

# Nature in Carmarthenshire

*...our approach for local action 2020 – 2030*

## PART 2

### How you can help - ideas for action

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*Partneriaeth Natur*  
SIR GÂR • CARMARTHENSIRE  
*Nature Partnership*





B. Langridge

## 2.1 What can you do?

The work of the partners, and the projects they undertake, help to conserve and enhance our natural environment and often deliver multiple benefits that improve the well-being of the people that live here and contribute to the economy of the county.

If we are serious about nature recovery, it requires action from us all and for organisations and individuals to work together in partnership - including land owners, government agencies, wildlife conservation groups, local authorities and industry.

Local people, communities and schools can make a difference as well and it is a role of all the partners to raise awareness and work with communities on projects that benefit biodiversity – and the people involved in local action.

In this section we provide a brief range of ideas for business, communities, schools and individuals to take positive local action in Carmarthenshire, with links to the myriad of useful information that is available today on the internet.

### 2.2 Businesses

In Carmarthenshire business extends from the large-scale operations at the Trostre steelworks to small-scale



I. Morgan

enterprises operating from workshops, business parks and homes and the land around them. These are most often concentrated in built up areas but can be situated on the fringes of settlements with links to the wider countryside. There are opportunities for all businesses to take positive action for biodiversity, whether as part of the development of new sites or the management of existing ones, procurement decisions and raising awareness with staff, whether the businesses employ hundreds or tens of people or are run by one person.



I. Morgan

### 2.3 Communities

Good quality green space can affect how people think, feel and behave - it can increase physical recreation and allow people to interact with nature. Community action to benefit wildlife can help a range of species and habitats but can also enhance areas so that they provide higher quality green space for local people to enjoy and learn about the natural world.

Action might only be small-scale (but still important) – a small group of volunteers helps maintain and enhance the area around Dafen Pond in Llanelli, removing litter, recording wildlife and helping with management. On a larger scale, a community group in Talley has been formally created and is now undertaking a large-scale grant-funded project to manage extensive areas of land around the village, for the benefit of the local people and wildlife.



### 2.4 Schools

Understanding and respect for nature can be fostered in children from a very early age. Biodiversity is an essential component of environmental education and can be linked to the national curriculum in many different ways.

- Completing a biodiversity audit could develop mapping skills in geography and data analysis skills in maths. Include biodiversity in schools' curricula, as there are clear links to science, maths and geography as well as citizenship, art, English and Welsh.
- In Carmarthenshire most schools are Eco-schools now, which has biodiversity action as part of its assessment. Local schools visit local

nature reserves in Bynea, Upper Brynamman and Pembrey.

- Manage and/or create space for wildlife in your school grounds. Johnstown school have a simple management plan for their outdoor space
- Consider using an INSET day for training in biodiversity education - managing grounds for biodiversity has been given as an inset day for primary schools in the past.
- Use the classroom to demonstrate good practice for the environment: recycle waste and use water and energy wisely.



L. Morgan

## 2.5 Individuals

Everyone can do something to help biodiversity - small actions can contribute to make a big difference. The beneficial effects of taking action may well be mutual for nature and for you. Positive action could include:

- volunteer with a local conservation group,
- garden for wildlife,
- think about your use of chemicals at home and in the garden,
- reduce–reuse–recycle,
- record your local wildlife and send

the records in to the local biological records centre – every record helps build a picture of where wildlife lives in the county,

- get in touch with your local politician and ask what is being done to maintain and enhance biodiversity or see what your workplace can do to help,
- be inspired by nature – if you write, draw, stitch or paint – explore how your local environment can stimulate your creativity.

There is a lot of information out there to help you.



## 2.6 Tourism providers

Tourism is an important part of Carmarthenshire's economy – our natural environment is a significant attraction for visitors. Many of the tourism attractions already have wildlife at their heart, e.g. the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, National Botanic Garden Wales and Dinefwr Park, and provide wonderful opportunities for people to experience and learn more about Carmarthenshire's biodiversity. Accommodation providers have particular potential to raise awareness and manage areas for wildlife. Many B&Bs are in rural areas and highlight and promote the potential for walking and outdoor activities but there is potential for

providing for, and receiving from visitors, information about our biodiversity. For example, many visitors are keen anglers, bird watchers or just general wildlife enthusiasts and accommodation providers could be a way of collecting records to be passed on to the local biological record centre or a way of promoting local targeted recording schemes.

