

Inquiry on Biodiversity

Halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030

23/08/2024

Halting and reversing biodiversity loss has become one of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time. The Welsh Government (WG) declared a nature emergency in 2021 and has set in place new and refreshed strategies with the aim of halting and reversing the loss of nature, many as a result of the targets agreed at COP 15 and the subsequent Biodiversity Deep Dive recommendations.

This evidence report aims to sets out how our current policies, funding and statutory duties, current monitoring arrangements and new approaches are contributing to the halt and reverse of nature loss.

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1. Current policies and initiatives which contribute to the halting and reverse of nature loss.

1. The [State of Nature 2023](#) shows that since careful monitoring of 380 Welsh species began in 1994, the numbers of those species have declined on average by 20%. Some of the wildlife that has suffered the biggest population losses are the insects, flora and mammals that people may be less familiar with. Well-known species like the Atlantic Salmon and Curlew have also suffered critical declines in Wales.
2. The 2020 State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) said that the key pressures affecting terrestrial biodiversity loss in Wales and across the UK result from: agricultural management; climate change; urbanisation; pollution; hydrological change; invasive non-native species and woodland management. The marine chapter states key pressures from the marine environment are climate change, some human activities, non-native species and inputs from freshwater catchments (i.e. pollution).
3. The WG has a wide range of policies and initiatives which can help to improve the condition of habitats and reverse biodiversity loss by addressing the root causes and drivers of decline. Many of these policies and initiatives have funding streams, details of which are set out in Annex B.

Welsh Government policies and initiatives

4. **Biodiversity Deep Dive** The former Minister for Climate Change worked with a group of key experts and practitioners to undertake a Biodiversity Deep Dive to identify and prioritise a set of actions to consider how we protect 30% of the land, fresh water and marine environment by 2030 in a way that delivers for nature and meets our international obligations. The core group supported by other key expert groups continue to deliver against the initial recommendations published in October 2022.
5. **The Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP)** for Wales was originally published in December 2015 and was last updated in 2020. In two parts, it covers the **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Wales**. It is currently being refreshed and will remain in place until it is realigned to respond to the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity** and the **Biodiversity Deep Dive recommendations**. The NRAP sets out

how best to support Ministerial commitments and strategic objectives, including those set out in Programme for Government (PfG).

6. The new Climate Action Wales - Public engagement strategy 2023 to 2026 was published in July 2023, highlighting the link between the climate and nature emergencies and the need for action on both. It provides the focal point for the national campaign, aiming to provide a trusted public source of information on the climate and nature emergencies.

7. National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales includes the aim to deliver nature-based flood management in all major river catchments, expanding wetland and woodland habitats, enhancing biodiversity, and improving ecosystem resilience.

8. The Woodlands for Wales Strategy, published in 2018, outlines the long-term vision and targets for trees, woodlands, and forests in Wales. Priorities include sustainable management, job creation, and the planting of 43K ha of new woodland by 2030.

9. The forthcoming Welsh Seabird Conservation Strategy covering twenty-nine species of breeding and non-breeding seabird will set out objectives to improve conservation and resilience of these species. The inaugural action plan containing key recommendations is expected this year.

10. The Natural Resources Policy sets out our priorities for the management of our natural resources and ecosystems and is supported by the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR), a comprehensive evidence base, provided by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), evaluating the delivery of the sustainable management of our natural resources and ecosystems in Wales.

11. The Welsh National Marine Plan includes policies supporting the protection, restoration and enhancement of our marine environment. We are working with stakeholders and NRW to develop planning guidance on opportunities for ecosystem restoration, supporting the achievement and maintenance of Good Environmental Status (GES) and Good Ecological Status (GeS).

12. Planning Policy Wales - Edition 12 was published in February 2024. The SSSI Policy, Stepwise Approach, Green Infrastructure policy, and Trees and Woodland policies were strengthened and updated to address the nature emergency.

