

Un Llais Cymru



One Voice Wales

# The 5 Pillars of Nature Action!

**01**

Create and protect  
habitats



**05**

Spread the word



**02**

Provide forage



**04**

Create connections



**03**

Provide water



Community and Town Council  
Nature Recovery Guide

# Why nature matters

There are many simple but effective ways to support nature recovery in the spaces we're responsible for. Large or small, urban or rural - whatever space you have, you can help nature thrive!

## Nature shapes our lives

Biodiversity is key to our health, well-being, and survival. We value biodiversity for what it provides to us, and for the value it has. Without it we would have no food, fuel, shelter, or medicine. Healthy ecosystems also provide other crucial services such as pollination, seed dispersal, climate regulation, water purification, nutrient cycling, natural flood defences and control of agricultural pests.



## Adding value to our local spaces

Everyday residents' shop, commute, relax or just take a walk in their local space. Nature can add to their day, reducing air and noise pollution, and providing places for tranquillity and beauty.

## And to our community

Nature also provides us with opportunities for volunteering, exercise, recreation, and family days out. These can help people meet their neighbours, build social cohesion and counter loneliness, and benefit our mental and physical health.





# 1. Create and protect habitats!

Enhance your green spaces! Freshly cut grass on amenity land or in churchyards can look attractive, but it provides very little food or shelter for wildlife. Mowing less often, or mowing different areas in turn, can help wildflowers or herbs grow and flower in places where they're usually outcompeted by grass.



Burial grounds can be transformed into meadow areas and wildlife feeding stations.

A change in mowing routine by Llanelli Town Council created this valuable habitat.

## Leave it for longer

Cutting fields or other amenity land later in the season allows flowers to set seed and provides shelter for a range of species. If it's not practical to let all areas grow throughout the seasons, consider where pathways or trimmed areas are needed and leave the edges to grow wild. You can then have the best of both worlds as with the burial grounds above.

Ask contractors to change mower settings to leave grass a little higher. Even this small change allows wildflowers to grow. [Plantlife - No Mow May](#)

Once mowing is complete, remember to remove cuttings!

When these decay they release nutrients back into the ground, which increases soil fertility. This deters our native wildflowers that prefer poorer soils.

[It's for Them campaign: stakeholder toolkit](#) | [GOV.WALES](#)

## Plant (the right) tree!

And if you have space...

The [Tiny Forests](#), [Stump Up for Trees](#), and the [Urban Long Forest](#) programmes are all great sources of inspiration and advice on how you can boost our native trees and hedgerows.







Standing deadwood, leaf piles and logs are important habitats for many invertebrates and fungi. As stumps and branches decay, they also feed precious nutrients back to the soil.

Ask contractors to leave dead wood in situ to provide habitats or work with local tree surgeons to set up log habitats in parks, burial grounds and other green spaces.

## Logging on

### Rock it out!

Piles of stones and rock piles make excellent habitats for invertebrates and amphibians. You may find the odd small mammal there too!

Drystone walls also provide nooks and crannies for insects to hibernate and breed.

### Green up your infrastructure

Public buildings such as community halls, council buildings and even public toilets and bus stops can also provide habitats for wildlife. You could encourage nature by:

Installing a green roof on local toilet buildings or bus stops:  
[Biodiversity and green roofs - green roof service in action \(livingroofs.org\)](http://livingroofs.org)

Building bug hotels with school or community groups.  
[Buglife – Creating Habitat for Bees and Bugs](http://buglife.org.uk)

Putting up bird and bat boxes on buildings or trees - especially in areas where natural nesting spaces are scarce.  
[RSPB – Ultimate Guide to Nest Boxes.](http://rspb.org.uk)

Just remember to plant or build at different heights to attract and shelter a wide variety of visitors!

Why not become a Bee Friendly community!  
[Bee Friendly Scheme](http://bee-friendly.org)





## 2. Provide forage

Nature has evolved to provide food for wildlife throughout the seasons. Being overly tidy, removing seedheads or fallen fruit or sometimes just being over enthusiastic with our pruning can deprive wildlife of food as well as shelter.



Reduce the commute!

Planting different types of plants in clusters can also save insects from having to travel too far between meals.

