

Tonyrefail and District Community Council

Biodiversity Duty Report - Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Tonyrefail and District Community Council sits within the South Central Area of Wales as defined by Natural Resources Wales' Area Statements. It comprises of the wards of Coedely, Collenna, Penrhiwfer, Thomastown, Tylcha and Tyn-y-Bryn.

There are numerous locations of environmental significance within the council boundaries, however the most significant of these is Rhos Tonyrefail. Rhos Tonyrefail is a large lowland site of special interest for its marshy grassland, acid flush, species-rich neutral grassland, acid grassland, wet heath and blanket mire being designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 2007.

Rhos Tonyrefail is also of special interest for its population of marsh fritillary butterflies which is endangered in Europe. The population at Rhos Tonyrefail is thought to be one of the most important remaining in Wales, in terms of density and area of suitable habitat due to the marshy grassland and wet heath, where its food plant, devil's bit scabious often grows in profusion.

Tonyrefail and District Community Council has a responsibility to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of our functions whilst promoting the resilience of ecosystems with the aim of helping to reverse the decline and secure the long-term resilience of biodiversity in Wales.

This report sets out what the council is undertaking to comply with its duty under Section 6 of the Environment Wales Act 2016.

Embedding biodiversity into decision making and procurement

As a council we have begun to consider biodiversity, the variety of species and habitats found in our wards and ecosystems, communities of plants and animals, together with the non-living physical characteristics of their environment into our thinking and business planning.

The council considers the impact that its actions will have on biodiversity and seeks to minimise the impact where possible. This includes things such as seeking to minimise our use of single use plastic at council events, where possible using reusable cups, cutlery and the like.

Safeguarding Species and Habitats

Tonyrefail & District Community Council manages the public rights of way across its six wards. Our operatives keep the paths clear and open, giving careful consideration to cutting times and the impact that their work has on the biodiversity of the area.

By encouraging walking we are reducing the impact of vehicle emissions on our environment and encouraging healthy citizens who will see the richness of the habitat that fills the communities which they live amongst.

Tonyrefail and District Community Council are consultees of Rhondda-Cynon-Taff Council when it comes to planning applications. Councillors are proactive in reviewing planning applications received at the monthly meeting and raise any concerns directly with RCT Council over protected sites such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and local Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

Through the management of Trane Cemetery we provide a peaceful haven for all manner of wildlife. The council considers the impact that actions on works in the cemetery may have on our environment; for example, it was decided to keep using paper hand towels as opposed to electric hand driers as the paper towels can be recycled.

The Community Council have carried out a litter pick in partnership with the Tonyrefail Environment Group within the community, and supported the group with grants to enable their activities to continue.

Resilient Ecological Networks

Tonyrefail and District Community Council provide numerous floral displays throughout its wards and works with the floral display providers to increase the provision of flower-rich resources for pollinators.

The cemetery is home to an abundance of species, in particular in the older parts of the cemetery where the nooks and crannies of the old stones allow for insects to make their home. When undertaking grass cutting, the grass is collected and removed to ensure it does not impact upon the biodiversity.

Collaboration

Natural Resources Wales are in the process of developing an Area Statement which will set out the natural resources in our area and the benefits they provide. The statement will provide an opportunity for these resources to be managed in a joined-up way with the key challenges and opportunities being added a local level based on a common evidence base. This area statement will provide Tonyrefail and District Community Council with the information we need to better manage our natural resources.

We have liaised with Rhondda-Cynon-Taff County Borough Council, the Community Liaison Committee and other community councils to ensure that we understand our duties and work efficiently moving forward with our responsibilities.

Monitoring

The Community Council will monitor its progress annually with the next report being prepared in 2022.