

The Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership is a partnership of organisations and individual ecologists primarily concerned with the conservation of the county's species and habitats and the enhancement of the resilience of our natural environment. It is facilitated by the Council's Biodiversity Officer and has been established for over 20 years.

The natural environment of Wales supports an amazing variety of wildlife. In Carmarthenshire the range of habitats, from coast to mountains and woodlands to meadows, all contribute to our experience of living here and also to the economy of the county, the health and well-being of our citizens, the provision of food, clean water and air and to our local culture.

A healthy natural environment is a vital part of a sustainable, resilient and distinct Carmarthenshire. We know that some habitats and species are declining, habitat connectivity has reduced, and the condition of some habitats declined. This means that their capacity to provide ecosystem services and benefits may be at risk.

The [State of Natural Resources Report](#) (SoNaRR) has been produced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The report sets out the state of Wales' natural resources. It assesses the extent to which natural resources in Wales are being sustainably managed, and recommends a proactive approach to building resilience. The report links the resilience of Welsh natural resources to the well-being of the people of Wales and considers how pressures on Wales' natural resources are resulting in risks and threats to long-term social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being, as set out in the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#). The report looks at the key issues, as well as opportunities for integrated solutions that provide multiple benefits.

The work of the partners, and the projects they undertake, deliver outcomes that help to conserve and enhance our natural environment and often deliver multiple benefits that improve the well-being of the people that live here. Their work contributes to objectives and outcomes of a number of national and local plans with goals for the natural environment. These include:

- The [Nature Recovery Action Plan](#) is the national biodiversity strategy and action plan for Wales working to reverse the decline in biodiversity in Wales and build the resilience of our ecosystems.
- [Carmarthenshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan](#)
- Carmarthenshire County Council's [Well-being Objectives](#) and the Carmarthenshire Public Service Board's [Well-being Plan](#).

In addition [The Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) puts into place a duty to plan and manage our natural resources. This includes a duty to require all public bodies, when carrying out their functions to seek to 'maintain and enhance biodiversity' where it is within the proper exercise of their functions and seek to 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'. The Council has prepared a Forward Plan to evidence how it will integrate this legislation into the delivery of its services.

Local Nature Partnerships are a key delivery mechanism that can help provide local focus and delivery of all these objectives.

Local people can make a difference as well and it is a role of all the partners to raise awareness and work with communities on projects that benefit biodiversity – and the people involved!

This is a summary of some of the achievements of the partners in 2018, often working together, to conserve and enhance Carmarthenshire's diverse range of habitats and species.