Plant native bushes with berries or fruit to feed insects, birds and mammals. This can also provide free food for the community!

A great way to do this is to plant fruit bushes in beds close to other facilities. Make sure to label the plants well and let the community know they can help themselves.

**Go native**

Let garden waste and fallen leaves decompose naturally feeding the soil as well as countless invertebrates and insects that in turn provide food for birds and bats. This can be tucked away under shrubs or bushes or collected in a corner if it looks too unsightly.

**Waste not,  
want not**

Provide a 'calendar of food' by planting species that flower or fruit at different times of the year.

[Friends of the Earth – Bee friendly plants for every season.](#)

**'Tis the season**

Stop using slug pellets!



Stop using pesticides such as slug pellets in public areas and ask your community to consider this also.

Slug pellets are poisonous to many species and they deprive the animals that would usually eat the impacted species of a food source.



### 3. Provide water

Half a million ponds have been lost from the UK according to North Wales Wildlife Trust. We can help replace them! Even small ponds can support a wealth of wildlife and can provide crucial 'stepping stones' to other ponds, streams or waterways for freshwater species.

By undertaking an assessment of your large green spaces with a local ecologist you can find where water collects naturally and where you can locate a pond or network of ponds with appropriate landscaping and planting. If this isn't an option, you can create a raised pond, which will allow the community to observe water wildlife. Attenuation ponds can reduce sitting water on playing surfaces and paths whilst creating habitat at the same time.



Insects, amphibians and invertebrates will all benefit from this pond, wetland and bug habitats created by Mumbles Community Council.

#### Drink up!

We all need to drink water, even birds and other animals!

A great way to do this is by adding a bird bath or mini pond with a shallow or sloping end for small mammals to safely escape.

Think about how you can incorporate small watering areas into your public spaces.

This would be a great activity to do with the local school or community and provide a focal point for residents to enjoy sitting on a nearby bench.

[Make a splash with water \(rspb.org.uk\)](https://www.rspb.org.uk)







Did you know that a bee colony can drink up to two pints of water to cool down on a hot day and dilute honey to feed larvae?

## Water features

Shallow containers filled with pebbles can provide water for bees and other pollinators.

## Across the pond

Containers or natural ponds provide a habitat for frogs and newts and places for insects such as dragonflies to lay eggs.

Make sure there are sloping slides or ramps for any creatures that fall in to get out again! Larger ponds can also support resident or migratory wetland birds.

Ditches, scrapes (shallow, more temporary water bodies) and reedbeds are also important wetland habitats.





## 4. Create connections

Nature can't thrive in isolation. To create resilient ecosystems rich in life its essential to connect habitats through wildlife corridors, feeding stations and "stepping stones".



Green infrastructure like this green fencing helps to connect habitats in urban areas

### Join the dots

You can help join up our wild spaces by creating 'wildlife corridors' and feeding stations.

A good starting point is to look at an aerial map of your area to see where the habitats are located and think about how you can join the dots.

Consider planting hedges to connect habitats or create mini stepping stone habitats in your parks and greens. You could even do this as a community consultation or school activity.

### Hedgehog highways and rodent routes

Check your park fences! Do they allow small mammals to move through?

Make sure there are gaps or enough room at the bottom of a fence to allow hedgehogs and other small mammals to easily range through your area to find food and mates. Ask your community to leave gaps in fencing too to create hedgehog highways everywhere.

[Home - Hedgehog Street](#)







Make the most of existing habitats and wild spaces.

Improve existing spaces through effective habitat management. Check what grows well in your area that also has wildlife value and plant more of it to extend the range of habitat that wildlife can enjoy.

Remove unwanted species that may be crowding out beneficial plants and keep areas clear of harmful litter.

**Good  
housekeeping**

Provide 'buffers' to existing wild spaces in our towns and communities to protect them from being trampled and reduce pressures on resident wildlife.

**Buffer zones**

Find opportunities to create new sites in and around our towns and communities.

Overgrown spaces and 'waste ground' can already be valuable to biodiversity, particularly species that thrive on poorer soils.

Don't rush to clear or 'tidy' these patches. Ask local groups to help identify the wildlife species that live there and see if there are actions that could help them do better.

Learning about the wildlife on their doorstep can often help residents see these spaces in a new light.

