



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:	Tonyrefail & District Community Council
Group:	2

Introduction and Context

Tonyrefail & District Community Council is a local authority serving the communities of Penrhiwfer, Collena, Tyn-y-bryn, Thomastown, Tylcha and Coedely within Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Council represents a population of approximately 13,000 residents (5,400 households), and covers an area that includes a mix of residential neighbourhoods, retail centres, community facilities, green spaces and the cemetery grounds.

The Council is funded primarily through its annual precept; in the region of £300,000 - £400,000.

The Council area covers 9.5 square miles and includes both urban and semi-natural environments, green corridors, mature trees and small public open spaces. The Council has land asset holdings collectively covering 5.2 hectares, directly manages a further 0.6 hectares and is committed to maintaining 3 miles of footpaths. The land it manages is highly visible and widely used by the public, presenting meaningful opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and education.

Although a small local authority, the Council performs several functions that can positively influence biodiversity and ecosystem resilience within the community area. These include:

- **Land and Grounds Management:**

The Council owns and manages various parcels of land, including the cemetery and attached SSSI plot, a small network of footpaths, five allotment gardens and planters. Through sensitive grounds maintenance practices such as reduced mowing regimes, pollinator-friendly planting and habitat enhancement, the Council can directly improve local biodiversity.

- **Grant Funding and Community Support:**

The Council provides financial support to local community groups and projects. This offers opportunities to encourage biodiversity-related initiatives such as community planting schemes, wildlife education projects, habitat creation and environmental volunteering.

- **Events, Education and Engagement:**

The Council organises and supports community events with environmental sensitivity at its heart. Interpretation boards, school engagement, volunteer sessions and public communication can all contribute to increasing understanding of local biodiversity.

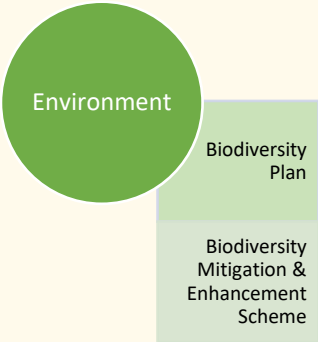
- **Planning Consultation Role:**

As a consultee in the planning process, the Council can highlight biodiversity considerations in local developments, promoting sustainable design, habitat protection and incorporation of ecological features where appropriate.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on certain community and town councils to take all reasonable steps towards meeting the local objectives included in the local well-being plan that has effect in their areas. With gross income or expenditure exceeding £200,000 for each of the three preceding financial years, the Council is subject to that duty and must publish a report annually detailing its progress in meeting the objectives contained in the local well-being plan.

The Council is directly subject to the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, including the Section 6 duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience. This duty shapes the Council's approach to land management, decision-making and community engagement.

Action Report 2023 - 2025

NRAP Objective	Action carried out to...	Monitored by:
1	-embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement 1. <u>Council decision making</u>: Clerk's reports on Council matters to be decided often include a statement on the impact on biodiversity of the decision options. When the Strategic Plan to 2027 was drawn up and adopted in July 2025, the environment was one of the three cornerstones of the Council's medium-term focus. 2. <u>Planning policy</u>: When commenting on substantial planning applications, the Council has ensured detrimental ecological impacts are highlighted and opposed. Specifically: 2023 – Mynydd-y-Glyn Wind farm application 2023 – LDP 2022-2037 consultation 2025 – Manley Close farmhouse demolition 3. <u>Procurement</u>: In 2025, the Council adopted a Procurement Policy that focuses on ethical and sustainable procurement that sets out the following requirements: • Evaluating procurement decisions in terms of their impact on local ecology • Supporting projects or products that contribute positively to biodiversity • Avoiding suppliers or methods harmful to habitats or wildlife Contracts over £10,000 should include consideration of: • Local employment opportunities • Use of apprentices or local labour • Partnership with local community groups • Contribution to the local economy In 2025, peat-free compost replaced multipurpose compost to top-up graves. In 2024, the Council switched to green tariffs on its energy contracts. 	Full Council; Clerk Full Council Clerk; Deputy Clerk; Supervisor

-raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance

4. Public engagement: During 2025, booklets were created that showcased the most common birdlife and small mammals to be found in Trane Cemetery. The Council had the opportunity to engage with residents at the Christmas fair where bird and mammal bookmarks were given out to children and young adults.

