



## Merlins Bridge Community Council Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems report 2022/23

### Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (section 6): guidance for public authorities

Merlins Bridge is a village situated on the boundary of Haverfordwest. The community had a population of 2,202 in the 2011 census. Its budget from precept was £10K in the 2022/23 financial year. It is subject to the provisions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

A public authority 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, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.

A public authority must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects—

- (a) diversity between and within ecosystems;
- (b) the connections between and within ecosystems;
- (c) the scale of ecosystems;
- (d) the condition of ecosystems, (including their structure and functioning);
- (e) the adaptability of ecosystems.



What are our environmental assets within the Merlins Bridge Community?

OS Explorer Map: OL36: South Pembrokeshire

Location Grid Ref: SM 9487 1420

Its boundary is partly surrounded by a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and Special Scientific Site of Interest, (SSSI).

Pembrokeshire Coastal Rivers – Merlin Brook main river, which is a tributary of the Western Cleddau, (SM9467514514).

### **Station NGR**

SM9467514514

### **Station description**

River level-only station on Merlin's Brook (a tributary of the Western Cleddau) at the A4076 roadbridge, Haverfordwest. Catchment area 26.2km<sup>2</sup>.

The Western Cleddau River is of special interest primarily for important populations of otter and various species of fish, including lampreys. Although not of special interest, the Western Cleddau is also a locally important migratory salmonid river and for its range of river habitats including beds of submerged aquatic plants as well as a variety of associated riverside habitats. It reaches its end at its tidal limit at Haverfordwest.

The catchment for the Western Cleddau is predominantly agricultural land with significant areas of permanent pasture, broadleaved woodland and other semi-natural vegetation. It also has a few restored ancient woodland sites. The river is dominated for much of its course by a plant community characteristic of smaller, predominantly lowland, medium nutrient status rivers flowing over sandstone, mudstones or hard limestones of southern Britain. A notable feature of the vegetation communities in the Western Cleddau is the unusual distribution of certain species normally considered typical of acidic, low nutrient conditions. The riverside vegetation communities form a complex patchwork with extensive areas of woodland and scrub.

The Western Cleddau is considered to be one of the best rivers in Britain for bullhead, brook lamprey and river lamprey and supports a significant population of sea lamprey.

Although not of special interest, the site supports a range of breeding birds. The river and associated habitat is also an important feeding corridor and resting site for an assemblage of bat species.

We also have a number of green spaces around our village, such as the front of St Issells Avenue, by the Village Hall, Glenview, Woodlands Park and Greenhill Crescent.

These assets are important to not just the wildlife, but to people and the economy. It's important that we look after this environment carefully to ensure that these beautiful places can be protected for future generations.

## Section 6 Action report

Number	Action carried out to: (For example) Monitored by: (for example)	Detail of action:	Monitored by:  1. What has worked well? 2. What hasn't worked well? 3. What can we improve?
1	Embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement.	<p>Taken into account biodiversity considerations when considering planning applications and other associated matters, such as footpath diversion orders and neighbourhood services matters.</p> <p>Developing adaptation &amp; mitigation responses to the impacts of climate change.</p>	<p>We take into account environmental considerations when considering planning applications and her associated matters, such as footpath diversions etc. by.....</p> <p>Using our monthly meetings within the Community Council to have the topic of our environment as a permanent agenda item, so it is applied to most if not all our actions within the community at every opportunity.</p>
2	Raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance.	<p>Organised awareness raising and training sessions for members and staff.</p> <p>Encouraged the community to volunteer in the context of nature/green spaces.</p>	<p>Numbers engaged in activities.</p> <p>Post details of the actions we have taken to help biodiversity on our website, social media platforms.</p>
3	Safeguard principal species and habitats.	<p>Contributed to the management of protected sites and species.</p> <p>Managed land around them as part of resilient ecological networks.</p>	As mentioned in our report above. By identifying our key environmental assets and then maintaining and finding ways to enhance.

		Ensured no negative impacts on protected species.	
4	Restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks.	<p>Add new greenery to our village to enhance and encourage biodiversity and wellbeing.</p> <p>Happy to talk bench.</p>	We have already committed to sourcing additional ways of enhancing and increasing green spaces in our community. Such as flower beds, shrubs and small fruit trees in some areas around Merlins Bridge.
5	Tackle negative factors: for e.g., reduce pollution, use nature-based solutions, address invasive species.	<p>Sustainable procurement policy which includes ensuring office supplies are locally and/or made from recycled material.</p> <p>Reduced the use of pesticides to only where necessary and sourcing eco alternative methods.</p> <p>Reduce fly-tipping hot spots.</p>	<p>We can source eco office supplies. Re-use items where possible.</p> <p>We use a local sustainable company, Cleddau Press which has environmental credentials, for mass printing to our community.</p> <p>We use free facility at Pembrokeshire College which has held a Green Dragon Environmental Certification for over 10 Years.</p> <p>By seeing green areas thrive and increased numbers of species.</p> <p>Tackle known fly-tipping hot spots by promoting cleaner spaces to enhance our village and promote wellbeing. That our community want to use and feel proud of where they live.</p>
6	Use improve and share evidence.	Taken advice from the Local Environmental Record Centres (LERCs) on local sites and species of interest.	Use of expert advice.
7	Support capacity and/or other organisations.	<p>Recognise the achievements of either a resident or local organisation who is championing environmental issues.</p> <p>Any organisations receiving grant from us to demonstrate how this will</p>	<p>Partnerships formed to deliver biodiversity benefit.</p> <p>Worked in partnership with X to provide extra volunteers to improve local wildlife area.</p>

		contribute to the environment as part of their project.	
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How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?

- The duty will be monitored through the Environmental, Sustainability and Planning Committee and individual officers reporting back to the council on the success or otherwise of the actions taken.
- The s6 plan will be reviewed in light of these reports and any other evidence or information that is made available to the Council. At the time of this report's publication, there is no specific time or date set for the plan to be reviewed, but this will be done within the next 3 years.

We must address the need to ensure the resilience of our environment to an ever-changing environment. This will be achieved by:

1. Maintaining the condition of these important features.
2. Focus on processes which maintain or boost the resilience of the environment to the climate emergency, including the avoidance, reduction or mitigation of other risk factors such as invasive species, nutrient enrichment, habitat, and population fragmentation.

Our vision –

The presence of all these environmental assets will increase well-being in our community and enhance the economic and social values of the area, by providing a high-quality environment for outdoor activities and peaceful enjoyment for our local community and visitors through appropriate land management and education wherever appropriate. The environment in which this community lives will be a focus for education to promote increased understanding of its biodiversity and surrounding environment by nurturing and making improvements where possible.