Clwb Adar Sir Gaerfyrddin
Carmarthenshire Bird Club



Partner Update	Engagement	Species and habitats	Resilience	Tackling key pressures	Evidence and monitoring
<p>This year the Mid Wales Red Squirrel Project has organised volunteer-led camera trap surveys. This is part of an on-going process to try to get a better idea of which forests red squirrels are using in the Mid Wales Red Squirrel Focal Site. Volunteers have monitored trail cameras at eight different sites within this area. In all red squirrels were recorded at six of these sites. A highlight during spring 2018 was the appearance of up to five red squirrels at one of our long-term feeders; the trail camera produced some interesting footage of mating behaviour. Hair samples were collected from this camera trap over the course of the year and sent for genetic analysis. Results have shown two different haplotypes (genetic markers): a known Welsh haplotype and a unique haplotype not previously recorded anywhere. This adds another haplotype to the four already known in the mid Wales red squirrel population and suggests that the mid Wales forests are an important site for the conservation of British red squirrels.</p>	✓	✓		✓	✓
<p>The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust has been awarded funding through the Biffa Awards Scheme to create new wetland habitat within the Dafen Scrapes at Penclacwydd. Work commenced in July to re-landscape the existing scrapes to reduce the steepness of banks and improve sightlines for birds. Islands have been created within the existing scrapes to increase breeding opportunities for water birds, and a large new scrape has been created in the western portion of the area, bolstering all-important wader chick feeding opportunities.</p> <p>Focus species include avocet, lapwing, and shelduck, but the work will also encourage more roosting and feeding birds outside of the breeding season. In addition, the increased range of habitats will provide benefits for other wetland wildlife including water voles and invertebrates. Close to the British Steel Hide, the project will help to bring even more wildlife closer to visitors. Nest boxes will be provided along the sea wall to encourage breeding shelducks, and coppicing carried out between the scrapes and the existing freshwater lagoon will increase habitat connectivity and improve sightlines.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Coed Cymru officers from the Council’s Conservation Section have been working with Western Power to help landowners affected by the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Connection carry out small-scale landscape and ecological enhancements. A total of 43 grant offers have been made to landowners within 3 km of the new powerlines, amounting to a total of approximately £60,000 in potential grant payments. Twelve landowners completed grant work last winter and this has resulted in 729 m of hedgerow being created, managed or restored, along with associated stock fencing as well as planting of trees, installation of bird boxes and pond creation and management. The remaining work is due to be completed over this winter and should lead to an additional 2 km of hedgerow created or managed under the project. CCC is still accepting expressions of interest for the grant which offers up to £1500 to eligible landowners to restore hedgerows, plant orchard trees and put up barn owl boxes. The line runs from Brechfa Forest, near Alltwalis, through Carmarthen, to approximately 3 km south of Llandyfaelog.</p>	✓	✓	✓		



© Paul Harry



@mj224

Dafen scrapes © M. Johnson



	WG Nature Recovery Plan Objective				
Partner update	Engagement	Species and habitats	Resilience	Tackling key pressures	Evidence and monitoring
<p>Following the launch of the public access to view biological records through the Aderyn website in 2017, West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre was involved with the development and launch of a new App to enable records to be gathered on mobile devices. This is another step forward in bringing together recording and viewing wildlife sightings as these records are directed to the all Wales database serving Aderyn which has increased to 12 million records from last year. These developments have been promoted by WWBIC at events such as the Pembrey Country Park Bioblitz, Birdsong Identification training at Cilycwm and other events and recording days arranged in the county.</p>	✓	✓			✓
<p>Ffrwd Farm Mire is remnant fenland, and primarily important for swamp habitat, which supports one of the largest reed beds in the county. It is managed by The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales. This year we have changed grazier, and consequently the site benefitted from a more appropriate stocking density. In addition the grazier cut and removed the rushes, opening up the marshy grassland, which will allow more species diversity and reduce nutrients. The dryness of summer enabled the cattle to graze an area previously thought inaccessible, thus improving habitat conditions for numerous marshy grassland plants including the rare marsh pea. We took the opportunity to gate and fence off the compartment, whilst a new holding pen will support future grazing. Three ditches were cleaned out and re-profiled, increasing open water and therefore wildlife potential for specialist plants, dragonflies and water voles. Thanks to NRW and the Llanelli Naturalists who continue to support our work on the reserve. This work has been made possible thanks to support from players of People's Postcode Lottery.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>During our final year of Bee Wild West Wales, the Bumblebee Conservation Trust has been busy delivering events and training across Carmarthenshire, including activities with local schools, Beewalk Information Days, guided walks and rare bee surveys. We have also been completing the development of our Bee Friendly Community Green spaces at Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park and Sandy Water Park. These projects have been part of our Buzzing Communities objectives and culminated in our Buzzing Communities Toolkit Launch at Machynys Peninsula Golf Club at the end of November. This training day presented our new guide to creating bumblebee-friendly community greenspace, and provided land managers and residents with information and training on managing parks and amenity grassland for pollinators and other wildlife. We have enjoyed meeting many people during the course of our work including land owners, gardeners, meadow creators and, children and teachers. We have also been working in partnership with Carmarthenshire County Council, the Conservation Volunteers group, the Wildlife Trust, Sandy Water Park Residents Association, Coleg Sir Gar, Pwll referral unit, and many others.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Mobile recording App



