LLANGOLLEN TOWN COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN.

December 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 The publication of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 makes biodiversity an important consideration for all local authorities. Section 40 of this act sets out the duty to conserve biodiversity: "Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity".

1.2 Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Public authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, as far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.

2 What is biodiversity?

2.1 The word biodiversity was first used at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992; it stands for biological diversity and is the term used to describe all variety of life on earth in all its forms. This includes variety or differences in genes and individuals of the same species, between different plant and animal species and within or between entire ecosystems. The term goes far beyond simply the number of species in a given environment or habitat. Not all habitats are equal in biodiversity terms. Broad-leaved woodland and unimproved flower-rich lowland meadows are rich in biodiversity when compared to habitats such as intensive arable farmland or densely constructed urban conurbations. Even within the urban environment gardens, parks and allotments can all be relatively diverse.

2.2 Why do we need to conserve biodiversity?
By conserving biodiversity, not only does it protect the diversity of species in our habitats but also maintain a healthy and interesting environment in Llangollen for current and future generations to enjoy.

2.3 The aims of this Biodiversity action plan are:

a. To embed biodiversity as a principle in all decision made by the Town Council where appropriate.
b. To support, or assist others to support, the safeguarding of species and habitats of principal importance; and improve their management.
c. To increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation in Town Council ownership.
d. To tackle, or assist others to tackle, key pressures on species and habitats.
e. To improve the Town Council's evidence and understanding of biodiversity.
f. To put in place a framework of governance to support delivery.
g. To monitor and review this action plan.

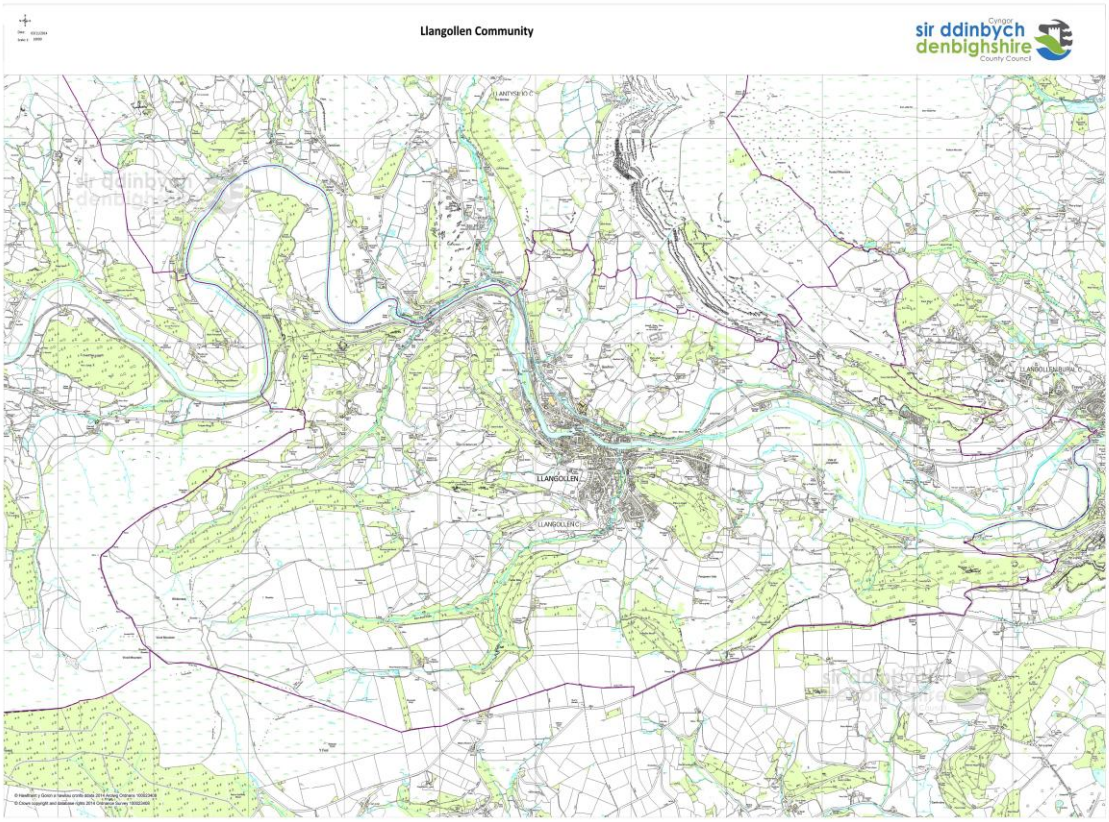
3. Location.

