

Environmental (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6

The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

Report 2022

Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC)

Introduction and Context

Haverfordwest is the County town of Pembrokeshire, is placed geographically at the heart of the county and has a population of approximately 14,000. The precept for Band D households is currently set at just under £75.00.

Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC) manages land and buildings and provides a range of services to the local community that have an impact on biodiversity, which provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity locally.

Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC) has responsibility for a number of green spaces. These are managed and maintained by Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC) staff and contractors and include:

- the cemeteries at Upper and Lower Prendergast
- St Martin’s cemetery
- The Priory Saltings - a ten-acre former landfill site on the tidal estuary reach of the river Cleddau. The site is being re-purposed to provide a riverside nature reserve/park
- Haverfordwest Community Garden

Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC) are the sole trustees of the Bridge Meadow Haverfordwest Trust which is a recreational area and green space, that provide use of land to Haverfordwest County AFC and Haverfordwest Kayak Club.

Haverfordwest Racecourse was gifted to the town for use as open green space and a recreational area, to be managed by Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC) and a number of other organisations. The Lower Racecourse is managed by the Portfield Recreational Committee for general recreational purposes and the Management Scheme itself covers regular works which are required to maintain the existing ground and soil structure. The grass area is mowed through the summer months and left to recover over the winter period. The extensive boundary hedges are appropriately trimmed on a regular basis to encourage natural habitat and use by wildlife and songbirds. Ditches are regularly cleared to divert excessive rainwater from the land as water logging of this particularly flat site has, in the past, led to significant soil erosion and loss of habitat. With the support of the Woodland Trust, two copses of native trees and shrubs were planted to encourage biodiversity and the management of these areas is ongoing.

Over the last five years we have supported The Cleddau Reaches Project, an environmental project which aims to enhance access to natural and built heritage along the river corridor within short distance of the town centre. Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC) has contributed £32,000 toward a total project cost of almost £300,000 and taken an active role in the project delivery, working with our partners Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), The Bridge Meadow Haverfordwest Trust and Haverfordwest Kayak Club.

Action Report

Action carried out to:		Monitored by:
- Embed biodiversity into decision making and procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action Plans reflect our commitment to biodiversity e.g. considered in plans for The River Corridor, Town Improvements (e.g. green spaces, pocket parks and tree planting)• The Cemeteries	

	<p>Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC) has encouraged the community to volunteer in the context of nature/green spaces.</p> <p>E.g. Through grant funding projects such as Transition Haverfordwest 's planting/sculpture installation in its pocket park (with community lease agreement from PCC) and participating in organised litter pick sessions with PCC County Councillors, the Town Team and other organisations</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have posted details through our social media platforms, which include short YouTube films and podcasts on green initiatives being undertaken in Haverfordwest • Liaising with Pembrokeshire College to provide a training ground for their students • Engaging with local school children & organisations to involve them in projects such as developing a community meadow at Priory Saltings 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safeguard principal species and habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage sites in our care to encourage biodiversity e.g. the redundant cemetery at Lower Prendergast where existing wildflowers and small mammals benefit from mowing regimes and coppice log piles to provide natural habitat to over-winter • Biodiversity plan drawn up for the Priory Saltings prior to any work commencing there. The plan to manage the existing habitats is being followed 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cleddau Reaches Project links a series of diverse habitats along the river corridor with new footpaths and a footbridge crossing at the northern extent. A further bridge in the south is also envisaged at some point in the future. <p>The project aims to restore and protect habitat undertaking conservation work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Following the management plan for the Priory Saltings, mowing regime to manage grassland habitat and planting of 400 whip saplings ○ eradicate invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam and enhance biodiversity by traditional methods of controlled grazing with horses in fenced meadows ○ repair areas of erosion along the riverbank using traditional 	

	<p>methods and natural living material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ create nesting habitat for using built structures e.g., constructing sand martin towers ○ stabilise archaeological structures such as the tunnels and walls at the Old Mill ○ Clear fallen trees and open up access to the river e.g., with the formation of new paths and a landing pontoon for kayaks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Earlier work undertaken by Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC) at the Priory Saltings and Lower Prendergast cemetery over the last five years includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tree planting: volunteers including members of Transition Haverfordwest have planted woodland in areas cleared by HAVERFORDWEST TOWN COUNCIL (HTC)'s contractor that were overgrown with invasive bramble ○ Creating new mown walks, and open wildflower meadows ○ We have worked with Plantlife' s 'Magnificent Meadows Cymru' and developed a community meadow at Priory Saltings ● Training and Education – we successfully engaged with local school children & organisations involving them in the 'Magnificent Meadows Cymru' project at Priory Saltings 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature-based solutions, address invasive species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in planning workshops with the local authority, PCC e.g. including the Local Development Plan, 'Sense of Place' strategic consultation, WelTAG traffic/ town centre studies, Green Infrastructure Plan funded by PCC to improve the presentation of the town and strengthen green infrastructure e.g. increase tree canopy, reduce traffic pollution in the town centre ● Manage waste more effectively incorporating recycling where possible ● Avoid the use of pesticides/weed killers in green sites unless essential e.g. to eradicate Japanese Knotweed (Note: Himalayan Balsam is being grazed to control as it is an annual plant) 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use improve and share evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have worked with and taken advice from Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC), to ensure use of best practice and to increase knowledge of local issues e.g. Regarding selective felling of trees at Lower Prendergast Cemetery to gain access to undertake repairs to the cemetery retaining wall • We are working with officers from National Resources Wales (NRW) and PCC who have expert knowledge of local issues and habitat e.g. The Cleddau Reaches project • Consulted local independent specialist suppliers e.g. Wyndrush Wyld who have provided expertise in report format and locally harvested seed for wildflower seeding • Liaised with and passed on our requirements to contractors where engaged so that they understand what is required 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support capacity and/or other organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC) has worked in partnership with Pembrokeshire College and The Prince's Trust to provide volunteers to construct boardwalk access paths and steps and restore historic railings • Provided Transition Haverfordwest volunteers with a site in Lower Prendergast Cemetery to plant fruit trees as part of their Orchard Mawr Project, which aims to plant 1000 fruit trees in publicly accessible spaces in and around Haverfordwest • Supported Haverfordwest Kayak Club and encouraged development of the access platform to the river as part of the Cleddau Reaches Project 	

Review of s6 duty

- What has worked well?

Engagement with partners on Cleddau Reaches has enabled a major project that will raise awareness of natural assets, support biodiversity and improve access and connections between the Town centre and the river, with £32,000 match-funding from Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC) contributing to a total project value of around £300,000.

Taking up opportunities to manage sites differently has allowed Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC) to undertake projects in more extensive sites and with more emphasis on biodiversity.

- What have the barriers been? What will you change?

Getting other councillors, stakeholders in the town and local organisations to work more cohesively together.

Managing councillors' and the public's perception of what is being done, and the aims behind this to improve biodiversity e.g. finding a balance when managing green spaces that can accommodate people's expectations e.g. 'civic trimmed' and more natural, wilder habitats for biodiversity.

- How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?

The duty will be monitored through the Management and Estates Committee and individual officers reporting back to the council on the success or otherwise of the actions taken through monthly Full Council meetings and annual inspections.

The s6 plan will be reviewed in light of these reports and any other evidence or information that is made available to Haverfordwest Town Council (HTC). At the time of this report's publication, there is no specific time or date set for the plan to be reviewed, but this will be done within the next six months.

Report approved by Full Council on -