

**Environment (Wales) Act 2016
Part 1 – Section 6**

The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

Report: January 2023

HAWARDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL – MARCH 2023

Introduction and Context:

Hawarden Community Council is the second largest Community/Town Council in Flintshire, based on the number of properties. The Community Council covers the four electoral wards of Hawarden Aston, Hawarden Ewloe and Hawarden Mancot and has a population of approximately 14,500 (source: UK Office for National Statistics). The 2023-24 precept is £302,896.

Hawarden Community Council has a Service Level Agreement with Broughton and Bretton Community Council and Shotton Town Council for administrative and maintenance purposes. Across the three councils, the team are responsible for the administrative and financial services, maintenance of 1,100 street light columns, 13 play areas and additional open spaces together with community buildings and car parks.

Full details of what the Council's main duties and responsibilities can be found in its Annual Report 2020-21 via the following link:

http://www.hawardencommunitycouncil.gov.uk/Finance_and_Accounts_40704.aspx
[X](#)

In summary:

- The Council office is situated at The Lodge on the Gladstone Playing fields which also comprises a council depot and woodland area, pavilion building, tennis courts, football fields, skate park, play area and the Gladstone Bowling Green and clubhouse, which is managed by a separate Bowling Club Management Committee. The area comprises a Scout Head Quarters managed separately.
- The area consists of mainly mixed density residential property and has some open spaces included within them, mature trees and a woodland area and grass verges together with a number of retail outlets, a high street and business parks.



- There are four primary/junior schools within the Community and one Secondary school.
- The community contains Hawarden Castle Park, Hawarden Castle occupied by the Gladstone family together with St. Deiniol's Library.
- There are four community centres.
- The Council is also responsible for litter collection, maintenance of planters, small spaces and Woodland areas, a large community allotment site, installation of festive lighting and is the custodian of the Hawarden War Memorial which is a Grade I listed building and the House of Correction.
- There is also a connection with the Wepre Country Park as it borders onto the Ewloe community.

Green spaces:

Within the community there are a number of green spaces as outlined in the County Council's Local Development Plan.

Definition:

Green spaces are areas of publicly accessible open space and other private land of value to the local community in and immediately adjacent to settlements. They add to the character of towns and villages and to the enjoyment of local residents. Such areas can be important for wildlife or general recreational value, or simply as the only green area in an otherwise urbanised environment. The main reasons for designating such areas are:

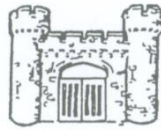
- For their landscape quality;
- For their value as a character feature in a locality;
- As a visual break in a developed area;
- As a buffer between incompatible uses;
- Or for their importance as part of an existing or proposed network of open areas, or as a link to open countryside.

As such they are "protected" from any form of development likely to affect their function as a green space. Development will only be permitted which does not unacceptably harm their function or value as a green space nor threaten their value to the community.

The green spaces are as follows:

Hawarden – Ewloe:

- Village Green, St. David's Park
- Parkland between business park and housing
- Disused railway cutting north of Chester Road
- East of Level Road
- West of Level Road
- Chester Road pond



- South of Bronte Grove
- West of Longfellow Avenue
- Site East of Level Road (opposite village green)
- Former Railway trackbed
- Carlines Avenue
- Maple Crescent

Hawarden Mancot:

- Leeches Close
- Hawarden Way
- Mancot Way
- Leaches Lane
- Trueman's Hill/Motte

Hawarden Aston:

- Shotton Lane
- Overlea Drive

Action Report:

This next section will outline how the Community Council can assist bio-diversity (through functions with regard to land management, grant funding and education opportunities etc).

Hawarden Community Council 'is' subject to the Well-being of Future Generations Act in relation to public service delivery.

Attached as an Appendix is the Friends of the Earth guide "**20 actions a local community or town council can take on the climate and nature emergency**".