Events Committee; Deputy Clerk



The Seniors' Christmas dinner in 2024 made use of recycled decorations and fully compostable centrepieces.

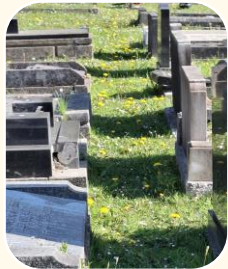


An event held during Easter 2025 offered children the chance to collect painted rocks to swap for a goodie bag. The prizes were plastic-free and recyclable, the paint used on the rocks was water-based and the children received a packet of sunflower seeds to encourage growing at home.



Selection of wildlife bookmarks

		5. <u>Small Grant Fund</u>: During 2023/24, the Council gave 8.2% of its annual grant budget of £10,000 to environmental projects. This rose to 9.7% for 2024/25. 6. <u>Biodiversity training</u>: During 2023, three members of staff attended Eco-literacy training. In 2025, the Clerk attended a One Voice Wales Section 6 webinar.	Finance Committee; Clerk Staffing Committee; Clerk
2	-safeguard principal species and habitats	7. <u>Site of Special Scientific Interest</u>: This area was cleared during 2025 by Natural Resources Wales contractors and has been passed on to the Council to maintain under a management plan. In addition, grounds staff regularly check for, and remove any Himalayan Balsam found on the site. 8. <u>Watercourse to the west of Trane Cemetery</u>: The embankment and stream are visually checked during the daily sweep of the site and cleared of litter and other obstructive debris as necessary. During 2025, a spoil tip was created on the west side of the upper cemetery and provision was made for water run-off from the spoil heap to be collected in a channel, taking the potentially contaminated water away from the direction of the watercourse. 9. <u>Cemetery site</u>: Tree, hedge and bush cutting is restricted to between October and February to avoid disturbing nesting birds. The clearing of willow and other brush on the undeveloped cemetery extension land to the north has been held over until February 2026 so as not to disturb hibernating reptiles and other mammals sheltering over the winter. 10. <u>Allotment Gardens</u>: In 2024, the Allotment Association agreements were revised with greater emphasis on environmental stewardship. In particular, S14.7 places a duty on the Associations to encourage composting and recycling of organic waste. During 2025, a programme of white asbestos removal has been carried out to clear the five sites of cement-bonded corrugated roofing panels that have been in situ for several decades. These measures will protect the health of soil ecosystems and prevent pollutants from entering nearby habitats, thus maintaining and enhancing healthy, functioning ecosystems.	Cemetery Committee; Supervisor Cemetery Committee; Supervisor; Burials team Cemetery Committee; Supervisor Open Spaces, Allotments & RoW Committee; Deputy Clerk

