

Penrice Community Council Draft Report 2022:

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

=====

Context

Penrice Community Council covers a small community of about 450 residents and raises a precept of £12,000. The principal authority is the City & County of Swansea.

It is located on the south coast of the Gower Peninsula within Britain’s first designated AONB. The landscape is diverse with bays and sea cliffs, narrow coastal fringe and coastal marsh, cliff top plateaux and rolling fields and woodland. A National Nature Reserve covers a significant area, which is itself diverse, and there are other protected areas, including much of the woodland.

Settlement is in several villages which are, in the main, clearly defined with significant open country between. The main land use is farming, both arable and livestock, and some land has been given over to tourism and hospitality in the form of caravan & camping sites and venues.

Penrice Community Council owns two green spaces. It does not own or lease any buildings and its annual procurement is very limited.

There is strong support within the area to maintain and enhance the natural environment.

=====

Section 6 Summary

The PCC has embedded biodiversity into decision making and procurement through its Policy on Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems.

The PCC has informally raised awareness of biodiversity and its importance through initiating and/or supporting activities in the community, inviting speakers on environmental matters and sharing information from the Council and other parties through its website, noticeboards and minutes.

The PCC manages the mowing of its green spaces to preserve wildflowers, both self-propagating and sown, which in turn supports pollinators.

The PCC actively identifies environmental issues in the area (observed by Councillors and reported by the local community) and seeks to address those issues directly or through relevant organisations.

The PCC continues to develop its capacity to use, improve and share evidence and to support and engage with the public and other organisations.

The PCC considers environmental factors in its procurement.

Relevant activities are built into the Council’s plans and relevant decisions are recorded in its minutes.

Council Engagement

- Council has adopted a Policy on Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems to give a framework to relevant decision-making.
- All Councillors have demonstrated (in considering planning applications, land management and other Council matters) that they are committed to preserving and where possible enhancing the habitats of our area.
- Though procurement is limited Council seeks to make the most appropriate choice for repairing or replacing its fixtures (benches, noticeboards and signs) and office equipment.

Council Awareness

- Many Councillors are lifelong or long-term residents of the area with significant knowledge of local landscapes and habitats, of local businesses and organisations, and of people with local expertise.
- Councillors have a varied level of understanding of wider issues of Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems but are actively researching and sharing relevant information.

Council Actions

- Council has arranged the sowing of wildflowers on its land both directly and through the local authority. This has been successful and popular. Some of the Council's green space is now left unmown to encourage and protect the wildflowers. Glyphosate is not used.
- The Greens are safeguarded when used for occasional events and are cleared of debris. The annual bonfire scar has proved a fertile space for wildflowers. Vehicles are only permitted in specific circumstances.
- Council has funded hedging, planted by volunteers, where an old fence has deteriorated.
- Council has also supported the planting of marram grass by local volunteers where it has been eroded from local dunes.
- Council has sourced noticeboards and bench slats of recycled plastic. Its eco-printer does not need disposable ink cartridges.
- Council has followed up reports of excessive harvesting of shell-fish on local beaches. Though unpopular with local people it was not found to be detrimental to the natural stocks and there is no mechanism to further restrict this activity at present. <
- Council has followed up reports of jet skis being disruptive and dangerous to people and marine life. Jet skis can no longer be launched from within the Community Council area though they can still travel here from other locations. Council has supported recent legislation confirming the status of jet skis and therefore clarifying responsibility. <

- Council has raised planning and enforcement queries in relation to tree removals and excessive lighting contrary to the Dark Skies policy. <

Local Engagement

- Council recognises that local people provide habitats and resources for wildlife through their gardens and through active feeding in the winter. Local people also volunteer individually and as local groups to support the local environment.

Council recognises that local land owners (such as farmers, caravan parks, camping sites, and churches) provide habitats and sources of food either deliberately or as a by-product of their activities.

Council also recognises other significant organisations in the area: the local authority which owns, manages and supervises land; NRW which manages an important coastal nature reserve locally; and the Gower Society.

- Council maintains its own website where it shares information about the Council and the locality. Council also maintains 6 noticeboards for general use. Council invites speakers on relevant topics to its meetings which are held publicly in local halls and with remote access.
- Council supports a local church which in turn organises a series of lectures every year exploring all aspects of Gower including the landscape and local wildlife.

In line with the PCC policy there are opportunities to engage further with these organisations and individuals and focus more on biodiversity and resilience.

=====

What has worked well?

- With the limited resources available to the Council it has been most effective to build up capacity gradually - identify a task, work through issues and continue with successful approach. It took some time to establish effective sowing of wildflowers but this is now a successful annual activity.
- Impact on the natural environment has always been part of Council consideration of planning applications, land management, procurement, etc, and this will continue.
- Though Covid itself was a barrier, the introduction of remote meetings which followed has given flexibility to Council meetings and has made it easier for OVW meetings and training to be organised and attended.

What have the barriers been?

- Routine regulation involves a huge commitment taking resources away from practical planning and activities.
- Covid interfered with the plans of many organisations.

What will change?

- In line with PCC policy the Council will be more proactive in seeking opportunities for biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems and more systematic in its assessments.

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

- Whilst s6 considerations are embedded in routine Council activities, in line with PCC policy the Council will review its overall s6 duty and its s6 plan at its AGMs and ahead of its annual budget. Monitoring will be achieved by inspections on the ground and by cross-checking through source material (both carried out by designated Councillors & reported back to Council). Reviews will be carried out by the full Council.

This Report was agreed by the full Council on 15th March 2023.

Contact for Council: Mrs Sam Caswell, Clerk to the Council, penricecouncil@gmail.com

Contact for Report: Cllr Jan Ellis, jan.delwyn.ellis@gmail.com

Report listed on PCC Website at: www.penricecommunitycouncil.org.uk/biodiversity

Report Direct Link: [pcc-report-on-biodiversity-&-resilience-of-ecosystems-2022.pdf](https://www.penricecommunitycouncil.org.uk/fileuploads/pcc-report-on-biodiversity-&-resilience-of-ecosystems-2022.pdf)

or copy & paste <https://www.penricecommunitycouncil.org.uk/fileuploads/pcc-report-on-biodiversity-&-resilience-of-ecosystems-2022.pdf>