

**Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6
The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty**

**Reporting on Section 6 – Crickhowell Town Council
2022-23**



Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 - Section 6

The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2022

Name of Town or Community Council: Crickhowell

Introduction and Context

Crickhowell is a small town (population 2109 in 2021) in the Brecon Beacons National Park. It sits on the north side of the Usk Valley and is a well known tourism destination through its beautiful landscape and rights of way, cultural heritage and vibrant town centre with independent shops. The main settlement is c3 square miles but with close proximity to other small rural settlements such as Llanbedr and Llangattock.

Crickhowell Town Council comprises 12 councillors, and provides a range of services to its local community which have a potential impact on biodiversity:

- Responsible for a number of green spaces including the Castle Grounds, cemetery and The Garn with influence over other spaces such as the Queen Elizabeth playing field and Bullpit Meadow
- Organising planters and hanging baskets in the town centre
- Giving grants for projects in the Council's area which could benefit biodiversity
- The Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications and takes biodiversity and green spaces into consideration in this capacity)

While, as a small council we are not subject to a duty under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 we strive to promote an ethos of sustainability and biodiversity by pursuing sustainability goals and sustainable practices in our decision making, in line with the Act wherever possible. The precept for 2022-23 was £54,500.

Action Report

Action carried out to:		Monitored by:
-embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement	The Council is hoping to develop a new procurement policy which could take these factors into account.	Finance Committee and full Council
-raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance	The Council provides some information on the planting in Castle Grounds. In 2023 it will launch its new website which will provide greater opportunity to increase awareness and highlight work being undertaken in the town	Environment Committee

-safeguard principal species and habitats	The Council champions the protection of our open spaces	
-restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks	In the context of a multi-agency plan to combat flooding (which has hit Crickhowell hard in recent years) there may be opportunities to restore and create biodiverse habitats to “slow the flow”.	Environment Committee
-tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature based solutions, address invasive species	The Council has supported a local group tackling Himalayan Balsam problems; as a statutory consultee on planning applications it does consider these issues.	Environment Committee
-use improve and share evidence	In the context of the current development of a “place plan” for the town there may be opportunities to do more of this.	Environment Committee and full Council
-support capacity and/or other organisations	The Council gives small grants to organisations, some of which are involved in projects relating to biodiversity	Full Council

Review of s6 duty

- **What has worked well? What have the barriers been? What will you change?**

Our management of the Castle Grounds and Town Cemetery has generally seemed to benefit biodiversity. Lack of powers and financial resources means we are very limited in what we can do elsewhere.

Considerable work has been carried out in the Castle Grounds as follows:

- Entering from Castle Road , the left of the mound is a wild flower area and behind that a rewilding area
- The mound is left to grow wild in spring and summer but strimmed back in the autumn.
- The area to the right of the mound next to the path and down to Gabbs wall is also a wild flower area which is cut back in autumn once the birds have finished the seeds, new seeds are added to the existing bed in the spring.
- The area along Gabbs wall is a biodiverse mixture of perennial plants and wild flowers so that there is colour all summer.

- The grass in the play and picnic area is cut every 2 weeks in the growing season; we have tried less cutting but it leaves large clumps of grass on the surface which is no good for ball games or picnics
- The walls are sprayed at present as weeding in between the stones causes erosion. In consultation with Cadw we use Round up Pro Bio.
- The rose bed adds more scope to pollinators and enhances the colour in the park along with the daffodils planted on the perimeter.
- The trees are inspected regularly for signs of ash die back.
- While some people have questioned the ivy growth Natural Resources Wales maintain that ivy does not kill trees and provides good cover and food source for birds and insects

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

The Council's newly established Environment Committee will be the first line for monitoring and review and will report to the full Council. The environment will be a core element of the emerging Place Plan in 2023.