3.1 Llangollen is a lively market town situated in the Dee Valley between the Berwyn and Ruabon mountains, overlooked by Castell Dinas Bran. The town has been a magnet for travellers and visitors since the early 19th century. The towns is within the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site buffer zone.

3.2 The railway arrived in Llangollen in 1862, and the restored railway is now run by Llangollen Railway PLC with the line extending as far as Corwen. The ruins of 13th century Castell Dinas Bran are on the hillside above Llangollen; the 18th C. home of the Ladies of Llangollen, Plas Newydd, is in the town.

3.3 The population of the town of Llangollen is 4079 and the town also serves the surrounding areas of Froncysyllte and Garth, Acrefair and Llantysilio, a further population of 4,260.

Diagram 1. Llangollen Town Council boundary.



4. Local Biodiversity resources

4.1 Geological Landscape influences

The most prominent influence on this area is river processes. From its outflow at Llyn Tegid, the Dee meanders along a relatively flat floodplain to Llangollen. The meanders are often small-scale in size on the valley floor, but occasionally they form significant features in the landscape such as at Rhewl, near Llangollen. Here it loops around a large meander and is a good example of an incised, ingrown meander where the river has cut vertically into the bedrock in addition to eroding horizontally as the meanders continued to develop. The result is an asymmetrical valley with a steep outer flank and a gentle inner slope, which in some areas has terraces and cliffs marking former river levels and stages in the evolution of the valley. Other examples can be seen at Pengwern, south of Llangollen.

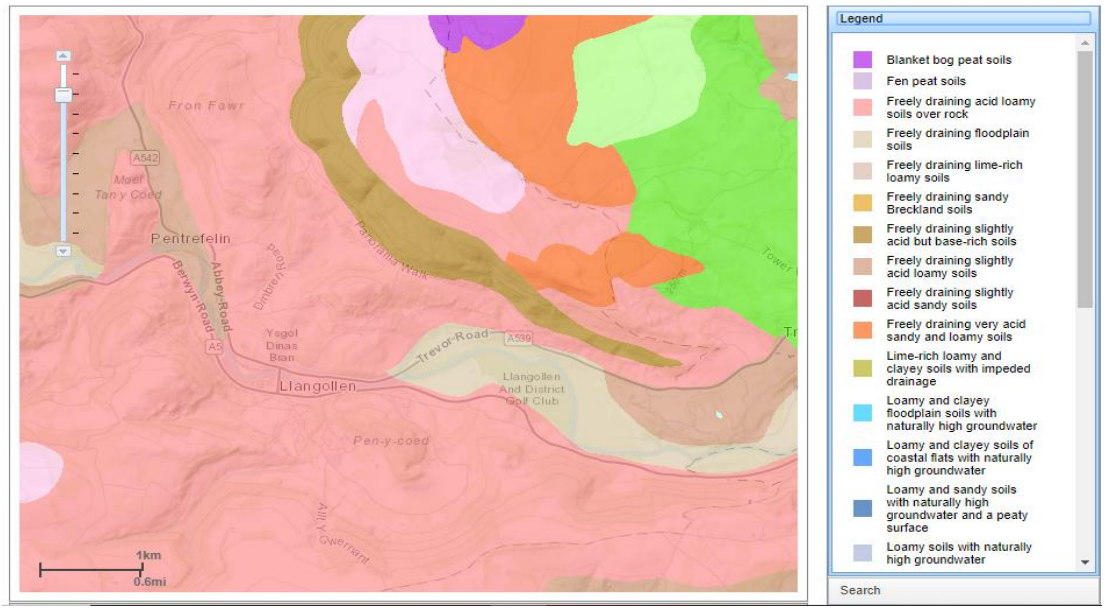
4.2 The valley floor is predominantly flat and infilled with glacial and river deposits but rises to elevations of more than 300m on the valley sides. The underlying bedrock valley consists predominantly of Silurian sedimentary rocks. Later mountain-building events have compressed these rocks, faulting and tilting them.

4.3 In some areas, such as the Horseshoe Pass, the mudstones have been compressed sufficiently to form slate, which is still quarried. Although essentially a relatively flat-bottomed valley, there are some areas where the bedrock has a prominent impact on the landscape, Llangollen and Llantysilio faults have further influenced the landscape, and the river Dee has used these structures to carve its route. Key sites which highlight the geological diversity of this area include Dinas Bran Geological Conservation Review Site (GCR site), Pant Glas Quarry and Hafod y Calch (GCR site).

