



Clerc/Clerk: Anwen Jones  
Cyfeiriad/Address: 10 Gorffwysfa, Dwyran, Ynys Mon, LL61 6YJ  
Ffon/Tel: 07375781090  
E-bost/E-mail: [clerc@valley-community-council.wales](mailto:clerc@valley-community-council.wales)  
Gwefan: [www.cyngor-cymuned-fali.cymru](http://www.cyngor-cymuned-fali.cymru)  
Website: [www.valley-community-council.wales](http://www.valley-community-council.wales)

## **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**

**Valley Community Council (Group: 2)**

**Date: December 2025**

**Author: Cllr Neil Tuck, Chair**

#### **Introduction and Context**

Valley Community Council actively maintains, enhances and manages a range of local assets with direct links to biodiversity and community wellbeing. These include Parc Mwd, Valley Play Area, Ynys Wen Cemetery, Parc Branwen green space, and a network of public footpaths, benches and bus shelters that together contribute to the area's natural character and accessibility.

Parc Mwd supports a balance between recreation and nature. Alongside its formal pitches, boules court and small play area, the site includes a semi-natural "Triangle" garden planted with fruit trees and native shrubs, creating valuable microhabitats for pollinators and birds. Routine grounds maintenance incorporates seasonal sensitivity, such as delayed hedge cutting and reduced mowing in selected zones, to allow wildflowers and orchids to flourish.

This report provides an update to the Council's published Section 6 Biodiversity Plan and the 2023 progress report, highlighting practical measures taken between 2022 and 2025. These include the protection of native orchid species, the use of recyclable and sustainable materials, the minimisation of pesticide use, and the integration of biodiversity principles into everyday decision-making. Actions and outcomes are presented in line with Natural Resources Action Plan (NRAP) Objectives 1–6, ensuring that the Council's approach to managing public spaces remains structured, transparent, and consistent with Welsh Government biodiversity duties.

Over the past three years, the Council has also supported biodiversity through its management of Parc Branwen and Ynys Wen Cemetery. At Ynys Wen, this has included tackling ongoing ground and drainage issues, improving site resilience, and managing waste and recycling as part of daily operations. At Parc Branwen, routine green space management has continued, with arrangements kept under review through the Council's governance and committee structure to ensure biodiversity is considered in ongoing and future works.

Action Report 2023 - 2025			
NRAP Objective	Action carried out to...		Monitored by:
1	-embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement	<p>Over the past three years, the Council has taken practical steps at Ynys Wen Cemetery to improve ground conditions, including progressing drainage solutions and related follow-up actions, while also ensuring day-to-day arrangements such as waste and recycling collections support good environmental management. At Parc Branwen, biodiversity has been built into decision-making by keeping maintenance arrangements under formal committee review, so upkeep and future works can reflect environmental considerations alongside public use and safety.</p> <p><u>AONB &amp; biodiversity duty considered in site decisions</u> (signage request, Parc Mwd) – Members noted the park sits within an AONB and that the Council “has a duty to uphold the natural environment of the park and promote biodiversity”; planning rules (e.g., signage over 0.3m<sup>2</sup> requiring permission) were explicitly factored into the decision.</p> <p><u>Local Places for Nature</u> — choosing an alternative package that better fits site risks – Council declined the Supersize grant (pond/polytunnel/fruit cage) after considering vandalism and access, then accepted the Wildlife Light package (5 fruit trees, native bulbs, raised beds, meadow turf, benches, tool shed) as a lower-risk way to enhance habitats. This shows procurement choices made with biodiversity aims and practical constraints in mind</p> <p><u>Vegetation management method</u> selected to protect habitats – Parks Committee resolved that the Triangle borders at Parc Mwd be maintained by strimming and approved boundary repairs and future surface materials (slate waste) via grants— i.e., specifying techniques/materials with habitat in mind. Ground maintenance contract includes collecting grass and this has been embedded in the contract</p> <p><u>Tree works</u> aligned with planning consent and biodiversity outcomes – For the new basketball court area, members agreed to remove a willow and plant three native trees in line with the planning consent.</p>	Clerk Parks Committee Full Council