3	-restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks 11. <u>Lower Cemetery site</u>: Since 2023, swathes of land unavailable for burials have been allowed to flourish, uncut through the Summer. On a rotation basis, some areas are cut back in Autumn, arisings removed, to encourage native wildflower growth and grass suppression. Other areas are left untouched through the Winter to provide habitat and feeding opportunities for the hibernating reptiles, amphibians, birds, insects and small mammals. On an ongoing basis, non-natives such as Himalayan Balsam are routinely removed from the wildlife corridors along the eastern boundary of the lower cemetery. The efforts of the grounds team have significantly reduced the spread of these invasive plants over the past two years. Grass cutting frequency in the two oldest sections of the cemetery (>100 years old) has been reduced during 2025 to allow flowering plants to go to seed. In addition, these areas are left as undisturbed as possible to encourage wildlife to access the gaps and spaces provided by the aged crypts and monuments. Where wasps and bees nest amongst the old graves, these insects are left alone in so far as health and safety permits. The large mass grave plot has been left uncut since 2024. As it is contained within a concrete edging, water tends to collect and has contributed to the variety of damp-loving grasses that now thrive. This provides habitat for amphibians such as frogs. Tree stumps are left in situ across the lower cemetery and provide habitat for a variety of insects.  Male blackbird amongst dandelions  Delayed onset of Spring grass cutting programme allows growth of dandelions  Lesser Celandine  Uncut swathes left over Winter Cemetery Committee; Supervisor Supervisor Cemetery Committee; Supervisor Cemetery Committee; Supervisor
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		12. <u>Upper Cemetery site</u>: Sections of the upper cemetery that are not yet required for burial use have been left uncut since 2023. Wherever possible, discarded plastic grave ornaments and flowers are recycled. 13. <u>Whole Cemetery site</u>: In 2023, the Council phased out the use of chemical herbicides, pesticides and harmful substances used to control plant and animal infestations and has opted for manual methods of control or removal if necessary. For example, previously, the removal of moss from the driveway was done by means of the application of herbicides. Since 2023, moss is removed with a steel brush instead. Weeds are controlled through strimming or pulling. Also since 2023, the practice of trapping moles has been abolished. Mole hills are now routinely raked over to improve the quality of the growing conditions for the cultivated lawn areas, or the soil is removed to fill containers and baskets on site. This reduces the Council's need to purchase potting soil and compost for floral displays. Since 2024, the first grass cuts of the season are held back a few weeks to allow the dandelions and other early flowering bulbs, wildflowers and grasses to proliferate, thus providing vital early sustenance for emerging insects. In 2024, one small length of poor-quality laurel hedge used to enclose an operational area was removed and replaced with a dead hedge that provides habitat and feeding opportunities for wildlife. Dead hedges will be replacing fencing and plastic barriers wherever possible. Throughout the site, piles of cut and fallen wood, leaves and sticks are left in undisturbed areas to provide habitat to a multitude of fauna. During 2025, bird feeders have been installed that attract an incredible range of birds from coal tits and bull finches to spotted woodpeckers. In addition, a source of water has been provided.        Common Blue Butterfly Green Woodpecker Hedgehog Mole Common Buzzard Common Pipistrelle Bat Goldfinch	Cemetery Committee; Supervisor Cemetery Committee; Supervisor Cemetery Committee; Supervisor Cemetery Committee; Supervisor Cemetery Committee; Supervisor All staff
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		14. <u>SSSI site</u>: A management plan has been in place since 2024, drawn up by Natural Resources Wales, that the Council follows. The aim of the plan is to restore the natural ecology of the area, that being marshy grassland, acid flush, species-rich neutral grassland, acid grassland, wet heath and blanket mire. The site is of special interest for its population of Marsh Fritillary butterflies, conservation status: vulnerable. Apart from the works scheduled in the plan, the grounds team regularly check for and remove any undesirable vegetation. 15. <u>Cemetery extension land</u>: With the purchase of this land completed in 2025, a Biodiversity Mitigation & Enhancement Scheme was commissioned to meet planning consent conditions. The Scheme was submitted to the Planning Authority in the latter part of the year and implementation is anticipated for early 2026. Whilst awaiting successful discharge of the planning consent condition, the Council has opted to leave the site undisturbed until February 2026 so as to provide hibernation habitat for reptiles known to occupy the site. Approximately one third of the extension land has been set aside for biodiversity and will be managed according to the Scheme.	 Marsh Fritillary Butterfly	Cemetery Committee; Supervisor Cemetery Committee; Clerk; Supervisor
4	-tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature-based solutions, address invasive species	16. <u>Chemical-free land management</u>: Since 2023, the Council has ceased the use of chemical herbicides, pesticides and harmful substances used to control plant and animal infestations on Council-maintained land and has opted for manual methods of control or removal instead. An Annual Contractor Permit was introduced in 2025 that places a duty on contractors working on the site to agree not to use chemicals or materials that could damage or harm the cemetery environment. 17. <u>Invasive species</u>: Considerable work has been carried out during 2025 to eradicate Himalayan Balsam from the natural, unmanicured areas of the whole cemetery site and this is ongoing. All Council-managed land is regularly monitored for new infestations of Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed.		Cemetery Committee; Supervisor Cemetery Admin Cemetery Committee; Supervisor

