



The **Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership** has produced this profile to highlight some of the wildlife, habitats, and important sites in your local area.

Carmarthenshire is justly celebrated for the variety within its natural environment, from the uplands in the north-east of the county to our magnificent coastline.

Every ward contributes to the rich and varied network of wildlife habitats that make up the county, whether that be woodlands, grasslands hedgerows, rivers or gardens.

There are still gaps in our knowledge about Carmarthenshire's natural environment and the wildlife it supports. Despite having a wealth of data, some species and pockets of special habitats remain unrecorded and

unmapped. There is always more to find out.

Wildlife and our natural environment reflect local culture and past human activity. We see this in the field and hedgerow patterns in our agricultural landscapes, and in areas previously dominated by industry where, today, new habitats develop on abandoned land. And our farm, house and street names provide clues to the history of our natural environment.

The mosaic of habitats in Pontyberem make up an **ecological network**. If these habitats are well managed, are well connected and are sufficiently extensive, they will support a diversity of species and help to make a **resilient** natural environment.

A **resilient** natural environment supports wildlife and provides a range of **ecosystem services**, e.g. agricultural products, pollinators, timber, drinking water, regulation of floods and soil erosion, carbon storage and recreation and inspiration. Find out more at:

<https://bit.ly/3u12Nvp>

We hope it you will find this profile interesting and that it might encourage you to explore your local area and record what you see. There are links in the profile that will help you to find out more and take action locally.

Thank you to all those in Pontyberem who have already sent information and photos. These profiles can be updated so please continue to send us information about the Wildlife in your Ward'.

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Produced by Carmarthenshire County Council for the Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership

For further information please contact: [Biodiversity@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:Biodiversity@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)



Centred on the Gwendraeth Fawr Valley, the rich coal seams found here were mined extensively in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Pontyberem developing as a mining village. Large-scale coal extraction progressed to opencast rather than by deep mining, leaving deeper scars on the environment and often reclamation here has been to poor-quality agricultural land. Elsewhere colliery sites in the valley bottom have now reverted to woodland with a diverse array of plants, birds and insects and also the rare dormouse – nature has re-established itself. Throughout its mining past, small-scale farming continued alongside industry, and the ward has retained biodiversity interest.

Streams run down steep, narrow wooded valleys into the Gwendraeth and the main valley sides and tops are a mixture of more intensively managed fields interspersed with more species-rich wet and dry grasslands. These, along with the woodland patches of scrub and hedgerows, form an important network of habitats within the ward.

A cluster of prehistoric standing stones, chambered tombs and round barrows overlooking the Gwendraeth Fawr Valley north of Pontyberem and remind us that this area has a long history of human presence.



### Special species in your ward

All the species in your ward are important in some way and help make your natural environment special. Some of the species recorded in Pontyberem are listed by Welsh Government as being of principal importance for biodiversity in Wales – so your area is important. Here are some species highlights from your ward.



The garden tiger is one of the 424 moth species recorded your ward. It flies at night in July–August and can be found in gardens. The 'Woolly Bear' caterpillars feed on stinging nettles, docks, and many garden plants. It is suffering from the 'tidying up' of our countryside.



Whorled caraway is found on old damp 'rhôs' pastures and is rare across much of the UK. Its frothy blossom is in flower in July–August. It is our county flower. The 'whorl' of leaves gives it its name.



The hazel dormouse is a declining nocturnal animal found mainly in broadleaved woodland, scrub and hedgerows. Carmarthenshire is an important county for this mammal. Loss/fragmentation of habitat is a major cause of decline in the county as it causes the isolation of populations.



All five of the 'thrush' species have been recorded in your ward: blackbird, song and mistle thrush, redwing and fieldfare. The last two are winter visitors but can be joined by European birds of the other species, which take advantage of milder winters and lots of berries.



Areas in and around towns and villages can be excellent habitats for hedgehogs, and they often prefer them over farmland. There are good records of hedgehogs in your area. 'Wild' areas/log piles/holes in fences all help hedgehogs and other wildlife in our gardens.

