland and worked hard to transform an overgrown ash tip to a peaceful space where people can immerse themselves in nature. This space went on to win the Community Green Flag Award 24/25, run by Keep Wales Tidy.</p>  <p>This year saw the removal of an established wildflower meadow that was originally planted with a grant from Keep Wales Tidy. The area was replaced by turf. This was a misunderstanding by one of our councillors and we are currently working with the councillor, the local community and OVW to buy new seed and reinstate the meadow. Below is how the wildflower meadow looked before and hopefully, it will look the same, if not better, once the seeds have been planted.</p>
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6	<p>-support capacity and/or other organisations</p>	<p>We invite organisations to our community events. For example, BGCBC Ecologist, Nadine Morgan, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Keep Wales Tidy & Animal Encounters.</p> <p>Councillors volunteer locally with Blaenau Gwent ecology team maintaining a leisure ground within the county. There is also volunteer activity with Gwent Wildlife Trust where the ecologists guide us in activities to maintain the biodiversity of several reserves and SSSIs. There is voluntary activity at a local church where efforts are underway to restore the grass areas in the cemetery to a wildflower meadow under the guidance of the County ecology team. These efforts help enhance our knowledge of the environment and how to enhance the biodiversity by natural methods.</p> <p>We want to work in partnership with organisations such as Local Places for Nature, Keep Wales Tidy and One Voice Wales to ensure we're on the correct track with biodiversity issues.</p>	Clerks

Review of S6 duty actions for 2023-2025

One Voice Wales

What has worked well?

The Town in Bloom project, especially the community involvement scheme, has worked very well. Also, entering Wales in Bloom has been great as it's given residents the inspiration to ask questions on biodiversity, plants, flowers and nature. School children also love getting involved. The voluntary work with the ecology specialists enhances our knowledge and practical capabilities and confidence in recognising problems and implementing solutions.

What have the barriers been?

Implementing change. Biodiversity is more and more at the forefront of people's minds but this hasn't always been the case.

Poor communication, for example the removal of the wildflower meadow.

Having sufficient people available to deal with some of the tasks in a timely manner.

As ALCC is not responsible for any land, it can be difficult to implement change.

What will you change?

We have established a biodiversity working group. This will give us a more focused group of councillors who are willing to learn and make change.

Biodiversity group to undergo necessary training and produce a biodiversity plan during 2026.

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

The next s6 review will be done by the end of 2028. Any goals will be monitored by both clerks and councillors alike to ensure we are moving forward.