

CYNGOR CYMUNEDOL DRAETHEN, WATERLOO A RHYDRI



**DRAETHEN,
WATERLOO & RUDRY
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry Community Council

Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Part 1 - Section 6

The Biodiversity

and

Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2019/20

Introduction

Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry Community Council is within the St. James Ward of Caerphilly County Borough.

The Community Council represents and serves three rural communities in South East Wales: Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry and has a population of approximately 1,053 residents.

The precept for 2019/20 is £15,000.

There are currently seven Community Councillors representing the communities within Draethen Waterloo & Rudry: Two for Draethen; two for Waterloo and three for Rudry.

Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry Community Council does not currently own or manage any land or buildings.

Within the geographical areas served by the Community Council, residents undoubtedly benefit from many natural resources being located within rural settlements that include Rudry common a rural common (as opposed to an urban common) of some 92 ha in area dominated by Mynydd Rhydri, a hill rising to 724 ft at the summit. It is a valuable asset to our local community for informal recreation and nature conservation. In 1994 it was designated a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) which has several diverse and valuable habitats of local and county importance. The area also benefits from mixed agricultural and woodland landscapes. Local communities are also fortunate enough to enjoy some significant areas of NRW Forestry; adjacent to Mynydd y Rhydri, at Copi Gwynddi towards Waterloo, Coed Graig Llan near the Maenllwydd home to a WWII bunker, Llyn Hir from the Lime Kilns to the lead mines at Draethen, Coed Cefn Pwll-du from The Retreat in Draethen to Rhyd-y-Gwern Farm together have some of the greatest and most precious diversity found in the borough. There is also a community woodland and enterprise of Coed Graig Ruperra within the community of Draethen with its heritage buildings of Ruperra House in the background and an ancient Motte within its own grounds.

Services and Activities

The Community Council is responsible for the services it provides, serving its' communities and acting to improve the quality of life in its localities. This is achieved through exercising a range of statutory powers and duties that will have an impact on biodiversity. These include:-

- Providing grants for projects within the Community Council's area that impact on biodiversity through cascading funding criteria.
- Providing planters and flowers in each of the communities.
- Providing education activities e.g. provision of beehives within the local school and Councillors engaging with pupils to help support them in encouraging ownership of the project to maintain and look after their hives.

- Facilitating collaboration with partnerships that tackle challenges impacting upon the local environment such as litter and fly-tipping, deliberate grass fires, antisocial behaviours of illegal off-road bikes and quads.
- Creating opportunities that seek to reduce the communities carbon footprint.
- Actively participating in Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) made up of representatives from the police, local council, fire and rescue service, health service and probation, as well as other non-statutory partners. The purpose of CSPs is to make the community safer, reduce crime and fear of crime, reduce anti-social behaviour and work with residents and businesses on the issues of greatest concern creating a better environment to live work and visit.

ACTION	DWR CC APPROACH
Action carried out to embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchases and labour are sourced locally where possible • Where practical, the purchase of products are made from recycled materials • Grants to include criteria to cascade this requirement • Increased the use of communications technology • Procurement to ensure biodiversity is embedded into the Council’s policies • Biodiversity is to be taken into account when considering planning applications • Formal and comprehensive objections have been made after consulting the community in relation to speculative applications from developers on local and neighbouring green field sites • Conduct a community survey on local trees and obtain a list of tree preservation orders from CCBC • Help residents and councillors understand the impacts of developments on conservation areas and listed buildings through training and awareness • Aim to safeguard and improve Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
Raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors work with schools to encourage and enhance biodiversity of the area by providing beekeeping support, talks on pollinators and biodiversity • Rudry Common is a designated Special Landscape Area and has Sites of

