

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 Section 6
The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty :
Review as at December 2020

Acton Community Council

Introduction and Context

Acton Community Council is one of four Wrexham Town Centre Community Councils created in 1985. It owns one building, the Maesydre Power House and has no other landholdings. The Council serves approximately 13,659 residents and 5795 households (based on the 2011 census). The precept for 2020- 21 is £169,500.

The Council is committed to encouraging and promoting sustainability goals and practices whenever possible. It seeks to encourage the retention of green open spaces, mature trees and green corridors for wildlife, use of native plants and a broad spectrum of tree species.

Situated within the five wards of the Community of Acton:

- Acton Park is owned and managed by Wrexham County Borough Council and has Tennis Courts and a bowling green within its curtilage. The Community Council funds a Seasonal Park Ranger Post through a Service Level Agreement arrangement with Wrexham County Borough Council
- The area consists of mainly mixed density residential property and has some open spaces included within them, mature tree planting schemes and several estates have deep grass verges
- It includes part of the town centre shopping area with a large supermarket and a Civic Quarter containing the Law Courts, Former Police Station site, RWF Memorial, the Memorial Hall Swimming Baths and Peace Gardens at Bodhyfryd that is bordered by Holt Street, Chester Street and Powell Road.
- There are four Primary/Junior Schools within the Community and one Secondary school together with the former Groves High School site that is currently vacant.
- There is an Owain Glyndwr protected open space known locally as the Spider Park and St John's Field
- The Former Rugby Playing Field at Dean Road/ Holt Road is owned and managed by Glyndwr University
- A natural informal open space known as Borrass Bog borders Bieston Close, Huntsman's Corner and the Llanypwll Link road
- The Nine Acre Field is a recreation ground with a Pavilion owned by Wrexham County Borough Council
- There are Children's playing fields situated at Aran Road, Ffordd Garmonydd and Acton Park that are owned by Wrexham County Borough Council and part funded by the Community Council under a Service Level agreement arrangement. There are also private developer funded play areas on the Redrow estate off Holt Road
- The Green at Little Acton is a large open space where the Little Acton Community Centre is sited
- The Acton Community Resource Centre is owned and managed by Wrexham County Borough Council and part funded by the Community Council under a Service Level Agreement arrangement.

Action Report

How the Council assists biodiversity (through functions with regard to land management, grant funding, education activities)

Please note in respect of Public services delivery - The Council is not subject to the Well-being of Future Generations Act as its precept is below £200,000

Action carried out to:	Example	Monitored by
Embed biodiversity into decision making and procurement	Reflected in the commitment to biodiversity and natural areas in its response to the Wrexham Unitary development Plan Taken into account biodiversity considerations when responding to planning applications	Comments made in documents Consideration of biodiversity demonstrated in consultation responses and objections to planning applications
Raise awareness of biodiversity and its importance	The Seasonal Park Ranger is required to produce annual surveys and a report on biodiverse activities within Acton Park. The work has not taken place during 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic Supported Friends of Acton Park and the Angling Club in their work to improve the Park and public participation by Children, School Groups and other local groups to use the Park as a resource	Through Feedback from the Park Ranger, Friends group , Council members and residents Recording number of people taking part in activities
Safeguard principal species and habitats	Championed the case of the mature "bird and bee" oak tree as part of the woodland trust tree of the Year competition in 2019	Submission document
Restore and create habitats and resilient ecological works	Encourage Wrexham Biodiversity and Planning Officers to maintain and manage habitats and expand ecology via planning comments	Planning Comments
Tackle negative factors ie reduce pollution, use nature based solutions address invasive species	Reduction in use of pesticides at Ffordd Garmonydd Play area and Acton Park Play area and seeking alternate solutions such as replacing the bark surfacing in the fenced area of Ffordd Garmonydd to prohibit the growth of weeds	To provide funding for alternate proposals through Service Level Agreement
Use improved and share evidence	Data collected as part of an Annual Wildflower and Bat Surveys in Acton park will be forwarded to	Submission of information to Wrexham County Borough Council