		18. <u>Pollution-reduction initiatives</u>: Upon the introduction of the Workplace Recycling Regulations in April 2024, the Council adjusted its waste management practices. Dead grave flowers, grass cuttings and other organic debris are composted or added to backfill material, and discarded plastic grave pots are reused. The Council office has, since 2024, been moving towards becoming paperless, as far as being a burial authority allows. During 2025, all cemetery administration paperwork was revised and made available online. Funeral Directors and Memorial Masons are encouraged to e-mail their paperwork instead of posting hard copies. There has been a significant shift in administrative practice in an effort to reduce the amount of paper and single-use paper products generated. Memorial permits, invoices and receipts are no longer posted out, but instead, sent electronically. In 2024, the administrative and grounds staff introduced food waste bins to the staff kitchens as well as a recycling bin for plastics, paper, card and tins. The Council acts as a Keep Wales Tidy litter-picking hub, and has done for several years. This is regularly publicised on social media and the Council's website to encourage community litter-picking initiatives. 19. <u>Sustainable procurement</u>: See 3, above.	Cemetery Committee; Supervisor Clerk; Deputy Clerk; Cemetery Admin All staff Deputy Clerk
5	-use improve and share evidence	20. <u>Biodiversity Mitigation & Enhancement Scheme ("Scheme")</u>: A full-site ecological survey was carried out in June 2025 as part of a planning consent condition requiring a Scheme. When adopted, this Scheme will cover • A conservation grassland plan • A biodiversity management plan for the wider Cemetery • Production of biodiversity interpretation • The erection of bat and bird boxes. 21. <u>Public Information Leaflet</u>: In November 2025, a simple leaflet was drawn up, listing the most common birds and mammals that can be found at Trane Cemetery. These leaflets are available to the public from the Council's office and website. Copies of these were also given out from the Council's information stall at the Christmas fair.	Cemetery Committee; Clerk; Supervisor Clerk; Cemetery Admin

6	-framework of governance and support for delivery	22. <u>Biodiversity Plan 2025-2027</u>: This plan was adopted in July 2025 and was circulated to all members and staff for implementation. The Plan will be reviewed in 2026 with a view to extending its scope to 2028, in line with the 3-yearly reporting cycle. 23. <u>S6 Biodiversity Duty Report 2025</u>: This report is published in compliance with the Section 6 Duty.	Full Council; Clerk
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Review of S6 duty actions for 2023-2025

What has worked well?	Reducing and/or delaying our grass cutting programme has allowed a wide variety of pollinator-friendly plants chance to flower and set seed. Leaving swathes of previously highly maintained grassland has increased the variety and abundance of wild flowers, supporting, not only pollinators, but birdlife and small mammals. Embedding S6 into our Procurement Policy has focussed the collective mind and ensured a more mindful approach to procuring goods and services.
What have the barriers been?	Implementing ethical and ecological procurement is more time consuming as many suppliers do not readily display their credentials or the sustainability of their products. From some sectors of the community, there has been push-back against a more relaxed attitude to wild areas in the Cemetery. The nature of the site means some members of the community would prefer a highly manicured finish to the grounds.
What will you change?	Increase the amount of training on offer to both staff and members. Implement the provisions of the Biodiversity Mitigation & Enhancement Scheme.
How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?	The S6 Biodiversity Plan 2025 – 2027 is reviewed annually by the Well-being of Future Generations Committee & Full Council. In addition, the Plan will be renewed in 2026 for 2027-2032.



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