13. The Net Zero Skills Action Plan was launched in February 2023 and delivers on our recommendations for 30x30, as part of 'a fairer, stronger, greener Wales'. It recognises the importance of skills in supporting our net zero challenges by

equipping our current and future workforce with the right options and opportunities.

14. **The National Peatland Action Programme** is focused on restoring, enhancing and protecting peatland ecosystems to enhance biodiversity, mitigate climate change, and improve water supply and quality. This contributes to the **IUCN UK Peatland Strategy**. While the **ban of peat-based products** has been delayed due to the UK General Election, we remain committed to legislate for this in Wales.

15. **Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Rivers Action Plan** is a comprehensive strategy aimed at relieving pressures on SAC river catchments in Wales. The plan outlines clear actions, timescales, and responsibilities to tackle pollution, particularly phosphorus pollution, and address planning constraints that affect the development of affordable housing

16. The **Marine Protected Area Management Action Plan** and Annual Report sets out key actions being undertaken each year to either mitigate against pressures or further our understanding to improve management. This year's documents are currently under development.

17. We remain committed to expanding our Marine Protected Area (MPA) network under the MPA Network Completion Programme. We are collaborating with stakeholders to identify potential sites, while assessing socio-economic impacts.

18. The **Action Plan for Pollinators** launched in 2013 to ensure healthy pollinator populations in Wales and to raise awareness of their importance and management. The **Pollinator Taskforce**, who deliver the Action Plan, launched **Bee Friendly** in 2016 and is an initiative to encourage communities and organisations to take positive action for pollinators.

19. The **It's for Them** campaign launched in 2022. It recognises that changing grass-mowing regimes can support pollinators and a range of other wildlife. The campaign aims to increase awareness of the wider benefits of this practice to the public, and those who manage grassland.

20. **National Parks and National Landscapes** (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)). WG has committed to enhancing nature restoration in National Parks and National Landscapes by supporting the development of prioritised action plans for nature recovery. WG has committed to designating a new National Park for Northeast Wales.

21. The **National Forest** was launched in 2020 and is a multi-decade commitment to create woodlands that are high-quality, resilient; accessible and interconnected. The network aims to provide spaces for leisure and nature; help capture and store carbon and supply sustainable timber for construction.
22. **Nature Networks Programme (NNP)** aims to improve the condition , size and connectivity of our protected sites creating resilient ecological networks. It is key in helping to deliver against a number of GBF targets including 30x30. See Annex B for funding details.
23. **Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs)** are strategic partnerships that bring together stakeholders to collaborate on the protection and enhancement of nature at a local level. They co -ordinate action, share resources, and influence policy.
24. The **Biodiversity Taskforce** was established to deliver against the PfG commitment to embed biodiversity in all we do. This internal taskforce aimed at mainstreaming biodiversity across WG through initiatives such as the **Nature Wise** staff training programme, supporting target development, and the implementation of our Section 6 Duty.

Wider UK plans

25. The **UK Biodiversity Framework (UKBF)** published on 9 May 2024, sets out how the four countries of the UK will work collaboratively to meet international commitments on biodiversity.
26. The **UK National Targets** were published to the Convention for Biodiversity Diversity [website](#) on 1 August 2024 meeting the international commitment.
27. The **UK Marine Strategy** aims to achieve and maintain GES of UK marine waters, ensuring that they are clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse. The strategy is updated on a six-yearly cycle to reflect new scientific data and policy developments, ensuring continuous progress towards environmental goals and compliance with the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010.
28. The **GB Invasive Non-Native Species Strategy 2023 – 2030** provides a framework to deliver the most effective response to preventing, eradicating and managing **invasive non-native species**. It also underpins our delivery of the internationally agreed targets on invasive alien species domestically.

2. Current arrangements for monitoring and evaluating biodiversity

29. Effective and affordable monitoring and evidence frameworks are vital to track our progress towards both the 30x30 target and the longer-term nature positive ambition. They underpin decision making and enable an adaptive management approach necessary to deliver resilient ecosystems that adapt to wider pressures, such as climate change. A range of biodiversity monitoring programmes are currently undertaken by, or on behalf of, WG.

