Cyngor Tref Pontyclun Town Council

A Report of Actions relevant to Section 6 of Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Winter 2025 update

Section 6 of this Act requires that Pontyclun Town Council seeks to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of its functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems.

This is a report on the actions of the Council and its partners which are relevant to this requirement.

In fulfilling this requirement, the Council recognises that its role is to facilitate and harness the contribution of many others including:

- Pontyclun residents,
- The volunteers of Pontyclun Environment Group, Pontyclun Community Garden and Pontyclun Men's Shed.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Pontyclun businesses.

Information about some of the groups can be found in appendix 1 below. Appendix 2 details information about activities undertaken with various groups and organisations to promote biodiversity and sustainability. Many of these projects are ongoing.

Council actions

Each year the Council seeks to increase the actions we take to promote biodiversity and increase sustainability by supporting the environment where we can.

The details below outline the new actions started in each of the last three years. Where successful these are then built into our normal operations in future years.

2025

1. 2 large pollinator friendly planters installed in Cefn y Hendy using community volunteers to build and plant
2. Funding provided for volunteers to build and plant up their own planters in their street

2024

1. A large bug hotel was installed by the Community centre in Pontyclun. This construction project was completed by Pontyclun Scouts
2. A Water Butt was installed at the Community centre to provide water for the floral arrangements there

3. We supported a “Computer recycling week” offering residents an opportunity to drop off various computer equipment for professional refurbishment and reuse
4. 2 additional pollinator friendly hanging baskets were added to our arrangements.
5. Working with a dementia support group a large, raised bed was installed at Café 50 and planted up with pollinator friendly plants
6. 3 New planters were created and installed using pollinator friendly plants. 2 extra existing planters were planted with pollinator friendly plants.
7. In conjunction with a local respite home and TFW we installed 7 new planters in and around Brynsadler which have been planted with pollinator friendly plants
8. For the first time the Council has also agreed an environmental action plan.
9. We launched a Keep Wales Tidy community litter picking hub.
10. With volunteers we planted over 1200 pollinator friendly spring bulbs in the Community
11. With a large group of volunteers we worked at YGGG school to refresh and make reusable around 10 large beds which the school will use for environmental activities with pupils

2023

12. A Clothes bank was installed in our Car park. This recycled over 1 tonne of material in its first year.
13. We supported delivery of a Swishing clothes swap event in Café 50
14. For the first time we facilitated the sorting of waste at the Christmas fayre into recyclable and non-recyclable
15. One of our floral planters was planted up with mainly pollinator friendly plants similar to our hanging baskets. This was a trial to see if it could work ahead of a wider implementation from 2024
16. Working with Pontyclun primary school a new planter has been placed by the library. This will be looked after by the school’s children and planted up with wildflowers in spring 2024. Funds have been earmarked to have similar planters at YGGG school should they wish to do the same.

Regular actions

<u>Ivor Woods</u>

The Council owns and maintains 5 acres of woodland at Ivor Woods. Its woodland management is intended to increase biodiversity and local eco-systems. Where safe, fallen branches and trees are left ‘in-situ’ or cut branches are placed in piles to encourage wildlife. Where possible, the canopy is managed to control light and encourage biodiversity.

In 2023 due to increasing Ash dieback a significant part of these woods had to be closed to the public. Whilst we will deal with the issue over the next few years this will allow biodiversity to develop whilst the area is closed

<u>Public footpaths</u>

The Council, as an agent of RCT Council, maintains over 20 miles of public right of ways. In managing overgrowth and clearing litter, avoiding chemical interventions, the Council fosters biodiversity and local eco-systems.

Floral displays

Our floral displays mainly use “Pollinator friendly” flowers in our hanging baskets.

The Community Council has a ‘bee friendly’ designation.

Recycling/Reuse

We promote recycling on our social media and offer recycling bags to residents on behalf of RCT CBC

We run a jigsaw and book lending scheme and host a clothes recycling bin in our car park.

To encourage recycling the Council ran a Crisp packet recycling scheme in the Community with drop off locations at Café 50 and the Pontyclun Library.