4.4 Soils

The UK Soil Observatory has classified the soils in the area as lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage freely draining acid loamy soils over freely draining floodplain soils rock.

Diagram 2. Soil types.



UK Soil Observatory

4.5 Landscape Habitats influences

The area is largely agricultural in the valley floor, but with a patchwork of small fields and broadleaved woodland blocks. The valley floor forms the only flat ground in the area and is intensively used. The steep slopes of the valley sides and tops of the surrounding plateau are largely rough grazing, with bracken, scrub and hanging woodlands in particular on the valley sides, with limited grazing for upland sheep flocks. Small areas of traditional agricultural practices have remained, being hay meadow typical of many in the uplands throughout Wales

many years ago, now restricted to small pockets where improvements have been limited.

4.6 Historic Landscape influences
The past strategic importance of the Vale and as a transport and communications corridor is visible in the landscape today. Castell Dinas Brân (and the Iron Age hillfort on which it is built) occupies the elevated land above the south facing slopes overlooking the Vale. Gentry houses such as Trevor Hall and Plas yn Pentre indicate its prosperity in the early modern period.

4.7 Llangollen sits in a narrow valley, and the town stretches in a compact linear form within this landscape. The Medieval sandstone bridge, a dominant crossing point, influences and frames key views, being a commanding feature within the landscape.

4.8 Transport developments associated with the industrial revolution have had a profound expression on the character of the landscape. Thomas Telford's London to Holyhead post Road (now the A5) follows the valley and has had an influence on the location and shape of settlement and the canal, which extends to the west of the town carried across the Vale by the Pontcysyllte aqueduct. The Pontcysyllte aqueduct and its environs were recently inscribed as a World Heritage Site, the greater part of which is included within this area.

4.9 Cultural Landscape influences
The town of Llangollen was granted its charter in 1284, and the working landscape of the area has contributed to its cultural identity. The proximity of the Llangollen Canal, which extends into the area from the Wrexham area, is a World Heritage Site, the Telford Road (one of the major works of one of Britain's greatest civil engineers), and the Llangollen railway, revived as a steam railway recreating the ambience of the 1950s, means that the area illustrates remarkably well the classic transport systems of the industrial revolution, and their revival and conservation offers the possibility of integration with each other.

4.10 Climate and Hydrology
The climate in Llangollen is warm and temperate. Llangollen has a significant amount of rainfall during the year the temperature typically varies from 33°F to 66°F and is rarely below 22°F or above 75°F and the average amount of annual precipitation is 31.89 inches (810.0 mm).

4.11 The River Dee is a vitally important natural resource for not only the Town but also for communities in North Wales and Northwest England, supporting a rich environment for wildlife, while also providing a valuable source for drinking water extraction. The river flows are controlled by Natural Resources Wales through programmed releases from the main balancing reservoirs; Lake Bala, Lake Celyn and Lake Brenig. The Dee Regulation Scheme balances the interests of abstractions, fisheries, biodiversity, recreational activities and flood risk management.

4.12 Protected landscapes

The community has a number of Nationally important landscapes in that there are several Nature Conservation Sites located within the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC), River Dee Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) wholly or partly within the area: -

- Caeau Pen y Coed
- Dee Estuary
- Dinas Bran
- Ruabon / Llantysilio Mountains and Minera

4.13 Habitat Types

Ffridd (also referred to as Coedcae) is an important habitat type that occurs within marginal land between the uplands and the lowlands. It contains components of both upland and lowland habitats, is vital for a range of important species and is also an important component of the Welsh cultural and historical landscape. The following Ffridd Areas in the community are good examples namely Velvet Hill, Castell Dinas Bran and the Panorama Walk.

4.14 Heathland within the study area comprises dry dwarf shrub heath (acid). In places, this forms a mosaic with acid grassland. The dry heath consists mainly heath, with frequent crowberry and occasional cowberry.

4.15 The hedgerow network is quite strong throughout most of the area, but there are areas where there are significant gaps. In respect of woodland one of the most substantial sections of continuous tree cover directly adjacent to the town centre is Pen-y-Coed, a 28-hectare wood that occupies the ridge between the Dee and Pengwern valleys. The site is a mixture of Ancient planted / semi-natural Woodland and more recently planted coniferous stands and contains a wide variety of tree species along with ground flora.