Current monitoring and evaluation arrangements

30. Led by the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH) and supported by WG, agri-environmental support is evaluated through the Environment and Rural Affairs Monitoring and Modelling Programme ([ERAMMP](#)).

31. Monitoring of stocks and trends of key indicator species is undertaken through a series of JNCC [citizen science-led surveillance programmes](#). Much of the data collected through these programmes inform biodiversity trend reporting at the Welsh level e.g. through the NRW produced [SoNaRR](#), the National Biodiversity Network Atlas and Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

32. The [CB Non-native Species Information Portal](#) (GBNNSIP) provides access to distribution maps and other information including an ‘Alert system’ for all non-native species in Britain.

33. NRW lead [‘Common Standards Monitoring’](#) a UK-established approach to measuring the condition of features i.e. notified and qualifying species and habitats, within statutory protected sites (SSSIs, SACs, SPAs).

34. [Living Wales](#) provides a national evidence base and monitoring system of Welsh environment and landscape characteristics, combining satellite imagery, ground survey and remote sensing technologies, providing support to biodiversity through SoNaRR and SFS.

35. WG continue to deliver a routine monitoring programme for [fish species](#).

36. [Water Quality monitoring](#). Reliable and real time monitoring data is essential for understanding water quality trends and putting in place effective policy interventions. Working with stakeholders we continue to develop an integrated and agile monitoring network.

37. National Peatland Action Programme. NPAP includes activity, hydrological and ecological response monitoring. All restoration data is published on the [Welsh Peatland Data Portal](#) and progress reports are published on the [NPAP Website](#). The first five-year evaluation of NPAP is scheduled for 2025.

38. The National Forestry Inventory is a five-year rolling programme coordinated by Forest Research, monitoring the state of woodlands and trees within Great Britain.

39. Welsh National Marine Plan. We are commissioning an independent review of marine planning approaches. This review will consider how we can further develop our marine planning framework to provide greater spatial direction, balancing support for renewable energy and protecting the marine environment.

40. Air Quality A key commitment in both our National Air Quality Strategy and PfG was to introduce a Clean Air Act for Wales, which sets out targets for pollutants and have regard to the most recent WHO air quality guidelines.

41. UK Marine Strategy – Monitoring Programmes. Details monitoring programmes to address specific indicators under various ecosystem components in marine.

42. Progress on Biodiversity Deep Dive Recommendations. A continuing programme of work is being delivered with a broad range of stakeholders and progress reported through the biannual progress report and subsequent written statement.

43. As Common Standards Monitoring is costly to implement the Biodiversity Deep Dive is considering new and innovative approaches to measure progress more effectively towards the 30x30 target.

44. New legislation to be laid during this Senedd term will incorporate the Nature Positive Framework to include a cycle of effective monitoring, assessment and reporting for the new biodiversity targets to provide greater accountability and transparency.

3. New approaches needed to halt and reverse the loss of nature

45. WG has proposed several new approaches to halt and reverse the loss of nature by 2030, aligning with international commitments and emphasising sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and community involvement. Here are the key approaches:

46. The **Environmental Governance and Biodiversity Targets Bill** has an introduction date of June 2025. The proposed scope includes the establishment of an environmental governance body, the re-introduction of EU environmental principles, and targets for the protection and stressors of biodiversity in Wales.

47. The **Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS)** is designed to replace current agricultural support mechanisms, rewarding farmers for sustainable practices that enhance biodiversity. This scheme emphasises the delivery of public goods and nature recovery through sustainable land management, including SSSIs and is due to be launched in 2026.

48. **Control of Agricultural Pollution (Wales) Regulations 2021** provides advice, guidance and financial support to farm businesses to reduce emissions of ammonia and nitrous oxide and improve nutrient management planning. The Regulations apply to all farms in Wales and will be fully implemented by 1 January 2025. The four-year review of the effectiveness of the Regulations will be completed by end March 2025.