## How can you help?

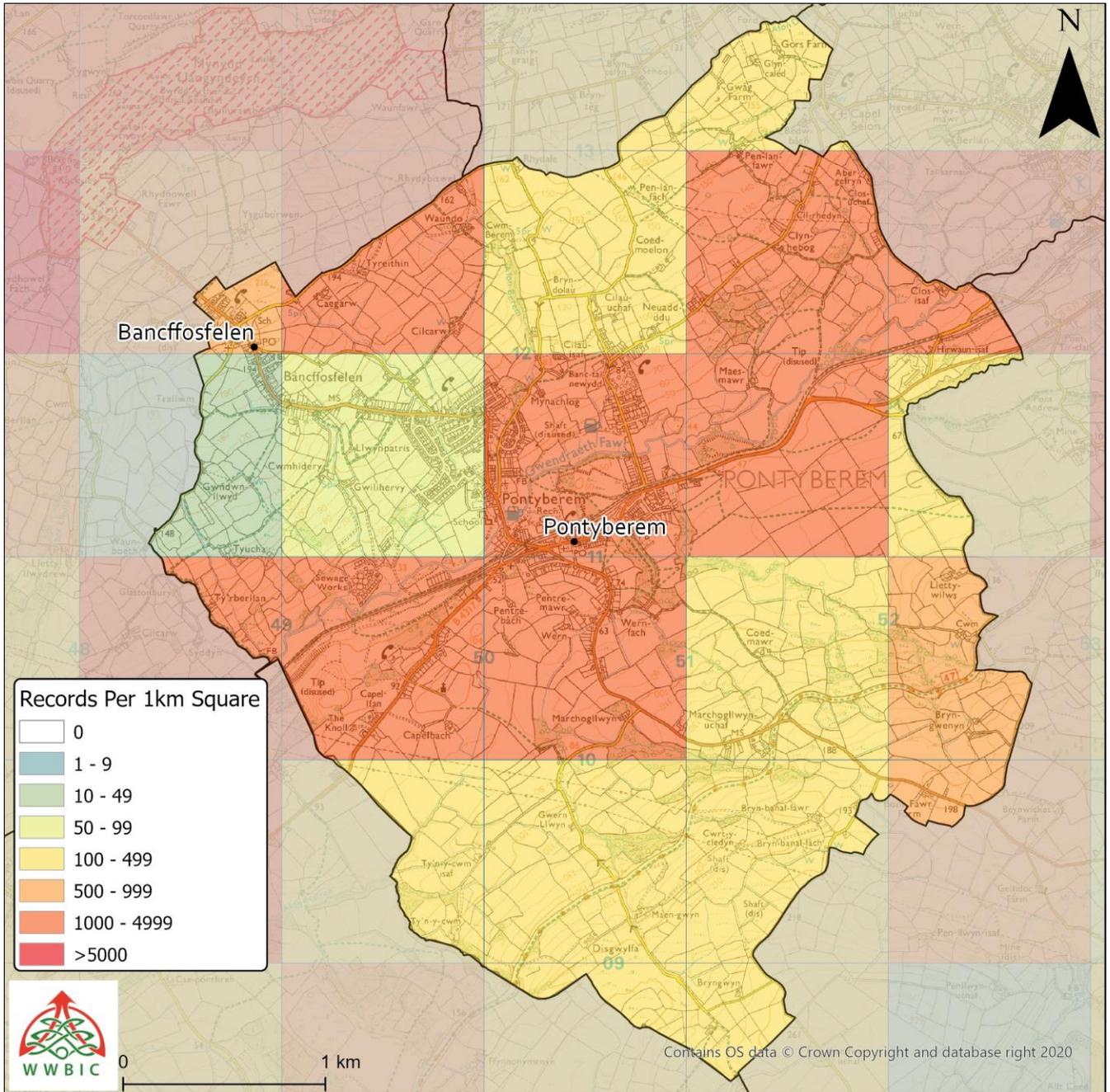
If we want to protect the wildlife in Pontyberem, help from people who live here can make a real difference. There are many groups and individuals recording their local wildlife and managing areas for Nature in the county.