4.16 The area surrounding the town contains a number of substantial woods and smaller wooded areas including; Inman's Wood, Barber's Bank, Smith's Wood, Bache-canol Wood, Wern-uchaf Wood, the Avenue, Geufron Hall, Tyn Celyn Wood, Craig-y-dduallt Wood, Gwernant Wood, Llwyn y cym, Fedw Ddu, Coed Pen-y-garth, Cefncoed Plantation, Inman's Wood, Bryniau-mawr Bank and Plas Newydd Dingle, Llangollen is also home to a unique and endangered species of tree, the Llangollen Whitebeam (Sorbus cuneifolia) being located on the Eglywyseg escarpment. There are a number of very ancient trees in the area, including yews at Dinbren Uchaf and Tyn Dwr Hall, the latter being considered as the oldest and largest yew tree in Wales.

4.17 Within the urban areas of the town the level of tree cover is around 25% (2013 data) which is the highest in Denbighshire. However, unlike most of the other towns within the county, this figure has declined from 28.7% in 2006, a loss of

over 6000 trees. The value of trees in the Llangollen area is recognised in the high level of Tree Protection Orders (TPO's) that have been issued to protect both individual specimen trees and larger blocks that have significant historical and/or landscape value.

4.18 Llangollen Canal

Is a navigable watercourse which links Llangollen with Hurleston in south Cheshire. An eleven-mile stretch of the canal between Llantysilio in the west and Gledrid Bridge in the east has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its rare vegetation, species of Atlantic salmon and floating water plantain.

4.19 Urban Environment

Urban gardens help aid dispersal of biodiversity by acting as green corridors and as stepping-stones for species moving between larger green spaces. Street trees not only protect our neighbourhoods from extremes of weather they are also important for urban wildlife, home to many insects and bird species. The verges alongside roads and railway embankments create wildlife corridors through urban areas and can support rare plant species. Larger green spaces within the urban environment are often represented by parks, playing fields, cemeteries and allotments and provide the most accessible areas for local residents to access and appreciate wildlife and nature.

4.20 Biodiversity

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) is a collaborative partnership created to exchange biodiversity information. The NBN Trust, the charity which oversees and facilitates the development of the Network, has a membership including many UK wildlife conservation organisations, government, country agencies, environmental agencies, local environmental records centres and many voluntary groups. Data for a 2km radius of Llangollen is detailed below and acts as a base line for monitoring changes to the biodiversity of the area going forward.

NBN biodiversity information.	**2022**	**2025**
All species	553	1044
Animals	261	625
Amphibians	0	2
Arthropods	138	467
Crustaceans	5	7
Insects	128	440
Myriapods	4	4
Spiders and Allies	1	12
Birds	86	106
Fishes	6	9
Mammals	18	17
Molluscs	11	18

Reptiles	2	2
Worms	0	0
Bacteria	0	0
Chromista	0	0
Fungi	99	139
Plants	193	279
Algae	0	0
Bryophytes	117	133
Clubmosses and Firmosses	0	0
Ferns and Allies	0	0
Flowering Plants	75	146
Gymnosperms and Ginkgo	0	0
Hornworts	0	0
Protozoa	0	0

4.21 This data shows a strong positive trend in local ecological health, and it can be inferred that the rising counts across all groups point to a resilient system.

5. Town Council assets.

5.1 Llangollen Recreation Ground.
The Recreation ground is situated on Dinbren Road and is managed by the Town Council on behalf of the Recreation Ground Trustees. The Recreation Ground will continue to be accessible to all whilst protecting its recreational and ecological value for future generations. The boundary of the site has rich tree cover with species such as chestnut, maple, sycamore, mature lime, mature beech, ash and both sessile and mature oaks.

5.2 Pen y Bryn Cemetery.
The Town Council is responsible for the management and upkeep of Pen y Cemetery, Hill Street. Very little has been done to the site since its purchase apart from grass cutting in the summer months and some perimeter hedging work. The current maintenance programme for the site is bi- month and the site is managed to maximise its biodiversity.

5.3 Centenary square.
Situated In town centre this public open space this site has four Liquid Amber trees on the perimeter and a Holy and Cherry tree and a number of grasses on the northern perimeter of the site. The grasses include Cortaderia selloana ‘Sunningdale Silver,’ Cortaderia selloana ‘Albolineata,’ Carex elata 'Aurea', Carex oshimensis ‘Evergold,’ Carex comans ‘Bronze,’ Cortaderia selloana ‘Splendid Star,’ Carex oshimensis ‘Evereste’,Deschampsia cespitosa ‘Goldtau.’ Festuca glauca 'Elijah Blue', Hakonechloa macra ‘ Aureola,’ Helictotrichon sempervirens, Luzula nivea, Molinia caerulea arundinacea ‘Karl Foerster’’, Molinia caerulea arundinacea ‘Poul Peterson’ and Ophiopogon planiscapus ‘ Nigrescens.’ Recently

the northern perimeter of the site has been planted with spring bulbs to benefit early pollinators.