		<u>Budgeting/procurement</u> linked to green-space upkeep – Committee minutes record the maintenance budgets and the need to seek grant funding to sustain Parc Mwd/green-space works, evidencing planned procurement to support biodiversity management.	
	-raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance	<p>At Ynys Wen, management discussions and day-to-day guidance have highlighted the need to protect ground conditions and avoid unnecessary damage during wet periods, helping reinforce how routine activity can affect soil health and habitats. At Parc Branwen, the Council's ongoing oversight and review of maintenance arrangements supports biodiversity-friendly practice and helps promote the space as an environmental asset as well as a community amenity.</p> <p><u>Volunteer and school engagement through Local Places for Nature</u> – The Council secured an <i>Orchard Package</i> (including twelve trees, native bulbs, habitat boxes and tools) and engaged local volunteers and schoolchildren in planting and maintenance activities at Parc Mwd.</p> <p><u>Wildlife awareness among sports users</u> – Representatives from the football club were advised about protecting local wildlife during evening training sessions and the use of floodlights. This promoted awareness of biodiversity among regular park users and light pollution at night especially for bats .</p> <p><u>Public-facing improvements and signage</u> – The installation of the new Parc Mwd sign involved discussion with local park users, including members of the boules group. This helped raise public awareness and encouraged community interest in biodiversity-related improvements.</p> <p><u>Dog-fouling awareness actions</u> – The Parks Committee's work programme included ongoing measures to prevent dog fouling at Parc Mwd and other green spaces. These actions were linked with the Council's wider efforts to promote responsible behaviour and protect biodiversity in community areas.</p>	Clerk Parks Committee Full Council
2	-safeguard principal species and habitats	At Ynys Wen, work to address drainage and reduce compaction and surface damage has helped protect ground conditions and vegetation cover, with reinstatement measures (including reseeded where needed) planned or progressed where disturbance has been unavoidable. At Parc	Clerk Parks Committee Full Council

		<p>Branwen, ongoing review of management arrangements helps safeguard habitat value over time, enabling the Council to respond to issues as they arise and build biodiversity-supporting actions into future maintenance decisions.</p> <p><u>Replaced trees lost to ash dieback with native planting at Parc Mwd.</u> The Council recorded felling dead/unsafe trees affected by ash dieback and then agreed an Orchard Package (native trees + bulbs) to replace them and restore habitat.</p> <p><u>Created and enhanced habitat features</u> via the Keep Wales Tidy “Local Places for Nature” awards. Minutes noted the Wildlife Package (including wildflower meadow and bulbs) and the installation/planting timetable, with school/volunteer involvement to establish the habitat.</p> <p><u>Established meadow and soft-edge habitats</u> inside the park. Parks Committee minutes recorded meadow turf laid along an existing footpath towards the tree line, supporting pollinators and low-input grassland structure.</p> <p><u>Managed vegetation</u> and tree work to maintain safe, healthy habitat. Committees resolved urgent interventions from a tree risk assessment (removing dead trees on public paths) and approved perimeter wall and boundary repairs that affect habitat edges.</p> <p>- Treated Parc Mwd within its landscape designation when making site decisions. Minutes referenced the AONB context and the Council’s duty to protect the area when considering park infrastructure—supporting habitat safeguarding in decision-making</p> <p><u>Reduced wildlife disturbance</u> and protected ground-level habitats through visitor management. Parks minutes agreed extra bilingual dog-fouling/lead signs across Parc Mwd and the Lon Spencer play area to curb trampling and dog impacts on sensitive areas.</p>	
<b>3</b>	-restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks	<p>At Ynys Wen, work to improve drainage and ground resilience is helping restore site stability by tackling persistent wet ground and progressing practical engineering and reinstatement options, supporting vegetation cover as conditions change.</p> <p>At Parc Branwen, routine management and ongoing review of maintenance arrangements</p>	Clerk Parks Committee Full Council

