



COYCHURCH LOWER COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

Background

Biodiversity in Wales is protected and managed through a combination of tailored Welsh legislation, UK-wide laws, and international agreements. The core of Welsh biodiversity law focuses on sustainable management, the duty of public bodies to enhance nature, and the creation of legally binding restoration targets.

Key laws and regulations include:

1. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 governs the management of natural resources and biodiversity in Wales.
 - a) Under Section 6 there is a duty on public authorities to “seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity” and promote the resilience of ecosystems in all their functions.
 - b) Under Section 7 Welsh Ministers are required to publish lists of habitats and species of “principal importance” for biodiversity, which public authorities must consider in the decision-making.
 - c) The Act also introduces a framework for managing natural resources at a national and local level, including the production of the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) and Area Statements. Under this framework the Community Council is required to publish, every 3 years, a report on the biodiversity actions it has taken and plans for future actions.
2. The Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill 2026 includes the establishment of the Office of Environmental Governance Wales (OEGW), an independent watchdog to hold public authorities to account for compliance with environmental law.
3. The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies to work towards 7 well-being goals, one of which is a “Resilient Wales”. This goal aims for a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems.
4. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) embeds biodiversity policy considerations into the planning process by requiring that development does not cause significant loss of habitats or species and provides a net benefit for biodiversity and from 2024 developers are required to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity as part of the planning process.
5. Protected sites and species legislation includes the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) which protects special areas of conservation (SACs) and special protection areas (SPAs).
6. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides the framework for designating Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and protects wild animals and plants, including prohibiting the introduction of non-native invasive species.

These laws are aimed at addressing the nature emergency in Wales where 20% of species is at risk of extinction.



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The result of this legislation is that public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Wales. Any public authority must;

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver policies and achieve objectives.

The Local Area

Coychurch Lower community comprises 2 hamlets (Waterton and Brocastle) and a semi-rural village surrounded by farmland, woodland and a golf course to the north, east and south, and 2 industrial estates and retail park to the west/south-west.

Within Coychurch village the community council maintains a Local Place for Nature to the boundaries of the Community Field and a native hedge planted in the Coychurch Play Park. Throughout the village there are grass verges, planted lavender beds tiered and precinct planters maintained by the Community Council.

Community Council responsibilities

The Community Council is responsible for maintaining the Coychurch Play Park and the Local Places for Nature site in the Community Field.

The Community Council is also responsible for the grass cutting of verges along the main road through Coychurch village.

It has the responsibility of maintaining the planted lavender beds on the Main Road, and the lamppost planters along the main road through the village and in Waterton Close.

The 5-tier, 3-tier and precinct planters throughout the village are also maintained by the Community Council.

The Community Council has also taken on the responsibility for keeping the rights of way within the village, ie between Hawthorn Drive and Grange Crescent, Brynffrwd Close and Manor Drive, The Court and St Mary's View, Main Road and Glenwood Close, Glenwood Close to the railway level crossing access, and around the west and north sides of the primary school grounds.

As Trustee of the Williams Memorial Hall, the Community Council will seek to improve:

- 1) the sustainability of the building by reducing its reliance on the national grid (solar energy and battery storage),
- 2) the heating system (air-source heat pumps),
- 3) the heating retaining properties by improving the glazing
- 4) the use of rainwater for the precinct planters to the front of the building.



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What the Community Council will do

- 1) Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made by the Community Council, especially when commenting on planning applications.
- 2) It will reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides used for footpath clearance and weed control in the Coychurch Play Park
- 3) It will keep under review how it manages the Local Place for Nature in the Community Field and encourage biodiversity by:
 - Leaving standing and fallen dead wood as a habitat for invertebrates
 - Leaving leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates
 - Removing invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna as required.
 - Allowing fallen tree branches to remain, if safe, to allow invertebrates to inhabit
 - Monitoring the wildflower planting and replacing plants as necessary.
 - Monitoring the use of bat and bird boxes and how these may be used to encourage biodiversity.
- 4) The Community Council will consider promoting biodiversity through the Coychurch Lower Community Council website
- 5) Hedge cutting in the Play Park will be kept to outside the bird nesting season, i.e. not cutting between April and September

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as and when required through change in legislation, and in full every 5 years

Policy Created: 03/04/2026

Policy Approved by council on: 14th April 2026

Signed by the Chairman: E Caporras