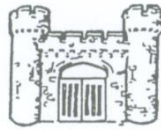
Principle:	Action:	Monitored by:
Embed biodiversity into decision making and procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of commitments to biodiversity and climate change have been reflected in the Council's 2022 Annual Plan. • The Council will take biodiversity into consideration when considering planning applications and other associated matters, such as footpath diversion orders. • An "Environmental Impact" and "Climate change/biodiversity impact" 	<p>Commitments made in documents.</p> <p>Planning Application responses.</p> <p>Council and Committee Reports</p>



	<p>section has been added to the standard report template for the council.</p>	
<p>Raise awareness of biodiversity and its importance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage local schools to produce an annual “Eco Quiz”. This encourages knowledge and awareness of environmental and sustainability matters amongst local children. • When promoting grants, include and encourage organisations to add some element of biodiversity, where appropriate • Encourage the community to volunteer in the context of nature/open spaces • Post details of actions we are promoting/have taken on social media platforms 	<p>Feedback through council members (as Governors) and residents. Numbers of people taking part.</p> <p>Grant Application Conditions and decision-making process.</p> <p>Aston play area flower beds and Aston and Mancot Wildlife areas (<i>provided by Keep Wales Tidy scheme</i>)</p>
<p>Safeguard principal species and habitats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to the management of protected sites and species including local wildlife sites/sites of importance for nature conservation • Careful use of pesticides and herbicides • Retention and reinstatement of “bat boxes” in Gladstone woodland area • Grass around trees is left longer • <i>Encourage volunteers to gather grass cuttings into piles to encourage insects/animals (soil health)</i> 	<p>Records of any sites or species safeguarded</p> <p>Annual risk assessment data/limited use</p>
<p>Restore and create habitats and resilient ecological networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage native pollinator friendly flowers on open spaces and allotments (where appropriate) Aston roundabout 	<p>Records of sites Allotment records Data collection</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with Flintshire County Council's Biodiversity Officers • Support local community woodland at allotment site (tree and shrub planting) • Recent tree planting and monitoring to increase tree canopy • House of Correction (protected access due to bats) • Apiary at allotment site 	<p>Meetings and consultation responses</p> <p>Queen's Trees in 2023</p>
<p>Use improve and share evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Biodiversity Officer at Flintshire County Council 	<p>Data collection Expert advice</p>
<p>Support capacity and/or other organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in close contact with Flintshire County Council's (FCC) Arboricultural Officer in supporting TPOs and ensuring council-maintained trees are documented and inspected regularly (three-year plan) • Increase in tree canopy (in conjunction with FCC); recent planting taken place • Require any organisation receiving a grant from us to demonstrate, where appropriate, how this will contribute to supporting biodiversity as part of their project 	<p>Outcome of planning</p> <p>HCC Tree register/policy and inspection regime</p> <p>Maintenance Team visual inspections and recommendations for actions</p> <p>Grant application receipt of finance letter and confirmation</p>
<p>Review of s6 Duty</p>		



What has worked well?

The creation of wildflower and plant areas, bat/bird boxes and tree planting has been successful across the community as it can enhance biodiversity and generate cost savings with reduced costs for mowing.

What have the barriers been?

The Council can only recommend and encourage residents and land owners in the community to embrace biodiversity.

What will you change?

Working more closely with the County Council's biodiversity team and seek advice wherever necessary.

The maintenance team will continue to review open spaces, trees and wildflower spaces and continue to amend its mowing regime to encourage biodiversity where appropriate.

Promote biodiversity more proactively on the Council's website and other social media platforms.

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

The duty will be monitored by the Council Members and the Clerk and Financial Officer reporting back to Council through periodic updates.

The s6 plan will be developed and reviewed in response to such reporting. Subject to Council approval this plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and reviewed every three years *(to comply with the duty of subsection (1) of the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty; Environment (Wales) Act 2016)*.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) The council is asked to consider and approve the contents of this report;**
- (ii) Contribute any ideas or information to add to/encourage to the wider climate and biodiversity action that it can take;**
- (iii) Consider the appointment of a Climate Change/Biodiversity Champion; and**
- (iv) Declare a Climate and Nature Emergency for the community of Hawarden.**



SUMMARY AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BIODIVERSITY “OUR LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM”

There are three components to biodiversity that contribute to our “biosphere”:

Atmosphere: plants absorb carbon dioxide (the main climate-altering gas) and produce oxygen instead.

