



Environment (Wales) Act 2016 – Section 6 Duty

Reporting Period:

1. Introduction

Maelor South Community Council recognises its responsibilities under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems when carrying out its functions.

Although the Council manages only a limited number of assets and areas of land, it acknowledges that local decisions relating to grounds maintenance, planting schemes, procurement, environmental management and community engagement can collectively make a positive contribution towards biodiversity and nature recovery.

This report outlines the actions undertaken during the period April 2025 to March 2026 and demonstrates how biodiversity considerations have been incorporated into Council activities.

2. Biodiversity and Environmental Context

The communities of Penley and Bettisfield are predominantly rural in character and include:

- Agricultural land
- Hedgerows
- Drainage ditches
- Grass verges
- Village green spaces
- Community recreation areas
- The Office Field / Donkey Field

- Mature trees and established planting areas

These habitats contribute to local biodiversity and form part of wider ecological networks across the rural landscape.

3. Actions Undertaken During 2025–2026

Governance and Decision Making

The Council continued to incorporate environmental and biodiversity considerations into routine decision making throughout the year.

Biodiversity considerations were taken into account when discussing:

- Grounds maintenance contracts
- Grass cutting arrangements
- Hedge maintenance
- Tree management
- Village environmental improvements
- Community projects
- Procurement decisions

The Council also reviewed and developed its Biodiversity Plan to ensure biodiversity remains embedded within future decision-making processes.

Nature Recovery Action Plan Objectives Supported

- Objective 1 – Engagement and understanding
- Objective 6 – Governance and support for delivery

Grass Cutting and Verge Management

The Council continued to manage grass cutting across areas under its responsibility whilst seeking to balance public safety, visual amenity and environmental considerations.

Actions included:

- Maintaining grassed areas in a manner appropriate to their use.
- Considering opportunities to reduce unnecessary cutting where practical.
- Retaining vegetation where this would not create safety concerns.
- Supporting the natural flowering of grassland areas where operationally possible.

These actions assist pollinating insects and support local biodiversity.

Nature Recovery Action Plan Objectives Supported

- Objective 2 – Safeguarding habitats

- Objective 3 – Habitat resilience and creation
- Objective 4 – Reducing pressures on species

Hedge and Boundary Management

The Council encouraged environmentally sensitive hedge management practices.

Where practical:

- Hedge maintenance was undertaken outside bird nesting periods.
- Excessive cutting was avoided.
- Existing habitat corridors created by hedgerows were retained.

Hedgerows provide important nesting, feeding and movement routes for birds, mammals and insects.

Nature Recovery Action Plan Objectives Supported

- Objective 2 – Safeguarding habitats
- Objective 3 – Habitat resilience

Office Field / Donkey Field Management

The Council continued its stewardship of the Office Field / Donkey Field area.

Management activities sought to balance:

- Public access
- Recreational use
- Environmental protection
- Habitat enhancement opportunities

The Council recognises the ecological value of community green spaces and their contribution to wildlife and ecosystem resilience.

Nature Recovery Action Plan Objectives Supported

- Objective 2 – Safeguarding habitats
- Objective 3 – Habitat resilience
- Objective 5 – Monitoring and understanding

Tree and Planting Initiatives

Throughout the year the Council supported opportunities for:

- Native tree planting
- Seasonal planting schemes
- Bulb planting

- Pollinator-friendly planting

These initiatives contribute towards habitat enhancement, visual improvement and increased biodiversity within the community.

Nature Recovery Action Plan Objectives Supported

- Objective 3 – Habitat creation and restoration
- Objective 4 – Reducing pressures on wildlife

Planning and Consultation Responses

The Council continued to review planning applications affecting the local area and considered environmental impacts where relevant.

Particular consideration was given to:

- Landscape impact
- Green infrastructure
- Tree retention
- Ecological considerations
- Community environmental benefits

This approach helps ensure biodiversity considerations are embedded within local decision making.

Nature Recovery Action Plan Objectives Supported

- Objective 1 – Engagement and understanding
- Objective 6 – Governance and support

Community Awareness

Biodiversity and environmental matters were discussed within Council meetings and considered as part of ongoing community improvement initiatives.

The Council recognises that increasing awareness of biodiversity issues within the community supports long-term environmental stewardship.

Nature Recovery Action Plan Objectives Supported

- Objective 1 – Engagement and participation
- Objective 6 – Governance and support

4. Summary Against the Six Nature Recovery Objectives

Objective	Progress During 2025–2026
Objective 1 – Engagement and understanding	Biodiversity considered within Council discussions and decision making.
Objective 2 – Protect important habitats	Ongoing management of green spaces, hedges and community land.
Objective 3 – Habitat resilience and creation	Support for planting schemes, tree management and habitat enhancement.
Objective 4 – Address key pressures	Sensitive maintenance practices adopted where practical.
Objective 5 – Evidence and monitoring	Ongoing review of Council-managed land and environmental opportunities.
Objective 6 – Governance and support	Biodiversity Plan reviewed and biodiversity embedded within Council operations.

5. Future Priorities for 2026–2027

The Council intends to:

- Continue implementing the Biodiversity Plan 2026–2029.
 - Identify opportunities for additional native planting.
 - Promote pollinator-friendly planting schemes.
 - Review grass cutting regimes where practical.
 - Encourage biodiversity considerations within procurement and maintenance contracts.
 - Maintain environmentally sensitive hedge management.
 - Continue monitoring community green spaces.
 - Explore funding opportunities for environmental improvement projects.
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6. Conclusion

During 2025–2026 Maelor South Community Council continued to integrate biodiversity considerations into its day-to-day activities and decision-making processes. While operating on a relatively small scale, the Council recognises that local actions can collectively contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems within the communities of Penley and Bettisfield.

The Council remains committed to supporting biodiversity through practical, proportionate and sustainable actions in accordance with its duties under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Report approved by Maelor South Community Council

Date Approved: _____

Minute Reference: _____

Signed: _____

Chair of Council