

Carmarthenshire Biodiversity Partnership - 2016 Achievements

The Carmarthenshire Biodiversity Partnership is a partnership of organisations concerned with the conservation of the county's species and habitats and is facilitated by the Council's Biodiversity Officer.

The natural environment of Wales supports an amazing variety the 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 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.

In 2016 the [State of Nature Report](#) highlighted that the net loss of biodiversity appears to be ongoing, and despite some success in Wales, such as the recovery of otters and red kites, the loss of biodiversity and the declines in the favourable conservation status of many habitats and designated sites is continuing, even though Welsh, UK and International legislation and policies to combat this are in place.

A healthy natural environment is a vital part of a sustainable, resilient and distinct Carmarthenshire. The work of the partners, and the projects they undertake, help deliver outcomes that contribute to objectives and outcomes of a number of strategies and plans in the county with goals for the natural environment. These include:

- [Carmarthenshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan](#)
- Carmarthenshire County Council's [Corporate Strategy](#)

The action of public bodies within the Partnership can contribute to the delivery of key legislation and strategies emerging from Welsh Government that legislates for the sustainable use of natural resources to secure the long-term well-being of Wales.

- [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales
- [The Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) puts into place a process 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 is currently preparing a Forward Plan to evidence how it will integrate this legislation into the delivery of its services.
- The [Nature Recovery 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.




Local Biodiversity 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 2016, often working together, to conserve and enhance Carmarthenshire's diverse range of habitats and species.






						WG Nature Recovery Plan Objective					
Partner/s	Activity/Five ways of working					Engagement	Species and habitats	Resilience	Tackling key pressures	Evidence and monitoring	
WWT	As part of a long-term vegetation control project at WWT Llanelli, tree and scrub management has been undertaken with the help of volunteers. This has helped increase the chances of breeding success for the threatened lapwing and it is hoped that they will continue to recover as a breeding species on site. With the help of PONT, and following the successful reintroduction of low-intensity cattle grazing to marshy grassland in the reserve, WWT are now planning to introduce sheep grazing as a means to sustainably manage vegetation on the recently cleared land in the longer term, working with local graziers.						✓	✓	✓		
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement						
CCC	To enable CCC's Cross Hands link road scheme, 75 acres of land have been purchased. The land not used for the road, which contains marshy grassland habitat suitable for the marsh fritillary butterfly, will be protected and managed by the Caeau Mynydd Mawr project. PONT (Pori, Natur a Threftadaeth) have helped to find grazing for the site. Glastir funding has enabled coppicing and hedgerow fencing, which will help conserve the hedge. The Cross Hands area is currently experiencing significant development. This makes the green spaces in between all the more important to wildlife and people. The site is crossed by a Public Right of Way, and the project is working with CCC's Rights of Way department to ensure the land is accessible for local residents to enjoy.					✓	✓	✓			
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement						
Coed Cymru	Coed Cymru (CC) officers continue to give help and advice at a wide range of woodland and farm sites including supporting landowners with applications to Glastir Woodland Creation and Glastir Small Grant schemes. As part of a joint project with the Woodland Trust CC Officers have surveyed over 20 Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) totalling more than 110 ha and reports are being prepared for owners. Recommended work includes halo thinning to remove conifers from around old native broadleaved trees and thinning of conifers to encourage ground flora and regeneration of broadleaves. CC Officers have contributed to habitat enhancement projects at various Carmarthenshire County Council sites including Pembrey Country Park, Ynys Dawela Nature Park and Bynea primary school.					✓	✓	✓			
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CCC	Thanks to hard work of many over the years the CCC-owned site Morfa Berwig in Bynea has been declared a Local Nature Reserve. The important species and habitats that it supports, such as the water vole, and the services it provides us will now be safeguarded for the future and. The site provides a wonderful green space with wildlife on the doorstep for all the local communities. Work has proceeded to enhance the species-rich brownfield habitat there as well as maintain the footpaths and bridges. This year a survey identified 299 invertebrate species there, including important pollinators.					✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement						
CCC/ Plantlife	CCC has been continuing its WREN-funded grant work in Pembrey Burrows LNR working in partnership with Plantlife. The foredunes have now been cleared of the invasive sea buckthorn in Pembrey Burrows and Pembrey Country Park and the increased mix of bare sand to vegetative cover will benefit many rare plants, invertebrates and reptiles. Restoration of the open dune habitat restores a habitat of international importance.						✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement						
PONT	PONT (Pori Natur a Threftadaeth) is the conservation grazing organisation for Wales. PONT have been advising on conservation grazing and sourcing livestock for sites in Carmarthenshire during 2016. Sites include WWT Llanelli, Morfa Berwig LNR, Carmel NNR, marsh fritillary sites around Cross Hands and private land throughout the county. Appropriate grazing will ensure that the habitats are more resilient, present less of a fire risk, improve access and increase biodiversity. PONT ran a LANTRA-accredited livestock checkers course at WWT Llanelli. Livestock checkers make conservation grazing easier to achieve on remote sites as they take some of the pressure off livestock graziers.					✓	✓	✓			
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement						