- There are records of over 500 species of flowering plants but only three otter records and none for stoat or weasel.
- Why not visit the Council's biodiversity web pages and the section on priority habitats and species in the county: <https://bit.ly/3gsZgyP>
- Discover what is in your area – take a closer look at what is around you – let us know. It's amazing!
- Manage areas in your local school, village and gardens for wildlife – make space for Nature.
- Get involved with a local conservation group – volunteer some of your time for Nature.
- For a range of ideas visit: <https://bit.ly/2EENrZ6>

### Useful links:

- Carmarthenshire biodiversity web pages: <https://bit.ly/3jb2Krl>
- Carmarthenshire Nature Recovery Plan: <https://bit.ly/2QqmfOe>
- Wales Biodiversity Partnership: <https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Home>





## Help record the species in your area

West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre (WWBIC) is a valuable source of information about the county's wildlife, and anyone can contribute. Common species are often under-recorded, so you don't need to be an expert.

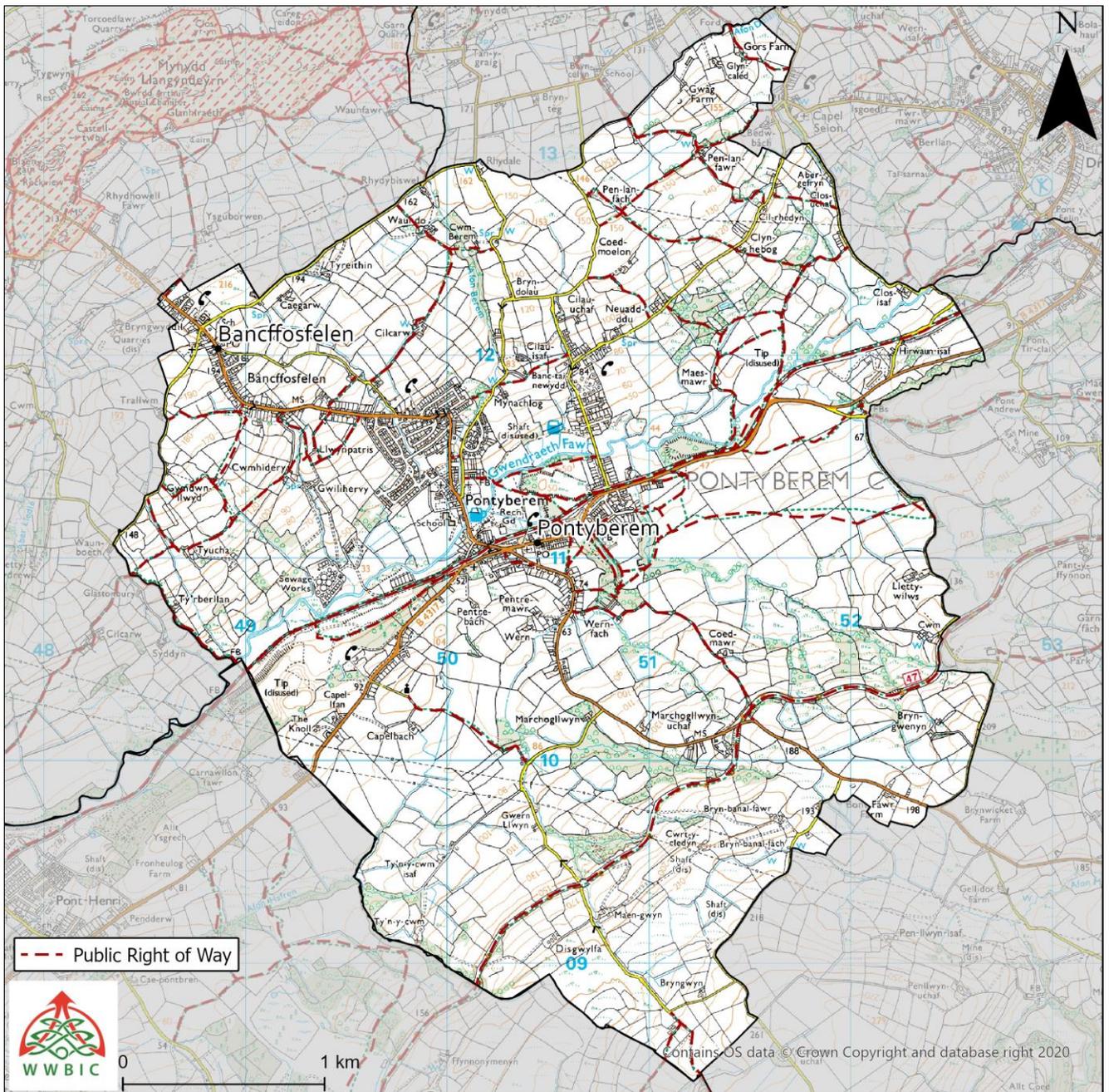
WWBIC holds a lot of biological records for Pontyberem (see the map above).