Caravan parks may well have areas that could be managed or enhanced for wildlife as part of a management plan for the whole site. There could be opportunities for wildlife activities on site through bat or moth evenings and appropriate activities for children.



R. Pryce

## 2.7 How you can help - ideas for action

This is **not** a comprehensive list of suggestions or links to websites but is intended to stimulate ideas and start a conversation...

## Discover

- Find out what you have on your site/area – carrying out an ‘ecological audit’ of your land/buildings will help you identify the interesting areas and help identify opportunities for enhancement/management.
- Find out what species/habitats you have there. You can access a range of information on line and from your local biological record centre and local authority conservation team.
- Use aerial photos/OS or on-line maps to map the area – it might tell you interesting things about your land.
- Find out from old maps what used to be on your land and what the important historic or archaeological features might be. Tithe maps are useful (circa 1840s). They can show you where old woodland, meadows, ponds and hedgerows used to be and guide future restoration projects.



<http://aderyn.lercwales.org.uk/>

<http://lle.gov.wales/home>

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/biodiversity>

- Record what is in your area and send the records in to the West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre – they want to hear about all the wildlife in the county so records of common species are just as important as the scarcer species.
- There is lots of information on line to help with recording and a number of targeted recording schemes each year for a range of species, e.g. RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch (see species action table).

<https://www.ispotnature.org/>

<https://www.wwbic.org.uk/>

<https://nbn.org.uk/>

[www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Get-Involved](http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Get-Involved)

- Could you use a wildlife camera – carefully placed it could reveal some interesting visitors!



## Get involved

- New development may have areas allocated for landscaping or areas unlikely to be amenable for development but where biodiversity can be enhanced. If you are submitting a planning application think about what habitats can be retained and what areas can be enhanced as part of the development.

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-services/planning/>

- Can you comment on planning applications to highlight important areas for biodiversity to consider as part of the planning process?

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-services/planning/>



# Manage

- From your audit can you identify an area/s that could be managed for wildlife within the land/buildings that you manage? This could be the corner of a garden or school ground, an area outside your office, within your campsite or local park – it could be an area of grassland, scrub, hedgerow, groups of trees, pond or marshy area.



- You might not have a garden but manage a plot on an allotment. Can you work together to manage/create wildlife-friendly areas?

<https://www.nsalg.org.uk/>

- Use the expertise of the local Nature Partnership and the organisations within it: they can help advise on what action you could undertake on your site.

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/biodiversity>

- If the area is large consider writing a simple management plan. This could be for a whole site: park, school grounds, business park or a specific habitat within that area (e.g. meadow or woodland). These need not be complicated but should address the following questions:

- What is the aim of your plan?
- What have you got? Use your audit and identify what more you need to know.
- What are your priorities for action? What are the constraints and opportunities?
- What must you do? What action can you take to maintain or enhance what is there? Can you make links between existing habitats and help enhance/create a habitat network? Can you create new features – see below



<http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/plan.htm>

Can you volunteer with the local community council/authority to manage areas of parks or public open space for wildlife?



Can you work with the local church or chapel to manage areas of the cemetery for wildlife?

<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/>

Can you apply for grant funding to undertake a project? For communities there are a number of small grant scheme that you might be able to use to help with your project.



## Protect

Get involved with a local group; if you are a business, consider sponsoring a local wildlife project. If you are a business with staff, consider getting involved by volunteering on a community wildlife project. It's great for team building!

<http://www.businessandbiodiversity.org/credits.html>

<https://bit.ly/2xxinqM>

Consider what impacts you might have on the environment through the products/materials you use: what household chemicals are you using and where do they come from? Are there any other products which may have less of an impact on the environment?



Go peat-free – use alternative and help save our valuable peat bog habitats.

<https://bit.ly/2xCvZBh>

<https://bit.ly/2VwGCxw>

Avoid using artificial pesticides, herbicides, fertilisers unless absolutely necessary.

<https://bit.ly/3bfdEJ8>

## Create

Try to create a mosaic or patchwork of habitats. Don't necessarily just manage for one species or habitat. Look at the natural characteristics of your land and assist what is already there rather than trying to create something new that would not naturally occur. For example don't drain a good piece of land to plant a woodland, or create a wetland where it wants to be dry.