	<p>Interest for Nature Conservation ‘Grade A’ which means it contains several habitats and species of local, County and national importance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draethen is a designated Conservation Area. • Encourage and support litter picking activities that will encourage the “Reduce; Re-use; Recycle” ethos • Promote activities on the Council web site and social media and highlight the positive value of the biodiversity of the area such as the many diverse species and the risks they and their habitats face • From research undertaken from the Landscape Partnership Project the Community Council will profile the many red list species in the area that need to be protected through its’ website and Facebook pages to raise awareness of the threat to them. • Work with CCBC to promote biodiversity awareness among Councillors • Work with partners and CCBC to obtain the skills necessary to set up community-based biodiversity and conservation initiatives
Safeguard principal species and habitats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners, CCBC; local communities and individuals to ensure that the biodiversity of the local areas is sustained by supporting conservation activities throughout the communities • Work with partners, Natural Resource Wales and CCBC to raise awareness about the publics’ rights relating to common land, and forestry land highlighting acceptable and unacceptable activities • Continue to work with the Police and South Wales Fire Service encouraging increased policing of Rudry Common (a rural common) to reduce threats to habitats and commoners’ rights resulting from encroachment, illegal activities and antisocial behaviours.
Restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planters will be planted with native pollinator friendly flowers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Council obtained a grant from Keep Wales Tidy for a 'Place for Nature' for a small area to be planted up and dedicated to encouraging pollinators with local wildflower plants • Signed up to the Woodland Trust as a Charter Branch and signed up to plant 50 trees as part of the Big Climate Fightback on the National Tree Charter Day • To continue to safeguard and develop from the Community Council's Bee Friendly Status
<p>Tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature-based solutions, address invasive species</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting held on 27th November 2019 to influence and contribute to reducing individual and communities' carbon footprint and to support efforts by CCBC within the authority. • Transport is responsible for 80 per cent of harmful roadside emissions. Typical measures to reduce emissions from local sources include traffic management and encouraging the uptake of cleaner vehicles. Therefore, the Community Council has commenced an Action Plan for the feasibility of installing electric vehicle charge points in the communities as the CCBC Electric Vehicle Strategy does not currently include rural communities. Properties within rural communities often have no drives or garages and would not normally be able to consider electric vehicles. Therefore, by providing these public charging point facilities may encourage residents to consider more sustainable means of transport that will positively impact on the communities' carbon footprint • Councillors car share when attending training and/or meetings where appropriate • Councillors attend training sessions as close to the area as possible, reducing unnecessary travel • The Community Council has already embarked on a Speed Watch Program

	<p>and its' success has seen the formal reduction of mandatory speed limits from 30 to 20 miles per hour in Rudry. The Community Council will continue to support and deliver further speed watch activities through a programme of education, publicity and training to increase the skills and knowledge of local road users on the communities' roads and lanes reducing harmful pollution and making the areas safer to live, work and visit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Council has obtained large boulders and set in place on Rudry Common in a place notorious for fly-tipping. This will help to reduce the access and impede vehicles being able to pull up easily to offload illegal waste on the Common. • The Community Council is working with Gwent Police, SW Fire Service, Natural Resources Wales and CCBC Countryside and Rights of Way Officers in tackling anti-social behaviours of fly-tipping, illegal off-road motor vehicles and deliberate grass fires • Councillors arrange community walks that look to crush bracken and Himalayan balsam (an invasive species) and to maintain the fire breaks effectiveness against deliberate grass fires.
Use, improve and share evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Councillors have played a key role in creating a co-production long term strategy and delivery for protecting, preserving and enhancing the local environment. The Strategy has now received international recognition as an award winning masterplan (Landscape Institute Awards 2019) for the area based on Sustainable Management of Natural Resources as defined in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This ambitious project was to facilitate a sustainable and collaborative approach to landscape management and public access and as a driver for wider

	benefits to biodiversity, heritage and health and wellbeing.
Support capacity and/or other organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grant making policy will require any organisations receiving a grant from the Community Council to demonstrate how this will contribute to supporting biodiversity as part of their project • The Community Council is a formal consultee with Caerphilly County Borough Council for planning applications and related documents • Ensuring the safety and well-being of residents by promoting community safety and participating in the local Neighbourhood Watch activities
Review of S6 Duty	
What has worked well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working has worked well resulting in the Landscape project.
What have the barriers been?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers have been the length of time required to gain permissions from relevant bodies to develop Common land improvement
What will you change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined at the first review
How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will work on identifying additional opportunities to embed biodiversity and ecosystems into Council activities. • The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2019/20 will be reviewed in 2023.