		<p>help maintain the space as part of local green infrastructure, supporting ecological connectivity and providing scope to strengthen habitat value through future maintenance choices.</p> <p><u>Replaced diseased trees</u> with new native planting at Parc Mwd. After ash dieback removals, the Council secured an Orchard Package and planted 12 replacement trees with native bulbs, engaging volunteers and the school to establish the planting.</p> <p><u>Delivered the Local Places for Nature (Wildlife)</u> package to add habitat features. The Wildlife package brought habitat boxes (birds/hedgehogs), a shed, tools and materials to support site management and habitat creation.</p> <p><u>Created and expanded green infrastructure</u> across the site. Minutes and year-end progress recorded that 110 trees were planted at Parc Mwd, meadow turf and native bulbs were planted, wildflower seed was sown, and three raised planters were installed and planted up, building structural and seasonal diversity for pollinators.</p> <p><u>Strengthened the “Triangle” community garden</u> as a resilient habitat edge. Volunteers cleared borders; kerbs/perimeter repairs were completed; borders were maintained by strimming (to protect young trees/shrubs); and Keep Wales Tidy supplied 60 tonnes of slate dressing to stabilise and finish the habitat margins.</p>	
<b>4</b>	-tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature based solutions, address invasive species	<p>At Ynys Wen, work to improve drainage and ground resilience is helping restore site stability by tackling persistent wet ground and progressing practical engineering and reinstatement options, supporting vegetation cover as conditions change. At Parc Branwen, routine management and ongoing review of maintenance arrangements help maintain the space as part of local green infrastructure, supporting ecological connectivity and providing scope to strengthen habitat value through future maintenance choices.</p> <p><u>Switched to vinegar-based weed control.</u> The payment schedule approved on 15 Oct 2025 listed showing the Council had bought vinegar instead of glyphosate to manage weeds.</p> <p><u>Kept the Triangle borders chemical-free.</u> On 7 Aug 2024 the Parks Committee resolved to maintain the borders by strimming and to seek funding to</p>	Clerk Parks Committee Full Council

		<p>lay slate waste as a long-lasting surface, avoiding bark mulches and herbicide use.</p> <p><u>Removed diseased ash</u> and replanted with native trees. On 15 Nov 2023 the Council recorded that an Orchard Package of 12 fruit trees and native bulbs would replace ash trees felled because of ash-dieback, tackling an invasive pathogen and restoring canopy cover</p>	
5	-use improve and share evidence	<p><u>Acted on a tree-risk report.</u> Council approved spending on the urgent works flagged by the Tree Risk Assessment dated 8 Sept 2023 and then bid for funding to replace the felled trees, showing evidence-led decisions</p> <p><u>Monitored biodiversity gains</u> and shared the numbers. The 2024/25 Annual Report quantified habitat work—115 native trees, bulbs, meadow turf and raised planters—delivered under the Places for Nature scheme, providing a baseline for future monitoring.</p> <p><u>Logged litter-pick data</u> through the new Keep Wales Tidy Hub. Minutes confirmed the hub’s set-up, risk-assessment templates, and the plan to upload results to the KWT web portal, so evidence from community clean-ups would be captured and shared.</p> <p><u>Used pupils’ field evidence</u> in behaviour-change work. Year 3/4 children presented their dog-fouling survey and sign designs to the Council; members adopted the designs for village signage, turning citizen evidence into action.</p> <p><u>Published progress on aims &amp; objectives.</u> The Council reviewed progress against its objectives and instructed the clerk to publish the updated document on the website, making performance data accessible.</p>	Clerk Parks Committee Full Council
6	-support capacity and/or other organisations	<p>At Ynys Wen, the Council has used an evidence-led, review approach, including risk assessments and documented discussions to identify site issues, agree works and reinstatement, and track follow-up actions through its processes. At Parc Branwen, committee oversight has kept responsibilities and maintenance arrangements clear and under review, strengthening capacity by ensuring expectations are recorded and can be updated as circumstances change.</p>	Clerk Parks Committee Full Council