	the Ecology Officer	
Support capacity and/or other organisations	<p>Worked in partnership with Arboricultural Officer in supporting TPO.</p> <p>Provided funding for Seasonal Park Ranger post and Acton Play areas and for a Young People project to work with 8-18 year olds providing informal environmental education opportunities.</p> <p>Made provision within the Council's budget for Environmental schemes within the Community Streetscene</p>	<p>Outcome of Planning and TPO applications</p> <p>Performance Reporting under the Service Level Agreements provide evidence for positive biodiversity benefits</p> <p>Amount of money spent</p>

Review of s6 duty

What has worked well?

The Service Level Agreements with Wrexham County Borough Council and the Caia Park Partnership have enabled a focus on biodiversity matters and facilitated informal education of young people in growing their own plants and vegetables.

Financial support to the Friends of Acton Park and the Angling Club have improved the biodiversity within the Park and improvements to the management and water quality of the lake has improved resilience and been able to identify blue green algae at an early stage. A grant to purchase a water aerator helped prevent the development of blue algae on the lake. Further purchases to improve the oxygen quality at the lake in Acton Park are planned by the Angling Club.

There has been a much higher footfall in the Park during the lockdown period. This has resulted in the biodiversity of the flora and fauna at the Park being enjoyed and appreciated by a broader range of Acton Community residents and other visitors.

What have the barriers been?

The Council owns no land and can only recommend and encourage other land owners in the Community to embrace biodiversity

During 2020, the Covid Pandemic and the severe Lock Down restrictions have had a severe impact on some of the planned Service Level Agreement work. In particular, despite providing funding for the Seasonal Park Ranger in 2020, there was no Ranger appointed in 2020. Accordingly this year there have been no annual surveys of the Wildflowers and Bats in Acton Park. Previously the results of such surveys were sent to the Wrexham Ecology Officer. The Lockdown has resulted in School/ Group activities being severely curtailed within the Park and with the Restrictions there has been loss of opportunities to carry out further tree studies, nature walks looking at birds, bird boxes and significant tree species: Grass cutting at the Park has left some open ground for the growth of wildflower meadow. The Council is supportive of the Friends of Acton Park but without the Seasonal Ranger in post, the Restrictions of social distancing and sporadic anti-social behaviour within the Park, any work usually funded by the Community Council within Acton Park has not been as proactive and productive as in previous years .

What will you change?

Work with the Wrexham Local Biodiversity Officer and seek advice whenever necessary. Will seek to encourage the planting up of hardscape/paved areas and publicise the work of Groundwork and other ecology groups on the Council’s website. The Community Council has established a task and finish group to liaise with other organisations working within the Park and bring forward proposals to support Wrexham County Borough Council in its management and continuing improvement of the biodiversity of ecosystems within the Park at Acton.

Members of the Community Council have referred to the importance of tackling negative factors in respect of emissions from cars and in particular the daily car movements outside the five existing schools in the Acton Community. The Community Council is concerned that the present and any proposed School’s footprint and footfall should not adversely affect the Biodiversity and resilience of the immediate vicinity and environment around each of the Schools. The Community Council will continue to support Acton Residents’ wish to retain green open spaces within the Acton Community and in particular the 9 Acre Field and Dean Road Playing Fields and will promote the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems within the Acton Community at every opportunity.

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 reporting back to the Council through a regular agenda item at Council meetings.

The s6 plan will continue to be developed and reviewed in response to such reporting and any other evidence or information that may be made available to the Council. At the time of Publication of this report there is no specific time or date set for the plan to be reviewed but this will be done in the next twelve months.

Signed for Acton Community Council

KEVIN ROBERTS
Chair

CAROLE ROBERTS
Clerk to the Council

Date December 2020