Our Administration

With regards to its administration, paper purchased for use in the Office is PEFC certified from sustainably managed forests and controlled sources. It is also Chlorine free.

The Council replaces light bulbs with LED ones when then need changing and in 2018 replaced the bulk of the lighting in Café 50 with LED lights, reducing the number of light bulbs by nearly 60 during the process.

The soft plastic we generate is sent for recycling – approx. 1 or 2 bags a month

We have implemented the new waste management regulations across our activities

Habitat management

The Council seeks to promote and encourage biodiversity and habitats for pollinators and insects. To do this we have taken the following actions.

1. Since 2017 we have operated a Hay cut regime in a section of our park. This covers over 1k square meters.
2. In 2020 we started to leave the area of ground to the side of Café 50 in Pontyclun uncut (approx. 3m by 10m)
3. In 2020 we started to leave an area of ground at the Hollies uncut. (This area is about 600 square meters)
4. In 2019 we were asked by residents to look at installing additional fencing/gates at the park and as a result we planted new sections of hedging at the park boundary (rather than metal or wooden fencing)
5. In 2020 we signed up to the Hedgehog Heroes scheme

Appendix 1

Pontyclun Environment Group

The Council supports and work closely with the Environment Group.

This is a group of residents whose activities include:

- Coordinating the input of volunteer residents in undertaking litter picks throughout the Pontyclun Community recognising that litter free areas host biodiversity and foster community appreciation of local eco-systems
- Organising local walks with the county ecologist and other experts so that residents can better understand and appreciate the diversity of the local eco-systems.
- Arranging various environmental events across Pontyclun
- Promoting environment issues and actions in the area.

Pontyclun Community Garden

The Council supports and work closely with the Community Garden

Pontyclun Community Garden is a group of volunteer residents who have established and maintained a community garden within the Pontyclun Park which is provided by the Council.

The Community Garden includes.

- Insect friendly flowers and vegetables
- Bug hotel
- Bees nest
- Composting

Groesfaen Gwyrdd

We supported this new volunteer led organisation in Groesfaen to set up and start activities in 2020.

Their purpose is to make Groesfaen a better place to live by taking action to improve the environment and encourage local participation.

We supported them to acquire a “Pollinator Garden” under the Local Places for Nature scheme and to plant several Pollinator friendly bushes and flowers on local waste land which has now been transformed into a valuable “Community Garden”.

Men's shed, Pontyclun

This group of volunteers set up in 2023, undertakes several activities that support the environment

These include

1. Making bird houses, bat boxes, hedgehog houses and selling to the community
2. Regular monthly litter picks
3. Running an allotment

Appendix 2 – long term projects and actions with partners

Working with Local Schools

The Community Councils seeks to support and work closely with local schools. For example,

Refill Pontyclun

Pontyclun school children made agreements with local retailers that tap water will be provided to children bringing their own bottles. The effect is to reduce the use of plastic and reduce the littering of plastic bottles.

The Community Council fomalised these arrangements through the launch of a "Refill Pontyclun" scheme. This scheme currently has 21 local businesses as members.

Pontyclun Christmas Tree

In 2019 to encourage discussion on and the reuse and recycling of plastic waste the Council decided to decorate the Community Christmas Tree with waste plastic.

Local schools were asked to create garlands or paint empty plastic bottles which were then used to decorate our community tree.

This generated significant comments locally bringing recycling issues to the fore.

Working with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

The Council seeks to support and work closely with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

RCT Council has innovated in the development of a grass cutting and collecting machine which allows vegetation a long growing season before it is cut and collected to foster local eco-systems and encourage greater biodiversity.

The Council worked with RCT Council to identify and reserve sites for this 'hay cut' regime. The sites include:

- A half-acre of land along the perimeter of Pontyclun Park

- 5 acres of land on the top end of the cycle path which runs from Pontyclun Railway Station to the A473
- 20 acres of land enclosed by Ffordd Cefn yr Hendy.
- Land in on Cowbridge Road, Talygarn and by the motorway Talygarn Drive

We have asked them to extend this from 2025 with additional no mow May areas