5.4 Planting schemes.
The Town Council provides both summer and winter floral display around the town centre. The town's floral displays are cultivated at the Derwen College and planted out by students. The planting is undertaken to enhance the urban habitat for pollinators and e the creation of eye-catching pollinator-friendly floral displays throughout the town.

6. Action Plan.

6.1 There are a number of key factors that could have potentially detrimental effects on the level of biodiversity in the Llangollen. These are development, climate change, recreation, pollution, changes in land use and changes or lack of management. These factors are not limited to Llangollen and represent the wider issues facing the environment in the UK as a whole.

6.2 This situation is reflected in Llangollen where partnership work between council volunteers, statutory bodies and the local business sector delivered environmental conservation projects. In the current financial climate partnership remains important and this plan outlines a series of actions to provide a framework for the delivery of conservation enhancements across Llangollen until 2028. The actions are intended to make a genuine positive contribution to the Llangollen's biodiversity while being realistic and achievable.

6.3 Actions taken to help biodiversity should be guided as far as possible by the 6 objectives of the Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) which have been identified to contribute to reversing the decline of biodiversity in Wales. The actions identified by the Town Council, within this framework, are detailed below.

Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.
Actions to include:

- Incorporating biodiversity and the s6 duty into performance by the preparation and adoption of a s6 Plan the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Valuing biodiversity more effectively and for the longer term in decision making.
- Raising awareness across the Town Council.
- Providing staff with relevant environmental training.
- Working with the public, suppliers and contractors to improve their environmental performance.
- Using local labour and materials where available to reduce CO2 and help the community.
- Reducing the amount of energy used as much as possible, lights and electrical equipment will be switched off when not in use and heating will be adjusted with energy consumption in mind.

- Considering the energy consumption and efficiency when purchasing new products and favour 'green' machinery where possible when considering replacements.
- Using cleaning materials that are as environmentally friendly as possible
- Minimising waste by eliminating, reducing, reusing, composting and recycling.
- Reducing the need to travel where possible, by promoting the use of travel alternatives such as email video and phone conferencing.

Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management.

Actions to include:

- Safeguard special species and habitats listed on the section 7 biodiversity lists if prevalent in area.
- Improving habitat management, for example, for pollinators.
- Using the planning system to maintain and enhance species and habitats.
- Contribute to the management of protected sites and species.
- Ensuring protected sites and species are valued in decision making.

Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring.

Actions to include:

- Using the best available evidence for decision making in the consideration of planning applications.
- Having regard to the section 7 lists of species and habitats, the State of Natural Resources Report, and Area Statements when they are available.
- Consulting relevant stakeholders and utilising expert input.
- Undertaking research.
- Ensuring the Town Council's environmental data is accessible to local communities.

Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation include actions taken to:

Actions to include:

- Restoring and/or creating habitats.
- Improving the management and/or diversity of areas of habitat.
- Working with local environmental organisations and projects.
- Working with bodies such as NRW, the AONB and Glandŵr Cymru

Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Actions to include:

- Address key pressures, for example by reducing or where possible stopping the use of pesticides and herbicides.
- Reducing waste , reusing and recycling resources where possible.
- Climate change mitigation decarbonisation of Town Councils activities.
- Maintaining local green spaces for communities and visitors to improve health and well-being outcomes.

Improve the use of evidence understanding and monitoring.
Actions to include:

- Using the best available evidence for decision making.
- Having regard to the section 7 lists of species and habitats, the State of Natural Resources Report, and Area Statements when they are available.
- Consulting relevant stakeholders and utilising expert input.
- Ensuring environmental data is accessible to local communities.
- Considering planning applications which impacted local or national designated sites, with regard to information: such as costs, benefits, impacts and outcomes relevant to NRAP objectives.

Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.
Actions to include:

- Ensuring the Town Council recognises its responsibility for ensuring biodiversity action is taken.
- Ensuring that where needed ecological expertise can be drawn upon, either internally or externally.
- Encouraging and supporting volunteer participation in action for biodiversity by staff or local communities.
- Support biodiversity action through funding and/or partnerships, for example through the Community Grants Scheme.
- Working with local environmental organisations and projects.

To monitor and review this action plan
Actions to include:

- Ensuring the s6 duty is monitored and reviewed in accordance with the Act.
- A review of biodiversity action plan will be carried out in line with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016: Section 6 reporting cycle.

Bibliography and data sources .

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