



**Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6
The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty
Reporting on Section 6**

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

Name of Town or Community Council: Maesteg Town Council

Introduction and Context

Maesteg Town Council (MTC) is nestled in the heart of the Llynfi Valley and surrounded by the neighbouring villages of Llangynwyd, Garth, Cwmfelin, Nantyyffyllon and Caerau. MTC falls within Bridgend County Borough (BCBC) and lies at the northernmost end of the Llynfi Valley, close to the border with Neath Port Talbot County Borough. Historically MTC was part of Glamorgan, the growth of the town started with the opening of ironworks in the 1820s, and 1830s.

Once a coal mining area, the last pit closed in 1985. With the decline of the coal industry and, more recently, the closure of one large factory producing cosmetics and another manufacturing vehicle components, the valley has become a residential/dormitory area for the Port Talbot, Bridgend and Cardiff journey to work areas.

MTC consists of 4 Wards (Caerau, Maesteg East, Maesteg West and Nantyyffyllon); According to the website Understanding Welsh Places, <http://www.understandingwelshplaces.wales/en/compare/W38000016/> Maesteg has a population of 18,888 inhabitants, of which 13,322 (figure from BCBC) are registered electors.

MTC provides a range of services to its local communities, some of which have an impact on biodiversity. These include:

- Responsibility for floral displays and hanging baskets within the town
- Rights of Way (ROW) Agency Agreement with BCBC to maintain 66.75km of ROW.
- Funding: MTC gives grants to local groups and organisations in the MTC area, which may include grants to improve the biodiversity and sustainability of various sites
- meet the well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- We promote sustainability and biodiversity by pursuing sustainability goals and sustainable practices wherever possible. – Recently upgraded boilers within the building to more economical boilers.
- The precept for 2022/23 was £330,919.00
- Planning consultee - As a statutory consultee, active discussions have also taken place with developers at the early planning stages to ensure biodiversity

is taken into account when building new homes within the community. This action is in line with the recent Planning Policy (Wales) Act 2016 which states: "planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or population of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity".

Action Report

Action carried out to:	Examples of action taken/in progress	Monitored by:
<p>embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement</p>	<p>Spring bulbs are planted throughout MTC boundary area by CMO, local community groups and organisations. This enhances the area for local biodiversity and visually enhances the Town.</p> <p>Contract procured with a local contractor to maintain 11 street planters along Commercial Street and Talbot Street and the flower beds at the entrance to Garn Road during the Winter and Summer. Additionally in the Summer the contractor maintains and waters 96 hanging baskets located within the Town centre. In 2022 additional 2 street planters were purchased for Maesteg East Ward. These street planters and hanging baskets provide an essential outlet for the pollinators within the area, which in turn assists other biodiversity e.g. bees / butterflies & moths feed on the pollen and nectar and these are then in turn eaten by other animals along the food chain.</p> <p>Whilst discussing planning applications, effects on biodiversity is also taken into account when providing responses.</p> <p>MTC works alongside the Llynfi Woodland Group to maintain an area that is part of the Natural Resources Wales Spirit of the Llynfi Valley Woodland. Part of this area is cut as part of the ROW agreements and in 2022 the CMO assisted on several volunteer days. More information on the</p>	

	<p>area can be found: https://naturalresources.wales/days-out/places-to-visit/south-east-wales/spirit-of-llynfi-woodland-near-bridgend/?lang=en</p>	
raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance	<p>MTC have the following links on the website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llynfi Valley Walks • Llynfi River Care Group • Friends of Maesteg Welfare Park • Spirit of Llynfi Woodland 	
safeguard principal species and habitats	<p>Ensured no negative impacts on protected species.</p> <p>Respond to requests to cut down trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders.</p>	
restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks	<p>Maesteg has a historic industrial heritage, many of these areas have now been reclaimed by nature. There are many examples of this that include the Maesteg Washery site that now forms part of the Natural Resources Wales Spirit of the Llynfi Valley Woodland, National Cycle Network trail (https://www.sustrans.org.uk/find-a-route-on-the-national-cycle-network/llynfi-valley-trail/)</p>	
tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature based solutions, address invasive species	<p>MTC is not a waste or highway authority. It does not have any direct responsibility for these matters. However, its members are active locally and several of them volunteer as litter pickers on a regular basis.</p> <p>MTC members are keen to improve local spaces and many are involved as volunteers in several groups within the area including: Llynfi Valley Rivercare Group, Llynfi Woodland Group, Maesteg Welfare Park.</p> <p>They also report any issues of concern about pollution etc to the County Borough Council.</p> <p>MTC do not currently use pesticides whilst maintaining ROW.</p>	

use improve and share evidence	This action report has been produced and all MTC members have been asked to contribute and get involved. The report will be published online. This heightens awareness among communities and promotes the use and sharing of evidence.	
support capacity and/or other organisations	<p>MTC supports local groups and organisations with providing spring bulbs for planting.</p> <p>The CMO has assisted in some volunteer days.</p> <p>There are S137 Grants available for all community groups and organisations.</p>	

Review of s6 duty

What has worked well?

- MTC try and work with local contractors to reduce carbon footprints.
- MTC have installed various ecologically friendly lighting / boilers / emergency lighting within our Council building to reduce our carbon footprint.
- MTC provide biodegradable dog waste bags that are available at several outlets free of charge

What have the barriers been?

Lack of knowledge of the Act and the s6 duty

What will you change?

- Add to the S137 grant application form that applications also welcomed from communities wishing to enhance their biodiversity
- See if there is any specialist training available to staff and members regarding the Act and s6 duty

How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?

This report has been developed and adapted by the Clerk councillors. Once agreed, this will be published onto the website.

The Action Plan is an organic plan to be regularly reviewed and evaluated along with a commitment for this Plan to be reviewed, and amended where appropriate by Full Council on an annual basis.

This plan was agreed by full council on 1st November 2022