

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 Section 6 -**The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty : Review as at December 2022****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 2022-23 is £169,000.

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 five 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 Community Council supported its designation as a protected open space.
- The Former Rugby Playing Field at Dean Road/ Holt Road is owned and managed by Glyndwr University, although regrettably this Open space has now received Planning Permission appeal to be developed for Housing.
- 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 and has this year been renamed as the Queen Elizabeth II field and is to be protected from development.
- 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	<p>Reflected in the commitment to biodiversity and natural areas in its response to the Wrexham Unitary development Plan</p> <p>Taken into account biodiversity considerations when responding to planning applications</p>	<p>Comments made in documents</p> <p>Consideration of biodiversity demonstrated in consultation responses and objections to planning applications</p> <p>Financial support given to Residents Group opposing the development of 9 Acre Field</p>
Raise awareness of biodiversity and its importance	<p>The Seasonal Park Ranger is required to produce annual surveys and a report on biodiverse activities within Acton Park. The Ranger post in 2021 was extended by six months. Winter survey work of trees, birds etc is to be undertaken</p> <p>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</p> <p>The Council has provided financial support to enable the extension of this Agreement to enable the Ranger to be employed for three days a week over twelve months</p>	<p>Through Feedback from the Park Ranger, Friends group , Council members and residents</p> <p>Formal detailed Reports from the Ranger to the Community Council are reported to the Council meetings</p> <p>Daily and weekly activities are highlighted on the Council's Facebook page by the Park Ranger</p> <p>Recording number of people taking part in activities</p> <p>Recording Biodiversity within the Park</p>
Safeguard principal species and habitats	<p>Champion mature trees such as the "bird and bee" oak tree.</p> <p>The Ranger now carries out general maintenance within the Park</p>	<p>Submission documents and Council's Facebook Page</p>
Restore and create habitats and resilient ecological works	<p>Encourage Wrexham Biodiversity and Planning Officers to maintain and manage habitats and expand ecology via planning comments</p>	<p>Planning Comments</p>
Tackle negative factors ie reduce pollution, use nature based solutions address invasive species	<p>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</p>	<p>To provide funding for alternate proposals through Service Level Agreement</p>
Use improved and share evidence	<p>Any Data collected as part of an Annual Wildflower and Bat Surveys in Acton park will be forwarded to the Ecology Officer.</p>	<p>Submission of information to Wrexham County Borough Council</p>

	Winter Surveys within Acton Park from 2021 will form a baseline for future years and full year data /evidence	
Support capacity and/or other organisations	Work in partnership with Arboricultural Officer in supporting TPO applications. Provided funding for Annual 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. Made provision within the Council's budget for Environmental schemes within the Community Streetscene	Outcome of Planning and TPO applications Performance Reporting under the Service Level Agreements provide evidence for positive biodiversity benefits . In 2022/23 the Ranger Post will be funded for the full 12 months Amount of money spent

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 by the Angling Club have been supported financially by the Community Council..

There is a much higher footfall in the Park since the Covid 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. A reinvigorated Friends of the Park Group now works closely with the Park Ranger in helping to maintain all areas of the Park

The 2022 Park Ranger has been proactive in publicising the work, surveys and tree trails within the Park via the Council's Facebook Page . The extended duration of the Ranger post has enabled events to be held in the Park throughout the whole year and attendance at the events has been well supported with a multitude of opportunities to promote and assist biodiversity within the Park.

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

Over the last three year period particularly during 2020, the Covid Pandemic and severe Lock Down restrictions impacted negatively on data collection and general work/ publicity/tours within the Park as the Seasonal Park Ranger post for 2020, was not filled. In 2021 detailed surveys of the Wildflowers and Bats in Acton Park were carried out and the results of such surveys should be sent by the Ranger to the Wrexham Ecology Officer. The impact of the Covid pandemic resulted in School/ Group activities being severely curtailed within the Park. The Restrictions saw a 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 during 2020 several paths had become overgrown and undergrowth has had to be severely cut back during the autumn of 2021. With the expanded Ranger post in 2021 and 2022/23 there has been ability to recommence engagement with local schools and groups and routine of the Park has taken place. The pandemic lockdown saw a greater footfall within the Park.

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 Councils website. The Community Council will seek 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.

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. Over the last three year period the Council has reviewed this duty and published its Plan on its website www.actoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk

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



Chair

Date 13 December 2022



Clerk to the Council