Soil health: dead leaves and plants add nutrients to the soil. Insects and animals burrow, helping the soil to breathe.

Water cycle (hydrological cycle): trees and other plants slow the flow of rainwater to rivers, acting as a natural flood control.

Wales’ Well-being Goals: (there are seven, but number two states....)

A resilient Wales “A nation which **maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with health functioning ecosystems** that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

What are Ecosystem Services?

- Evidence tells us that ecosystems that are resilient are better able to deliver these services.
- Resilient ecosystems are diverse, connected, large enough and in good condition to be able to adapt to disturbance.

Examples include:

Carbon storage and sequestration

Soil quality and erosion control

Biodiversity

Coastal protection

Water quality

Flood regulation

Irrigation

Fisheries

Pollination Pest control

Climate regulation

Scenic beauty

Aquaculture



In addition to the actions outlined above specifically targeted at the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty, the Community Council is working towards wider targets for Climate Change including:

Provision of Water meters

LED replacements on street lighting

LED Christmas lighting

Recycling receptacles, particularly at Gladstone Playing Fields

Paperless office (subject to legislation changes)

Local Electricity Bill commitments (local energy to local people)

Solar panels on Council buildings

Redevelopment of Community Orchard at Allotment site

Sharron Jones

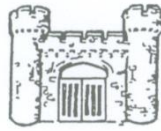
Sharron Jones

Clerk and Financial Officer

Ralph Small

Councillor Ralph Small

Chairman of the Council



APPENDIX

20 actions parish and town councils can take on the climate and nature emergency

Friends of the Earth, Mike Childs, 24 June 2021

Parish and town councils may not be as powerful as local authorities but they can be a force for change in addressing the climate and nature emergency.

[This guide complements Friends of the Earth's template Local Climate Action Plan.]

Action at the local level is essential to meeting the UK's legally binding climate target to reach *Net Zero by 2050*. More than half of the emissions cuts needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions – decisions that are made at a local and individual level.

In this guide we identify actions that parish and town councils can take on climate change and nature. Its purpose is to support those of the 10,000 local councils across England and 750 community councils in Wales who want to do their bit in addressing the climate and nature emergency.

The blue text indicates how the Community Council can contribute or is contributing.

Be a force for good

1. Encourage the formation of Climate Action groups

Communities across the country are coming together to take climate action in response to the climate and nature emergency. Climate Action groups will encourage and support you to take local political action, build positive community solutions, and join together to demand national action. Parish, town and community councils should encourage and support the formation of these groups. Friends of the Earth will provide resources, training and advice to Climate Action groups (see takeclimateaction.uk).

<https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/near-you/local-authority/flintshire?postcode=ch53dn#energy>

This link shows the current position in Flintshire in relation to the following Energy, Homes, Transport, Nature and Health.



2. Support Local Plan policies that help to tackle climate change and boost nature

Use your role as a consultee to the local planning authority to seek strong policies in the Local Plan requiring the highest possible standards of energy efficiency for new housing and other buildings. Sites allocated for new housing should also be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport and avoid loss of local nature sites and green spaces.

[During the planning consultation process.](#)

3. Promote practical action by local people

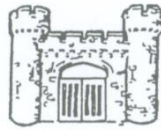
People can often be at a loss about what they can practically do to reduce their own carbon footprint or support nature. An impartial local guide that provides information on accredited local businesses can be invaluable and help keep money in the local economy. The guide could include information on local accredited energy assessors and renewable energy installers for solar panels, batteries, EV charging points and heat pumps, eco-friendly retailers, green builders and landscape companies, etc. It can also encourage sustainable transport options.

[Templates to be added to Website, Facebook and social media platforms.](#)

4. Bring together groups of people for bulk purchases

The costs of installing solar PV, or other renewable technologies such as heat pumps, should be much lower if done in bulk, street by street, or area by area. A town or parish council can bring together local homeowners and businesses to develop such a scheme – it's a widely used model in the Netherlands and places such as Suffolk and Frome in the UK. Bulk purchases of energy audits or energy insulation is also possible. Transition Streets is an example of this approach.