Management at Ffrwd Farm Mire



Bee bank at Sandy Water Park

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<p>The Caeau Mynydd Mawr Project has had another successful year, receiving an award for 'Planning in the Natural Environment' category at the National RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence this summer. This has been great publicity for the project and has helped the project gain even more support from County and Community Councillors. The marsh fritillary butterfly has also had an amazing year, with butterflies recorded at sites on which they had previously been absent or recorded in low numbers. On a site managed by the project near Llyn Llech Owain Country Park 84 larval webs were recorded in a field that had only very few records in previous years. In addition two larval webs were recorded on the SAC field at Greengrove for the first time in many years, a site owned and managed by the project.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>During 2018, the National Botanic Garden of Wales has continued to carry out research on pollination. Using data from across Wales, its science team are establishing the honey bee's favoured springtime and summer plants. They are now investigating the relationship between plants and other pollinators, especially bumble bees, solitary bees and hoverflies and the relationship between different garden wildflower seed mixes and pollinators, and the aesthetic preference of humans. In addition, the success of a new method of translocating threatened tree lichens from across Wales on to willow trees in the Garden has led to the publication of a booklet about tree lichen, a Garden-wide trail and dedicated week of family activities on lichens, which actively engaged with over 1000 children. Training in lichen identification allowed volunteers to monitor nitrogen pollution. The Garden's education service provided around 2000 schoolchildren with meaningful direct contact with biodiversity through education programmes. The Garden's Growing the Future project has run adult courses on the likes of plant and fungi identification, DNA extraction, plant systematics, sustainable gardening and beekeeping, and to create its first Pollination Weekend event.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has been working with the South Wales Trunk Road Agency (SWTRA) to design otter mitigation measures on the Afon Gwili near Pont Abraham roundabout at the western end of the M4 motorway. This location has been a hot spot for otter road mortalities for many years. Geoff Liles of The Otter Consultancy has assisted in the design of appropriate mitigation measures in the form of culvert ledges and associated fencing. The measures are to be implemented by spring 2019. Partnership work is continuing in the Rhandirmwyn area at the top of the Tywi catchment to control Himalayan Balsam. The local community is working closely with the Carmarthenshire Fisherman's Federation and NRW, and significant progress has been made this year.</p> <p>Mink control continues to be undertaken to protect the water vole population at Pembrey. This work is a long term collaboration between NRW, the Wildlife Trust and a network of local volunteers, and would not be possible without this partnership approach.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Marsh fritillary food plant
- Devil's bit scabious



Small copper butterfly
© P. Williams

Partner update

Carmarthenshire County Council has developed new trails, focusing on health and wellbeing for Pembrey Burrows Local Nature Reserve, Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park and Ynys Dawela Nature Park. The new trails will hopefully encourage people to get outside in nature and to experience the benefits of being active in natural surroundings. This can have a positive impact on people’s mental and physical wellbeing. It is a novel approach to encouraging people to use nature reserves and hopefully will mean more people, who may not think of going to a nature reserve, will visit these sites. These places are very calming and peaceful places where nature thrives. Being outdoors and close to nature like not only feels good, but has also been shown to reduce stress. One of the trails encourages walking and gentle physical activity whilst the other trail encourages developing mindfulness and being in the moment which can help reduce stress and anxiety. The trails have been trialled and will now be rolled out to individuals and groups that can benefit from being active in these beautiful natural areas.

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The **Carmarthenshire Bogs Project** continues to seek ways to encourage people to visit these amazing sites and experience probably our oldest habitats in the county – formed after the last Ice Age. Two connecting cycle routes were launched this year and these are featured on the Discover Carmarthenshire website, guiding cyclists through some of Carmarthenshire’s best scenery.