49. **Sustainable Finance** – we are developing a new strategic approach to sustainable finance to enable us to increase the scale and pace of nature recovery delivery. The aim of this work is to increase and diversify the funding available while ensuring it is high integrity, avoids greenwashing and engages and benefits local communities. To inform this work WG commissioned a report from Finance Earth looking at a sustainable delivery model for biodiversity.

50. We have committed to publishing and consulting on a set of co-developed **Sustainable Investment Principles** intended to increase and diversify the funding available so that we can effectively tackle the nature emergency and the pressures that drive biodiversity loss – including climate change, pollution, and unsustainable management of natural resources. WG will publish the executive summary of the Finance Earth report, alongside the principles.

51. Two pilot projects are being taken forward: to support the development of the **MARINE Fund Cymru**, a voluntary marine enhancement fund, and to accelerate the development of natural capital and payment for ecosystems services models in **Designated Landscapes**.

52. We are also engaged in sustainable finance initiatives at the UK level, recognising the need for consistent standards. This includes the ongoing work with the British Standards Institute to help develop recognised standards for green and sustainable finance and support financial markets deliver positive environmental outcomes.

53. A new **Forum for Blue Carbon in Wales** will bring together a network of practitioners in Wales to share information and knowledge, and to accelerate the already growing body of expertise and experience we have in Wales, to address specific Welsh policy questions, identify research needs and potentially stimulate larger programmes of research.

54. **The Wales Coasts and Seas Partnership** (CaSP Cymru) is delivering three workstreams to support resilient marine ecosystems and the deep dive recommendations for capacity building, awareness raising and skills - developing ocean literacy, improving long-term investment and building capacity to identify local opportunities and challenges and deliver action.

4. Summary

55. The WG's broader strategy to halt biodiversity decline, promote ecosystem recovery, and ensure a sustainable future for Wales integrates the policies and initiatives detailed in this evidence report. By combining the NRAP, sustainable land and sea management, policy and legislative reforms, climate action, community engagement, monitoring, and public education, the WG aims to create a resilient, biodiverse environment that supports both ecological and human well-being, aligning with national and international commitments including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

56. Recognising the intertwined nature of the climate and biodiversity emergencies, the report highlights the need for coordinated action, as reflected in the Climate Action Wales: Public Engagement Strategy 2023-2026, which addresses climate change as both a stressor and driver of nature loss.

57. We also recognise that tackling the biodiversity crisis requires a 'whole of Government and whole of Society' response if we are to put nature on a path to recovery.

Annex A

Statutory Duties

WG has several statutory duties that include biodiversity commitments and include:

Legislation	Description
Environment (Wales) Act 2016	<p>Section 6 - Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty: requires that all public authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems. This requires the embedding of biodiversity considerations throughout all of their day-to-day activities, policies, plans, programmes and projects.</p> <p>Section 7 - Biodiversity Lists: Welsh Ministers must prepare and publish lists of <i>species</i> and <i>habitats</i> which are of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales'.</p> <p>The NRP outlines priorities for managing natural resources sustainably and includes commitments to protect biodiversity.</p>
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	Public bodies must work towards goals that include having a healthy natural environment that supports social, economic, and ecological resilience and can adapt to change.
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017	Enables the protection of both marine and terrestrial habitats and wild species, including the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPAs). Public authorities must take steps to maintain or improve these natural habitats and species.
The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	Protects wild animals and plants, manages the release of 'non-native' species and control of 'invasive alien' species. It also designates and protects SSSIs. The act further provides legal protection to public rights of way.
EU Regulation 1143/2014 (the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation)	Retains the EU Regulation 1143/2014 in domestic law. It imposes strict restrictions on a list of 'species of special concern' (SOSC) whose adverse impacts are such across GB that concerted action is required.
The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019	Contains provisions relating to offences, penalties, enforcement, licensing and permitting to meet requirements of the retained EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation.

