

## Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6: THE BIODIVERSITY AND RESILIENCE OF ECOSYSTEMS DUTY

### 2019 Report

#### Context

- Rogiet Community Council owns an area of open playing fields which includes two football pitches, a multi-use games area, and a sports pavilion building. The playing fields site also hosts a small play park which is owned and maintained by Monmouthshire County Council. RCC also owns and has responsibility for a lane which accommodates a public footpath.
- Rogiet Countryside Park is a valuable site within the village, owned by Monmouthshire County Council and supported by several members of RCC through volunteering.
- Others areas of note in the Rogiet and Llanfihangel Rogiet areas are woodland and fields owned by other organisations such as the Woodland Trust and Gwent Wildlife Trust. Public footpaths run along many of these areas, past the remains of the Rogiet Windmill, around the now disused Ifton Quarry to the north of Rogiet, and the Wales Coastal Footpath at the sea wall to the south, overlooking the Severn Estuary.
- Rogiet Community Council area encompasses the densely populated village of Rogiet and the rural area of Llanfihangel Rogiet.
- The population of these communities at the 2011 census was 1,813 individuals.
- These communities cover an area of 847 hectares (3.27 sq miles), with a population density of 2.1 persons per hectare.
- The 2019-2020 precept for this area was £49.890.
- The area is affected by pollution (air quality and noise) from the M4 and M48 motorways (the main routes between Wales and England via the Prince of Wales Bridge and the Severn Bridge respectively) which pass either side of the villages, as well as the busy B4245 which runs through the villages.
- Rogiet became developed around the railway industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, particularly after the creation of the Severn Tunnel. A train station (Severn Tunnel Junction) remains in Rogiet.

<b>Action Report</b>		
<b>Action carried out to:</b>		<b>Monitored by:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Embed biodiversity into decision making and procurement</b></li> </ul>	<p>Council have decided to implement a 5-year plan of enhancement of the playing fields site to create a more diverse habitat.</p>	<p>Formation of a 5-year plan to drive council actions in biodiversity.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Raise awareness of biodiversity and its importance</b></li> </ul>	<p>Council have promoted the use of the playing fields and the countryside park, in particular educational activity sessions at Rogiet Countryside Park through social media and village newsletter.</p>	<p>Attendance at activities, community fun days, and interactions following information distribution.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Safeguard principal species and habitats</b></li> </ul>	<p>Thorough research and advice is needed to draw up a policy to address this.</p>	<p>Input from a biodiversity and Ecology officer and production of a policy in the foreseeable future.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Restore and create habitats and resilient ecological networks</b></li> </ul>	<p>RCC have been liaising with Monmouthshire County Council for advice on planting of wildflowers and trees (including fruit trees), to encourage new habitats.</p>	<p>Making clear aims and actions in the 5-year plan for the playing fields site.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tackle negative factors: e.g. reduce pollution, use nature-based solutions, address invasive species</b></li> </ul>	<p>The RCC area is subject to pollution from the busy B4245, M4 and M48 motorways, as well as the mainline Swansea to Paddington railway line.</p> <p>RCC representatives have regularly attended meetings with MCC to discuss the need to reduce the volume of traffic travelling along the B4245 through the villages of Rogiet and Llanfihangel Rogiet.</p>	<p>Implementation of speed restrictions by MCC on the B4245, and village roads, as well as parking restrictions.</p> <p>Feedback from residents affected.</p>

<b>Action Report continued</b>		
<b>Action carried out to:</b>		<b>Monitored by:</b>
	<p>RCC were vocal in their objection to the proposed M4 relief road that would have had a further negative impact on the villages due to its proposed proximity.</p> <p>RCC are keen to plant more trees in the area at the playing fields site.</p> <p>RCC are supporting the Magor Action Group On Rail (MAGOR) who have been campaigning for a walkway railway station in neighbouring Magor with Undy Community Council's area. If the station bid is successful this would result in a marked reduction in traffic travelling to Rogiet and along Station Road to Severn Tunnel Junction.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use, improve, and share evidence</b></li> </ul>	<p>Through our social media account we have encouraged residents to use the Long Forest app to record hedgerow species in the area.</p>	<p>As yet no data have been collated from the app, but the increased use of this, and potentially other apps could help us in the coming years to establish biodiversity in the area.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support capacity and/or other organisations</b></li> </ul>	<p>Working with MCC, and supporting the activities of Rogiet Community Junction regarding development of playing fields site, and Friends of Rogiet Countryside Park, to maintain and enhance biodiversity.</p>	<p>Feedback from other organisations.</p>

### Review of s6 duty

- The plans for the playing fields site has been well received by those we are working with at MCC, and by members of the community. We had hoped to be further along in implementing wildflower planting but were advised to wait until spring 2020 for best results.

Flooding at the bottom of the playing fields through autumn and winter has meant that planned planting of fruit trees had to be delayed. Councillors who have lived in the village for a long time have identified that flooding at that specific location happens on a semi-regular basis in autumn/winter and therefore we will be seeking further advice as to the suitability of fruit trees at that specific location. We are considering whether there are species of tree more resilient to waterlogged land could be planted at that site instead, and we will consider planting fruit trees elsewhere on the playing fields.

We will be seeking further advice regarding suitable pollinators.

- The council will work to produce a biodiversity policy that will inform the 5-year plan for the playing fields. In addition the policy will be applied to other land owned by the community council. Once written, the council will review the policy each year at the annual meeting, and use it as a reference for decision-making.