On Figyn common – which includes a bog with peat over 8 m deep in the centre - further work was undertaken with local contractors to continue to try and retain water within the bog area . Previous ditch blocking was enhanced and a second peat bund created 15 m west of the first bund. Sphagnum moss (one of the peat-forming plants) is already filling up the ditch that was dammed.

We hope to work with a local grazer to return grazing on to this site.

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Butterfly Conservation continue to have a focus in the county. For the **Marsh Fritillary** at least 10 work parties took place at Median Farm/Caeau Ffos Fach reserve in Cross Hands, mostly by volunteers but including modest contractor work. Grazing by cattle and/or ponies was also maintained throughout the year, using different graziers. Together, this has led to further grassland restoration, spread of Devil’s Bit Scabious and pleasingly records of Marsh Fritillary in two fields not previously occupied, with breeding confirmed in one of those.

Volunteer work parties were also held, jointly with WTSWW, at two occupied sites near Ynys Dawela in Brynamman and restoring a site in Harford (near Pumsaint), where Marsh Fritillaries moved in this year. Volunteer surveys were also carried out.

For the **Brown Hairstreak** contractors, BC volunteers and WTSWW, worked together across several sites to coppice blackthorn and control invasive bramble. This included three sites in the Teifi valley near Llangeler and a site near Broad Oak. Egg surveys were also carried out, mostly by volunteers, across 30+ sites in Carmarthenshire during the winter and autumn.

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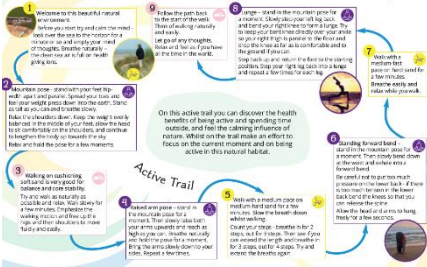
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Pembrey Burrows Local Nature Reserve - Active Walking Trail



Active Walking Trail



Water pooling behind a peat bund.



Brown hairstreak butterfly

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<p>Carmarthenshire County Council, in partnership with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and Natural Resources Wales have worked together again this year to create a sinuous pond/ditch for wildlife, with a specific focus on water voles, on an area of Council-owned land, north of the railway line near to the WWT. This previously open coastal grazing marsh was left over after the link road construction and was scrubbing over. This project complements the pond creation work undertaken last year on land close by and the wetland habitats within the WWT.</p> <p>This site has records of water vole (feeding signs and droppings) and the vegetation clearance and ‘pond’ creation will provide additional valuable wetland habitat. The excavated material was used to create a new bund running alongside the pond in which the water voles can create burrows. Hopefully it will improve habitat connectivity and help with local flood storage and alleviation.</p>		✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>PONT (Pori, Natur a Threftadaeth – Grazing, Nature and Heritage) has undertaken various projects in Carmarthenshire in 2018. With the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales the grazing management of Carmel NNR was reviewed and PONT helped to broker a new pony grazing agreement for Carmel Bog.</p> <p>PONT helped to broker grazing agreements for a number of partners locally. Now the Mynydd Mawr Project and Butterfly Conservation at Median Farm and Caeau Ffos Fach have eight cattle and two ponies extensively grazing the sites.</p> <p>With WWT Llanelli, PONT brokered grazing agreements for Shetland sheep resulting in lapwing chicks successfully fledging this year. In addition native cattle now graze the western scrapes and saltmarsh. PONT provided a stock checker recap. PONT are very grateful for the hard work of the WWT staff and volunteers for taking such good care of the livestock.</p> <p>The sand dunes at Pembrey Country Park are being grazed at long last! Forty hardy Glamorgan Welsh Mountain ewes are now grazing the dunes to reduce the dominant grass cover and remove any regrowth of sea buckthorn. PONT provided a short stock checker training for staff and volunteers as well as signage.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



New ditch for water voles



Cow grazing on marshy grassland