		<p><u>Set up a Keep Wales Tidy</u> community hub so groups could borrow litter-picking kit, use risk-assessment templates, and have activities insured; the clerk collated outcomes for the KWT web portal.</p> <p><u>Worked with Valley Community School</u> (Y3/4 presentation; designs for dog-fouling signs/bag dispensers) and committed to print and use the pupils' designs.</p> <p><u>Planned joint activity with the school</u> (litter-pick linked to vape-waste awareness) to build pupil and community capacity.</p>	
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Review of S6 duty actions for 2023-2025	
<b>What has worked well?</b>	<p>Valley Community Council delivered practical habitat improvements at Parc Mwd through wildflower and meadow planting, raised borders, installation of a shed, nest boxes, native tree planting, and slate dressing for the Triangle area, all coordinated with a live repairs and improvements action plan. The Council made effective use of grants, including acceptance of the Local Places for Nature (Wildlife) package and supplementary materials such as 60 tonnes of slate, ensuring these aligned with site risks and maintenance capacity. Volunteers and pupils were actively involved through school planting sessions, a forthcoming litter-pick, and vape-waste awareness activities, supporting both habitat establishment and positive behaviour change</p> <p>Oversight was maintained through annual report approvals and publication, routine financial monitoring, and the commissioning of ROSPA inspections for the play area and Parc Mwd. In addition, the Council took steps to minimise nuisance impacts on habitats by agreeing to install extra bilingual dog-fouling and lead signs, bag dispensers, and improved site user guidance.</p>
<b>What have the barriers been?</b>	<p>Vandalism and anti-social behaviour, including incidents of fire damage, graffiti, broken play equipment, and repeated removal of safety tape, significantly undermined the Council's efforts to maintain and enhance local biodiversity features at Parc Mwd and other community sites. These acts not only damaged physical infrastructure such as signage, benches, and habitat structures but also disrupted planting schemes and community-led improvement projects, creating additional repair and replacement costs for the Council.</p> <p>The time and resources spent addressing this damage inevitably reduced capacity for proactive work on habitat creation and environmental engagement. In parallel, site-specific risks such as the vulnerability of the pond area and the exposure of the polytunnel to vandalism and weather</p>

	<p>damage meant that several otherwise appealing grant opportunities could not be taken forward.</p> <p>Instead, the Council took a pragmatic approach by selecting lower-risk, more manageable projects that still contributed to biodiversity and community value while remaining within realistic maintenance and safety limits. This balanced approach helped ensure progress despite setbacks, maintaining momentum in biodiversity work and safeguarding community assets.</p>
<b>What will you change?</b>	<p>Valley Community Council will continue to prioritise resilient, low-maintenance interventions such as slate dressing, strim-maintained borders, and durable signage, ensuring that environmental improvements remain sustainable and resistant to damage or neglect. This approach reduces the need for frequent repairs and limits the impact of vandalism, while keeping key biodiversity areas tidy and functional.</p> <p>The Council also intends to maintain its pragmatic procurement strategy by continuing to select Wildlife or Orchard-type grant packages and prioritising native planting and habitat restoration over high-risk infrastructure projects like ponds or polytunnels. This ensures that investment is both achievable and sustainable, aligned with the site's risks and available maintenance capacity.</p> <p>To further protect biodiversity and promote community responsibility, behaviour-change measures will be strengthened through the installation of additional bilingual dog-fouling signage and bag dispensers, alongside school-led campaigns and artwork that encourage responsible behaviour and respect for green spaces.</p> <p>Finally, site management will be tightened through regular Parks Action Plan walk-throughs, with clear oversight of maintenance tasks and an explicit grass-cutting scope that includes the pavilion surrounds. This structured approach will help safeguard habitat edges, maintain biodiversity features, and ensure that the site continues to provide a safe, attractive, and environmentally rich space for the community.</p>
<b>How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?</b>	<p>Valley Community Council ensures regular oversight of its biodiversity and environmental commitments through quarterly and termly committee structures. The Parks Committee maintains a written Repairs and Improvements Action Plan, scheduling routine site inspections such as ROSPA assessments to monitor safety and environmental standards. These provide consistent checkpoints for tracking Section 6 (S6) delivery and ensuring that biodiversity considerations remain active within day-to-day management.</p> <p>Each year, the Full Council approves and publishes an Annual Report that summarises environmental actions, including details of tree planting, habitat improvements, signage updates, and community engagement activities. This annual report functions as the Council's formal S6 review, typically completed each June or July, allowing members and the public to evaluate progress and set priorities for the year ahead.</p> <p>Budget monitoring reports, reviewed by the Finance and Personnel Committee throughout the year, provide an auditable record of biodiversity-related expenditure and achievements. Aligning S6 milestones with these</p>



	<p>financial reviews ensures transparency, accountability, and effective integration of biodiversity goals within overall budget management.</p> <p>Decision logs recorded in Council minutes, covering areas such as signage approvals, grant package selections, and grass-cutting scope—offer ongoing evidence that biodiversity is embedded in Council decision-making. To support efficient future reporting, these entries will continue to be tagged within agendas and minutes, making them easy to extract and reference during each S6 review cycle.</p>
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