Marine Strategy Regulations 2010	Requires action to be taken to achieve and maintain Good Environmental Status, through the publication and subsequent reviews of the UK Marine Strategy.
Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009	Sets up a system to manage the marine environment, including the designation of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) to protect important marine wildlife and habitats.
Planning (Wales) Act 2015	Requires that biodiversity be considered in the planning process. Local Development Plans (LDPs) must include policies that help protect and improve biodiversity.
Public Health (Wales) Act 2017	Focuses mainly on public health but also recognizes the importance of the natural environment in promoting health and well-being, indirectly supporting biodiversity.
The Agriculture (Wales) Act	Aims to support farmers post-Brexit, focusing on sustainable land management and practices that enhance biodiversity.
Pollution Prevention and Control (Agriculture) Regulations	Control pollutions from farming activities, helping to maintain healthy ecosystems and support biodiversity by reducing harmful impacts.
The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021	Prevents or reduce pollutions from agricultural activities through baseline nutrient management standards. Welsh Ministers must review the Regulations at least every four years and revised if necessary.
The Heather and Grass etc. Burning (Wales) Regulations 2008	Regulates controlled burning of certain types of upland vegetation, such as heather, gorse, and bracken.

Annex B

WG funding schemes that contribute to halting and reversing the decline in nature. The following funding schemes are currently available or have recently come to an end and are in the evaluation and reporting process.

Funding Schemes	Description
Nature Networks Fund (NNF)	A targeted funding component within the Nature Networks Programme (NNP) delivered in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and NRW. It is specifically aimed at financing projects that support the NNP's aims including capacity building whilst encouraging community engagement and green finance initiatives. WG are committed to evaluating the effectiveness of NNF in 2025.
Local Places for Nature.	A targeted funding component within LNP, specifically aimed at projects which restore and create natural spaces within communities across Wales. It emphasises direct action to enhance biodiversity and improve people's access to nature in their daily lives. WG are committed to evaluating the effectiveness LPN in 2025.
Rural Investment Schemes (RIS)	The WG have announced a number of schemes , including Habitat Wales Scheme and Integrated Natural Resources Scheme to support farmers and landowners before the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) is introduced in 2026. These schemes will allow for more collaborative work between Welsh farmers, landowners and third sector organisations.
Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS)	The SFS is designed to replace Glastir, Basic Payment and previous agri-environment schemes, meeting all four Sustainable Land Management (SLM) objectives from the Agriculture (Wales) Act and rewarding farmers for delivering SLM outcomes including increasing ecosystem resilience.
Natural Flood Management	Following our NRP, WG promotes natural flood risk management interventions wherever they can provide real benefits to a community. In the PfG, we committed to delivering Nature-based Flood Management (NFM) in all major river catchments, expanding wetland and woodland habitats in the process.
National Parks and National Landscapes Capital schemes	WG operates the Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Places (SLSP) scheme, with nature recovery a priority, and the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for National Landscapes, aimed at local, grass-roots projects.

	A review of SLSP and SDF funding post-2025 is looking at ways to increase provision for nature recovery works.
Marine Protected Area Management Grant Scheme	This WG grant scheme is based on the MPA Management Framework which includes the guiding principles of management of our network and has supported research of pressures such as climate change or direct interventions ranging from a surveillance programme for Grassholm to marine litter initiatives.
The Welsh Marine and Fisheries Scheme (WMFS)	This provides funding to support environmentally and economically sustainable growth in the Welsh seafood industry and coastal communities.
The Coastal Capacity Building Fund	The fund aims to build capacity, helping communities to deliver sustainable action which supports growth and recovery in local marine and coastal areas. It runs until March 2025.
Seagrass and Saltmarsh Restoration	WG have funded restoration of seagrass and saltmarsh and continue to work with stakeholders to develop a longer-term restoration programme.

Annex C

Case study 1

Project SIARC (Sharks Inspiring Action and Research with Communities), supported by the Nature Networks Programme, conducts crucial conservation research in Carmarthen Bay and Tremadog Bay, focusing on sharks, skates, and rays. The project, which spans across Wales, collaborates with fishers, communities, researchers, and citizen scientists to fill data gaps for six key species while also engaging over 3,000 members of the public and 600 schoolchildren through bilingual educational resources and interactive sessions. Awarded Wales Project of the Year in the National Lottery Awards, Project SIARC has made significant contributions to marine conservation and education.