Create your own or help create a community wildlife garden

<https://bit.ly/3abBsfG>

Can you plant an orchard?

<https://bit.ly/3eGyaV>

Can you create a wildlife pond (remember you might need planning permission)?

<https://bit.ly/2VejeGb>

Are there opportunities to erect bat and bird boxes or to build a bug hotel?

<https://bit.ly/2xCz9oq>

<https://bit.ly/2Vdo8mJ>

<https://bit.ly/3csi8fH>

Why not become a 'Bee Friendly community' and make Wales a pollinator-friendly country by taking action as part of Welsh Government's scheme!

<https://bit.ly/2K9gKCD>

<https://bit.ly/2xyYJuF>

*“try to create a mosaic or patchwork of habitats”*



## Types of actions - habitats:



# Grassland

Research shows that abundance of both flowers and flower-visiting insects increases significantly with reduced mowing, helping pollinators. Why not experiment and vary the mowing regime in different areas and see what works best for pollinators - and people. The easiest thing you can do is identify and enhance existing areas that are/have the potential to be good for pollinators - as food or shelter. This is often the most cost-effective way as well.

For lawns and amenity areas, try cutting some areas less often and cut higher to allow plants to flower. A longer rotation for grass cutting with the mower blade set at a **minimum** of 50–60 mm should allow low-growing species like daisies, clover, bird's foot trefoil and selfheal to flower as they can keep their heads below the mower or have time to spring up and flower again. Grass will grow at a different rate depending on the weather during the growing season but why not delay your first cut until mid-April and then mow to every 5-8 weeks and see what happens. In community areas use signs to explain why you are doing this.

<https://bit.ly/3csiyCN>

<https://bit.ly/3enDtsm>

Can you collect up the mowings? This will help encourage more flowering plants in the grass. If your mowing machine cannot collect it then for smaller areas can the grass be raked up to create a habitat pile or compost heap?

<https://bit.ly/2RJmXsV>

Are there some areas of grassland where you can let the grass grow long and manage like a hay meadow? Here you would ideally cut the grass in late summer and remove the cut material, helping to make the grassland more flowery. There are local contractors who could undertake this work on larger areas or perhaps a local farmer could cut and bale it for the use of the hay?



In some areas you might wish to sow seed mixes that benefit pollinators. Choose these areas carefully. It might be better to manage the habitat that is there already to encourage the flowers that are already within it. Also choose your seed mix carefully - ensure that the seed or plants that you're introducing are native, and preferably from a local source.

<https://bit.ly/3cpkWKw>

<https://bit.ly/2yIMGke>

Do you already have a native meadow that you would like to manage?

<https://carmarthenshiremeadows.com>

<https://bit.ly/2ygtkNI>



## Woodland and trees

You may be lucky enough to own or have an area of woodland in a community area. A lot of small woodlands are neglected but they should be valued for the benefits they can bring, for wildlife and people. With appropriate management they can become valuable habitats, generating employment and playing their part in climate change

<https://bit.ly/2ynl3rm>

<https://bit.ly/34HHTWC>

<https://smallwoods.org.uk/>

<https://bit.ly/2Vg9viC>

Can you plant more trees? If grassy areas are not regularly used and not already species-rich (check before planting up), then why not try something else – it could save money in the long run. Planting trees and shrubs such as willow, blackthorn, crab apple and birch can provide significant quantities of pollen and nectar in early spring.



If you have to fell a tree – replace it with two! If planting trees plant native species which are common to your local area. They are generally much better for your local wildlife in the long term. Leave some dead wood on site and build a habitat pile with the branch wood.

<https://bit.ly/3erl0LG>



## Hedgerows

Hedgerows are vitally important as they provide food and shelter to many species, including those that use hedges to move around. They are also important habitats for nesting birds and, in some areas of Carmarthenshire, for the rare dormouse.

Is there an opportunity to plant/restore a hedgerow - especially when they connect existing habitats together?

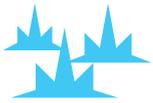
<https://bit.ly/2XFj781>

Ideally hedgerows should be managed in the winter months, avoiding the bird nesting season (March to August). Do you have to cut all hedges each year? Birds and insects will benefit from your hedgerows being cut less frequently and this approach is cheaper too. Draw up a hedgerow management plan for your land.