[Information to be added to Website, Facebook and social media platforms.](#)
[Three councils in Service Level Agreement can work together.](#)



5. Develop and promote lift-sharing scheme

By convening local businesses and car-sharing schemes, such as the social enterprise Liftshare, it's possible to help local people reduce the carbon pollution from car use, save money and foster new friendships. An analysis by Liftshare suggested that 92% of people commuting to work in over 200 locations lived close enough to be able to share a car to work.

Lift-sharing may often be a solution for people when public transport, cycling or walking to work isn't. Car-sharing schemes for non-commuting journeys should also be promoted.

[Promotion and information on Website, Facebook and social media platforms.](#)

6. Use your voice

Decisions on infrastructure projects are largely made by local authorities, Local Economic Partnerships, or by national government. But too many of these decisions will increase carbon emissions and / or harm nature. Use your voice when possible to oppose high-carbon developments, promoting sustainable alternatives instead. Press local authorities and MPs to demand national changes to bus services regulations, so all areas can regulate buses as London does, and urban profit-making routes can cross-fund loss making rural routes.

[Already doing, Hynet project is a more recent example.](#)

Demonstrate leadership through your own practical actions

7. Save energy

Ensure any council buildings are as energy efficient as possible and any street lighting uses well-directed LED lighting. Getting an energy audit is the first step. Loans for projects in England that have a payback of less than five years are available through Salix funding. Projects with longer term paybacks should still be carried out.

[Councils are already in the middle of a full LED replacement programme. Solar panels could be considered on council buildings? Energy audit to be undertaken initially.](#)

8. Produce green energy

Install renewable energy generation, like heat pumps and solar PV, at council buildings. Heat pumps benefit from a government grant that will partially cover the cost. Several energy companies provide a smart export tariff, which pays for any electricity generated that isn't used by the building, including offering top prices if the solar PV is used in conjunction with a battery.



Funds can also be raised through Salix loans or through crowdfunding. Buildings using renewable energy should also be used as a showcase to help local people see these technologies first-hand, particularly fewer familiar technologies such as heat pumps. An electronic display showing how much energy has been generated and how much money and CO2 emissions saved is one way of demonstrating the benefits.

Smart meter installed in office. Energy audit might highlight additional areas to be improved.

9. Reduce pesticide use and other harmful activities

It's possible to reduce activities that harm wildlife, from using peat-free compost to shunning pesticides and ensuring light pollution is controlled. Glastonbury Town Council has stopped using glyphosate weed killer and instead uses a hot foam system. These steps alone are not enough to protect and restore nature but they're an important first step. To encourage others, promote the actions you're taking, for example use signage on council-owned land where you use peat-free compost.

Maintenance team stopped using glyphosate approximately four years ago, pesticides are no longer used and the maintenance team use only herbicides.

Manage land for nature

Parish, town and community councils can have responsibility for allotments, bridleways, burial grounds, commons and open spaces, and village greens. All of these can be managed to enhance nature, particularly through changing mowing regimes. Friends of the Earth and Buglife have produced a guide to developing an action plan for helping pollinators such as bees. Buglife's B-lines project aims to support the development of a network of wildlife friendly corridors. Friends of the Earth is piloting a crowd-funded postcode gardener project to help people green the streets where they live.

Council owned allotment site has an apiary and rules and regulations about encouraging biodiversity.

10. Increase tree cover

Friends of the Earth is campaigning for the UK to double tree cover. The Forestry Commission and others have suggested that even urban areas should aim for at least 20% tree cover. Parish, town and community councils should aim to double tree cover and, if necessary, go beyond this to reach the 20% minimum. Much of this will involve encouraging and supporting landowners to take part in tree planting. The Tree Charter, developed by the Woodland Trust, provides excellent guidance on how to increase tree cover.



The National Association of Local Councils website provides case studies where it has been used.

Flintshire County Council did not identify any areas in the community of Hawarden where the tree canopy could be extended. The Community Council has recently agreed to install 7 additional trees as part of the late H.M. Queen Elizabeth's Tree Canopy scheme. (item elsewhere on this agenda).