Why not record the species that you see in your garden or when you are out and about? There are several ways you can record with WWBIC, by email, on the WWBIC website or using the LERC Wales App. More information can be found here: <https://www.wwbic.org.uk/wildlife-recording/>

There are many websites that can help with species identification. If you are on social media why not join West Wales Biological Recording (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/westwalesbiorecording/>)



## Special sites in your area



In Carmarthenshire we have a network of 'designated' sites, protected at a national or international level – these are the best examples of particular habitats in Carmarthenshire or even the UK and/or places where important species live. They are the cornerstones of conservation work, protecting the core of our natural heritage.

Want to find out more? Visit the Natural Resources Wales website - <https://bit.ly/2YwEybo>.

**NB.** These protected sites do not necessarily have public access unless they have a **Public Right of Way** passing through them or are **Open Access Land** (see next page).

☞ Locally we also have nature reserves with important habitats and species which are managed by a range of organisations. Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/2LcLJkM>



➔ Your ward has a network of Public Rights of Way (PROW). These footpaths are open to everyone to enjoy and a great way for you to explore your local area and the habitats and wildlife within it. The county also has areas of 'Open Access land'.



➔ Open Access land', under the CRow Act (2000), consists of open country (mountain, moor and heath land) and 'registered common land. It also includes areas of 'dedicated land' where owners, such as Natural Resources Wales, allow free access.. In these areas you can walk wherever you like, and in the NRW managed forests you can also ride a horse or a bike on the forest tracks, but please be considerate of other users.

Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/3n2tahp>



➔ PROWs include Footpaths, Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic. There are over 2400 km of PROW across Carmarthenshire providing different levels of off road public access from walking to horse riding and cycling, each has its own unique character, you may already have your own favourite. Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/2K7k9VK>



➔ The maps in this profile are Ordnance Survey maps (OS) – they are a great way to help you find local Public Right of Way and Open Access Land either through paper maps or through their phone App. Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/2Wi52Mo>



➔ The County also boasts numerous designated cycle paths, many of which make up part of the National Cycle network and Carmarthenshire's Active Travel network. There is over 100 km of designated cycle path in the county. Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/3gQopVC> and <https://bit.ly/3gPcck8>



➔ When you are out and about - always follow the Countryside Code: <https://bit.ly/37hFjJS>

## Local walks/sites to explore

You may already have your own favourite walk in your patch, where you experience the seasonal changes throughout the year. You may walk the same route regularly, but wildlife will not. So, keep your eyes peeled there is always something new to see/experience. But why not try walking another way? You might see something different but also the same sights – just in a different way.

Please tell us about your favourite walk or place to visit - here are some ideas.

## General

➔ There are four local **Ramblers** groups in Carmarthenshire that explore the county. Find out more about the Ramblers' groups in Carmarthenshire: <https://bit.ly/3r6xZZn>

➔ **Walking Well Carmarthenshire** is an initiative which aims to encourage people of all ages and abilities to take advantage of the physical, social and mental health benefits offered by walking in groups of like-minded people. It does this by setting up walking groups around the County. Find out more: <https://bit.ly/2J48FCc>

➔ The **Discover Carmarthenshire** website promotes local walk and cycle routes: <https://bit.ly/3r35xYi>

## Your Ward

These are some of the photos we have received from you.