<https://bit.ly/3bcWhbK>

Can you lay your hedges? This type of management helps maintain good boundaries and allows blossom and berries to form.

<https://www.hedgelaying.org.uk/>



## Scrub

Scrub is an extremely valuable habitat and one on which many species depend on for their survival. As part of a mosaic of habitats or in the corner of an area it is a welcome habitat. However, if left unmanaged, it can rapidly take over areas such as grassland so management may be required.

<https://bit.ly/3bfm10r>



## Formal areas

You may well have formal areas that you wish to maintain but there are still opportunities to help biodiversity here.

- Flower beds/containers or hanging baskets – include pollinator-friendly species of shrubs, annual or perennial plants to provide food for pollinators from spring to autumn.
- Use flowering and fruiting shrubs that provide food sources for birds and animals.
- Reduce intensive trimming of shrubs, allowing a variety of shrub heights to develop.
- Retain dead seed heads and skeletons of dead plants, leaving to stand over winter for seed-eating birds and winter invertebrate shelter and strimming in late winter or spring.





# Remember

Create **habitat piles** – dead wood is good!

<https://bit.ly/3cmQKj1>

For biodiversity projects ‘tidiness’ is not a priority – sometimes just leaving a small area go wild can be beneficial!



**Invasive species** - it is illegal to allow Japanese knotweed or Himalayan balsam to spread – can you take action to tackle them? Increasingly aquatic invasive species are becoming a problem in parts of Carmarthenshire – species such as Parrot’s Feather can quickly swamp a pond and care should be taken not to introduce them into a waterbody.

<https://bit.ly/3adsVZD>

**Pets** can have an impact locally on wildlife if not properly looked after.

<https://bbc.in/2wGuvFw>

Free-roaming **dogs** can disturb ground nesting birds or flocks of birds (e.g. wintering wildfowl). They can also attack hedgehogs.

<https://bit.ly/3clj9pJ>

**Domestic cats** will predate on wildlife but despite the large numbers of birds killed by cats in gardens, there is no clear scientific evidence that such mortality is causing bird populations to decline. However, gardens are important for breeding birds so it would be prudent to try to reduce cat predation by avoiding putting food on the ground and/or putting a bell on your cat’s collar.

<https://bit.ly/3abGgBt>

<https://bit.ly/2VDc2Ca>

**Litter** - unfortunately, wildlife is one of the main victims when it comes to people’s rubbish in the environment - particularly wild birds and small mammals. This is well publicized today – especially the impacts on the marine environment.

<https://bit.ly/2VCHhgZ>

<https://bit.ly/3ctQsaI>

<https://bit.ly/2z6Kvlb>



# Action for Species

Carmarthenshire Fungi blog	<a href="http://www.carmarthenshirefungi.co.uk/">http://www.carmarthenshirefungi.co.uk/</a>
Carmarthenshire Bird Club	<a href="https://carmarthenshirebird.club/">https://carmarthenshirebird.club/</a>
Butterflies and Moths	<a href="http://www.carmarthenshiremoths.co.uk/">http://www.carmarthenshiremoths.co.uk/</a>
Butterfly Conservation Wales	<a href="https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/wales-">https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/wales-</a>
Mid Wales Red Squirrel Partnership	<a href="https://midwalesredsquirrels.org/">https://midwalesredsquirrels.org/</a>
Plants	<a href="https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk">https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk</a> <a href="https://bsbi.org/">https://bsbi.org/</a>
Hedgehogs	<a href="https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/">https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/</a>
Bats	<a href="https://www.bats.org.uk/">https://www.bats.org.uk/</a>
Amphibians and Reptiles	<a href="https://www.arc-trust.org/">https://www.arc-trust.org/</a>
Dormice	<a href="http://www.wtwales.org/species/hazel-dormouse">http://www.wtwales.org/species/hazel-dormouse</a>
Bumblebees	<a href="https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/">https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/</a>
Invertebrates - general	<a href="https://www.buglife.org.uk/">https://www.buglife.org.uk/</a>
Swifts	<a href="https://www.swift-conservation.org/">https://www.swift-conservation.org/</a>
Barn owls	<a href="https://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/">https://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/</a>
Invasive Non-Native Species	<a href="http://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm">http://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm</a>
Birds	<a href="https://www.rspb.org.uk/">https://www.rspb.org.uk/</a>