Case study 2

WG's **Property Infrastructure scheme** at Parc Coed Elai, Rhondda Cynon Taff has won the Best Practice Small-scale Practical Nature Conservation Project at the 2024 CIEEM national awards.

Formerly a colliery, the site was remediated in 2001, with infrastructure works completed in 2019/20 to create an investment-ready employment site. The project focused on enhancing biodiversity in line with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Well-being Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The 25-year Landscape and Habitat Management Plan, implemented in 2021, emphasizes nature conservation over traditional business park design, with measures like managing invasive species, creating new habitats, and restoring wetlands. The site serves as a model for sustainable development on former colliery land in South Wales.

Case study 3

The Welsh **End-of-Life fishing gear** recycling scheme was introduced in 2021 in response to the lack of recycling opportunities for the Welsh fishing industry. The Scheme, which continues to be the only national scheme of its kind in the UK has so far collected more than 12 tons of fishing gear which may have otherwise been discarded at sea impacting marine biodiversity.

Case study 4

Welsh peatlands are crucial for biodiversity, flood management, food production, and carbon storage, covering over 90,000 hectares, with 50% designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Despite their importance, 70% were in poor condition by 2018 due to activities like drainage and overgrazing. In response, the Welsh Government launched the **National Peatland Action Programme** (NPAP) with over £8 million in funding from 2020-2025, aiming to restore 5,000 hectares. By 2024, the NPAP had restored 3,000 hectares, with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) leading efforts and using tools like the Wales Peatland Data Portal to track progress.

Case study 5

Dr Beynon's Bug Farm, a 100-acre site focused on nature recovery, serves as a vital wildlife corridor on the St Davids peninsula, linking critical habitats and integrating farming with conservation under the Glastir Advanced agri-environment scheme. Supported by the

Nature Networks Fund with £211,624, the Connected Commons & The Centre for Nature Recovery project aims to strengthen the region's fragmented habitat corridor, contributing to a larger vision of turning the farm into a nature reserve. This project has connected 200 hectares of wildlife habitat, with efforts including ecological surveys, habitat restoration, and sustainable woodland creation. Additionally, the Bug Farm is expanding its educational outreach and planning to reintroduce the marsh fritillary butterfly.

Case study 6

The Celtic Rainforests Wales project, running from 2018 to 2025, seeks to restore fragmented temperate rainforests in five Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) across Wales, which once covered nearly half the country. These ancient, biodiverse ecosystems, rich in cultural significance and vital as carbon sinks, are threatened by climate change, disease, and invasive species. The £6.5 million project, led by the Eryri National Park Authority with multiple partners, focuses on eradicating invasive species, implementing sustainable grazing, and restoring native woodlands. Community involvement is also key, with over 2,000 people engaged in raising awareness about the importance of these rainforests.

Case study 7

The **Natur am Byth** initiative, a collaboration of nine environmental charities with Natural Resources Wales (NRW), is Wales' largest natural heritage and outreach program, with an £8 million budget, aimed at saving 67 priority species and reconnecting people with nature. The program focuses on demonstrating effective species recovery strategies, raising awareness of threats, and inspiring action from diverse communities across nine target regions. Through community engagement in activities like species ID workshops and habitat management, notable successes include the reintroduction of rosy saxifrage to Eryri National Park and the world's first inoculation of oak polypore fungus in native woodlands.

Case study 8

The **Action Plan for Pollinators Taskforce** created the **Bee Friendly scheme** to encourage communities and organisations to learn about pollinators and implement local solutions to support their survival.

Cletwr, a community-run café and shop, became part of this initiative through its volunteer-led gardening club. Joining the Bee Friendly scheme allowed them to consolidate and showcase their efforts, inspiring others in the community and visitors to take action. In 2021, Cletwr earned the Bee Friendly award, and by 2024, a volunteer who became a local Bee Friendly Champion helped two schools achieve the same recognition.