**Eyesores into  
appetisers!**





## 5. Spread the word

The Wellbeing of Wales report 2022 found that over three-quarters of children feel that everyone has a part to play in protecting the environment. We can encourage more action and reduce eco-anxiety by showing that action for nature recovery is happening.



Friendly and informative signage can engage and educate visitors on the need for nature recovery - and the action that you are taking.

Encourage community groups to use the council's [precept](#) to coordinate activities that bring people closer to nature such as guided nature walks or wildlife photography sessions.

Encourage citizen science activities by engaging with the local [Biodiversity Records Centre](#) to coordinate nature recording events.

### Community action

Invite local wildlife trusts, other nature-focused groups and residents to help improve buildings and spaces through ideas or activities. Along with creative suggestions you will also bring on board local ambassadors to help promote your nature goals.

Installing wildlife benches or cameras can also be great ways to draw people in - to learn more and spread the message further.

### Strength in numbers

Consider having a small grant scheme available to the community for nature-based projects - especially where these can help meet Council strategies or priorities.

Funding can be hard to come by and even small sums can help ideas take flight.

### Nature Funding







Cwmaman Town  
Council community  
volunteers creating  
habitats for nature

Make use of available signage - or create your own to explain why you are taking action and how others can get involved.

This helps educate visitors to each space and children and adults alike can learn about different species on their way to school and the shop.

**Read all  
about it**

Share your progress with the community through local newsletters or other communications. Include photos of the people, plants and places that are benefitting from the improvements.

Tell residents what you are doing and how they can get involved. If you can provide resources and guidance on how you can multiply your impact.

**Share with the  
community**



Share information - and tools - to help chosen campaigns. For example, giving out hedgehog hotel kits.

Include a calendar of environmental events on your website and consider publicising them each month.

Including them on meeting agendas is also a helpful reminder.

**Natures  
calendar**







## The 5 pillars can help guide your actions

An important part of our role as Community and Town Councillors is to recognise the 'Protected and Priority Species' found in our communities and provide opportunities for them to thrive. The 5 pillars can work:

**With any species... in any location!**



# Next steps

The 5 pillars can be applied anywhere!



- ✓ Burial grounds
- ✓ Bus shelters
- ✓ Village halls / community buildings
- ✓ Toilets

- ✓ Local footpaths and pavements
- ✓ Markets
- ✓ Playing fields and open spaces
- ✓ Allotments

And they help us to meet our statutory obligations.

We all have a legal duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity [under Section 6 of the Environment Act](#). Any actions we take can be included in our 3-yearly reports to demonstrate compliance.



Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 - Section 6  
The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty  
Reporting on Section 6 - Community and Town Councils

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 - Section 6  
The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2022

Name of Town or Community Council:

Introduction and Context

- A short description of the Council [by functions and context](#) in relation to how it could help biodiversity through functions with regard to management, plant funding, education activities, for example:
  - spatial scale and place (e.g. how much land the council manages?)
  - public service delivery (e.g. is it a public service?)
  - Generations (e.g. 100 years)

Action Report

Action	Monitored by
- monitor and document biodiversity	
- raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance	
- safeguard principal species and habitats	
- restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks	
- tackle negative factors for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature-based solutions, address invasive species	

Section 6 Report

Un Llais Cymru / One Voice Wales 2022

## Who else can help?

Many of us work with or are part of our Local Nature Partnerships. We can support them to achieve local goals and targets under the local authority's Nature Recovery Action Plan.

And by working for the well-being of nature and our communities we fulfil our obligations under the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

**Find more information and sources of funding, advice and support from:**



## Remember you are not alone!

Working together One Voice Wales and your [Your Local Nature Partnership \(LNP\) coordinator](#) can support you to embed the '5 Pillars' in your spaces as part of their visions of a "Wales rich in nature for everyone".

One Voice Wales is able to support all Community and Town Councils with advice, resources and training and to signpost you to the grants and support schemes available in your area.



This resource was produced for One Voice Wales by [Cynnal Cymru - Sustain Wales \(Registered Charity 1158496\)](#), a charity providing advice, training and connections to accelerate progress towards sustainability, with funding from Welsh Government.