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CCC/ WWBIC	<p>NRW-funded Natural Resource Management Project. In year 2 of this grant we have continued to work with the community in Ferryside, where they have an Environmental Forum. West Wales Biodiversity Information Service have created an online map displaying four categories of natural resources for 85km² around the Ferryside area with a link to the Community Forum's website. An introductory wildlife recording session for the group was run, with expert contributions from the County Plant Recorders. WWBIC's online resources will enable the recording of species, provide access to this and information on natural resources, adding to people's knowledge of their surroundings.</p>				✓				✓	
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement					
CCC	<p>NRW-funded Natural Resource Management Project. The primary school in Bynea suffers from flooding after periods of very heavy rain, and it has been identified that tree planting on the sloping field above the school should help to increase infiltration of water and reduce the surface flows. This will provide a practical example of natural resource management and ecosystems services for the children and the wider community. Seven hundred native trees and shrubs will be planted there by children and local contractors in January.</p>				✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement					
BBCT	<p>Bumblebee Conservation Trust have been working in Carmarthenshire on an HLF-funded project called 'Bee Wild West Wales'. The project aims to get people involved in helping bumblebees. People will be encouraged to go out to record and monitor bumblebees, helping us understand more about how bumblebees fairing. Bumblebee identification training events, survey days, walks, talks are being organised. 'Buzzing Communities' which will involve working with two communities in Carmarthenshire to make their local greenspace more bee friendly. In 2016 BBCT delivered walks and talks on this important group of pollinators in the county. Partners include: CCC, KWT, Sandy Water Park Residents Association, Llanelli Naturalists, Llannon Community Council, NBGW, WTSWW, Dwr Cymru,, NRW, NT- and many more!</p>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement					

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MWRSP	Over 70 volunteers have been helping the Mid Wales Red Squirrel Project in 2016. The increase in the number and geographical spread of reported sightings in mid Wales appears to indicate an increase in the population of reds. Conversely, grey squirrel sightings by Trap Loan Scheme members have decreased in the Focal Site this year. The development of partnerships between MWRSP, forest managers, other UK red squirrel conservation groups, and local organisations has helped increase the impact of conservation efforts. This year, thanks to funding received from the Heritage Lottery Fund, via the UK-wide 'Red Squirrels United' Project, a new post was created for a Grey Squirrel Control Officer. This will be the Red Squirrel Officer to focus on habitat management and outreach/education work.					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement						
WTSWW	Last winter the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales continued their bog restoration at Carmel NNR. The raised bog area was in poor condition, due to historical peat cutting and drainage ditches. Since 2013 WTSWW has used four Caerneddau ponies to graze the bog in the summer months. This has helped with scrub clearance and improved the condition of the habitat. A volunteer work day blocked the ditches using pilings driven in using a large rubber mallet. The pilings have stopped a considerable amount of water from being lost from the bog, helping it to store water and continue to form valuable peat through increasing the amount of sphagnum moss in the bog.					✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement						
ccc/ NBGW/Swansea Uni/ Dyfed Archaeological Trust	The HLF-funded Carmarthenshire Bogs Project is working to explore the history of and celebrate the importance of bog habitats. In 2016 local schools have visited one site to learn about the prehistoric landscape, the people who lived there and the ecology of bog habitats. Local tourism providers visited the sites to explore how they could promote the sites to visitors. Swansea University are analysing a peat core from one of the bogs and radiocarbon dating has shown that the start of the peat formation was dated back to 9700 years ago! Further research will help discover environmental change in Carmarthenshire over the last 10,000 years. It is hoped that the resilience of these habitats will be improved, and that appropriate grazing be reinstated.					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
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CCC/ WTSWW	<p>The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, volunteers and Council rangers worked together at Ynysdawela Nature Park (Brynamman) to manage the meadows there. The nature park is important for wildlife, including the marsh fritillary butterfly and dormouse. WG funding has meant that meadows have been mown and encroaching scrub has been cut back from field edges. This sensitive management will help the flower-rich meadows to flourish. It is important to maintain these naturally damp grasslands, as they act like a sponge, soaking up rainwater and releasing it slowly into streams and rivers. The park is well used by dog walkers, runners and families and work to improve some of the paths during the winter should help ensure people can carry on reaping the benefits of such a special and attractive site.</p>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement						
ccc	<p>The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 puts into place a process 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 is currently preparing a Forward Plan to evidence how it will integrate this legislation into the delivery of its services. Workshops are being held with officers throughout the council to explore what is being done already to meet the requirements of the legislation, what else should the council be doing to embed the legislation into working practices.</p>					✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement						
Carmar- thenshire Meadows Group	<p>This year the Carmarthenshire Meadows Group has gone from strength to strength with over approx. 60 meadow owners attending the last meeting. The group is now looking to formalise itself and is working to put together walks, talks and training events for 2017. The opportunity to meet other meadow owners and share experiences has been welcomed by those who attended meetings. Now a group of volunteers is working together to develop a county-wide community that supports each other to improve the diversity of plants, fungi and animals on meadows, large or small, across Carmarthenshire</p>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
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