

**Environment (Wales) Act 2016**  
**Part 1 – Section 6**  
**The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report February 2024**

**CYNGOR CYMED YR YSTOG**

**CHUTCHSTOKE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**



### Introduction and Context

Churchstoke Community Council provides a range of services to the local community which may have an impact on biodiversity. The council serves the area defined as the community of Churchstoke a population<sup>1</sup> of approximately 1,745, and an electorate<sup>2</sup> of 1,358. It has 12 councillors, covering 2 electoral wards – Churchstoke ward and Hyssington ward. For the year 2023-24 net estimated expenditure £31,764.07 and the precept £31,764.07.

The council provides local services in the community, including:

- Grounds maintenance
  - Roadside verges
  - Recreation field
- Some street furniture (benches and bin)
- Cemetery and its maintenance
- Play area and its maintenance
- Garden Allotments
- Field Allotments
- Grants to two community/village halls
- Christmas tree lights
- Financial support for local organisations through a community fund
- Representatives to certain outside bodies on behalf of the community
- Responding to consultations and surveys on behalf of the community.

Churchstoke Community Council falls outside the spending threshold of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to report annually on its well-being duty but is subject to a more recent duty to produce an annual report. It has not declared eligibility to use the General Power of Competence<sup>3</sup> (GPoc) though it meets the criteria to do so.

Welsh Government reporting guidance<sup>4</sup> on the Act sections 6(9) and 6(10) of the Act lists the wide range of public authorities to which the duty applies. Churchstoke Community Council falls into 'Group 2: Organisations that own, occupy, or manage land their own buildings and grounds, whose functions are connected with biodiversity and/or land management, or can

<sup>1</sup> Population according to 2021 census <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/11145/Wellbeing-Information-Bank-View-information-about-2021-Census-Area-Overview>

<sup>2</sup> Electorate according to electoral register published 1<sup>st</sup> Dec'23

<sup>3</sup> Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/section-6-biodiversity-and-resilience-ecosystems-duty-reporting-guidance>

influence those who own or manage land.’ The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales (NARP)<sup>5</sup> objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 apply.

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<sup>5</sup> NARP at <https://www.gov.wales/nature-recovery-action-plan>

<b>Action Report</b>		
This section outlines how the council can assist biodiversity (through functions with regard to property and land management, grant funding, education opportunities, and working with others).		
Action carried out to:	February 2024	Monitored by:
Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning applications are considered in the context of the environmental impact, safeguarding of habitats, the development of sustainable homes and the planting of new developments are considerations.</li> </ul>	Dec 2025 by Council
Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, reduced the width of roadside verge grass cutting to 1m.</li> <li>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, reduced the number of playgrounds grass cutting from 18 to 12pa.</li> <li>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, set aside a wildflower area for pollinators at the cemetery.</li> <li>Hedge cutting at recreation field and cemetery only 1pa.</li> </ul>	Dec 2025 by Council
Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, reduced the width of roadside verge grass cutting to 1m.</li> <li>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, reduced the number of playgrounds grass cutting from 18 to 12pa.</li> <li>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, set aside a wildflower area for pollinators at the cemetery.</li> <li>Hedge cutting at recreation field and cemetery only 1pa.</li> </ul>	Dec 2025 by Council
Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, reduced the width of roadside verge grass cutting to 1m.</li> <li>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, reduced the number of playgrounds grass cutting from 18 to 12pa.</li> <li>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, set aside a wildflower area for pollinators at the cemetery.</li> <li>Hedge cutting at recreation field and cemetery only 1pa.</li> </ul>	Dec 2025 by Council
Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specification for grass-cutting/grounds maintenance states: <i>Potential contractors are informed the community council must comply with Environment (Wales) Act 2016 S6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems (1) "A public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of</i></li> </ul>	Dec 2025 by Council

	<p><i>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". The council has regard to this duty in setting this schedule of work as one of those functions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in county climate biodiversity summits.</li> <li>• Information will be shared with other local councils at regular networking events such as One Voice Wales and SLCC local branch to help others through shared information and experiences.</li> </ul>	
<p>Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specification for grass-cutting/grounds maintenance states: <i>Potential contractors are informed the community council must comply with Environment (Wales) Act 2016 S6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems (1) "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". The council has regard to this duty in setting this schedule of work as one of those functions.</i></li> <li>• The council's community grant scheme provides for introduction of priority themes such as biodiversity, should the council so decide.</li> <li>• Council will incorporate future S6 reporting into its Annual Report.</li> </ul>	<p>Dec 2025 by Council</p>

**Review of S6 Duty**

- What has worked well? What have the barriers been? What will you change?
  - The council has a raised awareness of the S6 duty and had amended its grass cutting/grounds maintenance specification accordingly
  - The coronavirus pandemic was a pivotal event which meant that council had to consolidate on what it already had in place and room for manoeuvre was hindered by lockdowns and distancing. The pandemic may have been a barrier to local groups working together or working with the council on projects
  - The council remains receptive to working with local nature groups.
- How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?
  - The S6(1) duty to ‘...to maintain and enhance...’ will be considered as part of annual business/budget planning and monitored as part of service delivery of council functions. The S6 report will be included as a chapter in the council’s annual report
  - The S6(7) duty to report will be undertaken by full review every three years as required by law.

End of report