11. Buy green

Buying local can support the local economy and buying green can help protect the planet, rewarding businesses committed to a better future. Buying green electricity helps develop new renewable energy and ensures the council isn't supporting dirty energy financially. Friends of the Earth has identified Ecotricity and Good Energy as the greenest energy companies. Buying green can also extend to any food provided at events, including providing mainly plant-based food and less but better meat and dairy.

The Community Council can strive to do this where practical. The street lighting energy contract is currently tied in for a further two years.

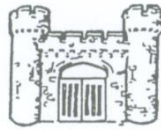
12. Use green transport

Employees and councillors should be encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport or car-share. The council should provide bikes or electric bikes for staff as they carry out any work-related trips. It should also provide zero-interest loans for buying bikes. Where a car or van is needed it should be electric only.

The Community Council can promote this but needs to recognise individual needs of members of staff and councillors. It is not cost-effective for the Community Council to provide bikes but this could be looked into if council members wish? Electronic council vehicles has been considered during the purchase of rent fleet but the initial outlay is costly.

13. Minimise waste going to landfill or incineration

In your own operations, ensure all your waste is recycled or composted, but also consider setting-up community recycling facilities for hard-to-recycle items when the local authority hasn't done so, for example in partnership with Terracycle. Bisley Parish Council has set up a community composting scheme. The best approach for waste minimisation is reuse (e.g. reusable cups) or avoiding unnecessary purchases.



The Community Council has considered installing recycling receptacles on its grounds but the County Council would have to empty them. Non-domestic rates are paid so this should be achievable.

The Community Council can encourage community composting scheme at the allotments.

14. Ensure money is invested wisely

Across the UK, local authorities are investing tens of millions of pounds each into fossil fuel companies, despite having declared a climate emergency. Although town council investments will be tiny in comparison, the council should still ensure any council funds are invested safely in low-risk sustainable banks or investment funds.

The Clerk and Financial Officer can pursue this if members wish to?

Use your powers wisely

15. Ensure you know the climate change or nature implications of decisions before you make them

It isn't credible to accept the need for rapid action on climate change and nature and then make decisions without knowing whether they'll be harmful or helpful. Requiring every decision to be well informed is common sense as well as good practice. This should extend to demanding that the planning authority provides you with this kind of information when consulting you.

[Revised community council report template, as listed on page 2 above.](#)

16. Designate sites within the Neighbourhood Plan for trees, renewable energy and nature restoration

In practice, the development of 90% of Neighbourhood Plans (Place Plans in Wales) is led by town and parish councils working hand in hand with their communities.



The Neighbourhood Planning (Place Plans) process is far from perfect and very time consuming, but it offers the community the opportunity to show it means business on protecting and enhancing the environment for future generations.

Place Plan not yet develop and the County Council had already identified that there were no areas to add to the tree canopy approximately three/four years ago within the community of Hawarden although there are localised areas.

17. Use the Neighbourhood Plan to require new homes to be energy efficient, nature friendly, and located close to public transport and amenities.

Given the climate and nature emergency, it's unfortunate that the government doesn't require all new homes to be as sustainable as possible. Neighbourhood Plans (Place Plans) will identify sites for future housing and should push for these to be zero-carbon (eg Passivhaus standard) and nature friendly, even though the local planning authority may seek to override this aim. Homes should also be fitted with renewable energy. Homes need to be located close to amenities and public transport to avoid car dependency.

Place Plan not yet developed but the Community Council are consulted on planning developments/applications where this point can be made.

18. Designate safe walking and cycle routes in the Neighbourhood Plan

Identify safe walking and cycling routes and where necessary work in partnership with district and county councils to deliver them. The Propensity to Cycle tool identifies the huge potential for increasing cycling in all areas of the country, particularly with good quality infrastructure, such as segregated cycleways and cycle parking, and with the use of E-bikes.

Place Plan not yet developed.

19. Use differential car-parking charges to support low-carbon vehicles

Any car parks run by the council should offer low cost or free car-parking to electric vehicles and dedicated spaces with electric charging points.

Council owned car park is currently free for all vehicles. No electric charging points are currently available.