

Saint Brides Major Community Council

Biodiversity Report 2024

St Brides Major Community Council represents a rural area consisting of four villages: St Brides Major (pop. 2,400), Ogmores-by-Sea (pop. 1,400), Southerndown (pop. 300) and Castle-upon-Alun. The Council comprises 11 councillors, five representing Ogmores-by-Sea ward and six representing St Brides Major ward. We are most ably supported by our two Vale Councillors.

The Council does not own any land or buildings but is responsible for St Brides Major Church in Wales burial ground and war memorials.

All local councils in Wales have a duty to prepare and publish a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) setting out its proposals to comply with the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 6.

This duty mandates the Council to enhance and maintain biodiversity and to promote the resilience of ecosystems. It also ensures that biodiversity becomes a natural and integral part of the Council's decision making and policy.

Our community council aims to publish its BAP in early 2025, but meanwhile we will provide a statement on biodiversity and outline some of our achievements.

What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth. It includes all animals, plants, fungi and micro-organisms and the complex habitats and ecosystems which they form. It includes the life in the soil as well as life we see above ground. Biodiversity is all around us: in gardens, fields, hedgerows, coasts, mountains, rivers, seas, etc. More biodiversity results in better quality of life.

Plants and animals provide food, timber and other building materials. They provide fibres for clothing and many medicines have come directly from organisms in our natural world (eg. aspirin, opiates, vincristine). An environment rich in biodiversity will enhance the quality of our life and our mental health and wellbeing. It can help alleviate stress and anxiety as well as assisting us to concentrate or relax. Environments which support a wide range of species and habitats are usually attractive ones that encourage people to visit, relax and take exercise. Outdoor exercise and recreational activities can reduce obesity, promote good mental health and enhance the quality of our lives.

The Saint Brides Major Community Council represents a rural community which embraces several ecosystems making our area an immensely rich, diverse and marvellous

environment. We have coastal, marine, river (Ogwr and Alun), woodland, enclosed farmland and calcareous heath and grassland ecosystems. Old Castle Down/Alun valley is a calcareous heath designated as a site of special scientific interest (SSSI). It has a unique habitat that supports the High Brown Fritillary, an endangered and legally protected butterfly that is only found there (only and last site in Wales). Rare violets, common twayblade (an orchid), unusual fungi, other fritillary butterflies and moths are also found there.

Achievements

- Named community councillor for leading on biodiversity.
- Commitment for biodiversity to be a fixed agenda item at Council meetings.
- Formation of a small working group (Biodiversity and Environmental Working Group) including a Vale Councillor (we will co-opt community members with special expertise and professional interests when advice is needed).
- Awarded a significant grant to High Brown Fritillary Conservation Project.
- Awarded a small grant to Trees and Flowers for Southerndown (TAFS).
- Forged good partnerships with Butterfly Conservation, TAFS, Wild Ogmore, Beach Academy, Glamorgan Heritage Coast.
- Undertaken a comprehensive bathing water review (River Ogwr). Results were published and councillors met with National Resources Wales (NRW) and Dŵr Cymru at a well-attended public meeting in Spring 2024, where residents voiced their concerns (this work is ongoing).
- Meeting of members of the public in Ogmore-by-Sea Community Centre (in April 2024) to promote the BAP and to explore different roles within our partnerships.
- Beach litter picking (Ogmore-by-Sea, Dunraven Bay).
- Clearing of rubbish and detritus from River Ogwr (dozens of tyres and several supermarket trolleys were recovered).
- Established some no mowing or restricted mowing regimens.
- Improved dog waste management.

We are committed to enhancing and maintaining biodiversity in our community. We want to demonstrate that it is an integral and natural part of our decision making and policy. We want to support a healthier and happier environment, and help to protect our varied ecosystems. This will improve the quality of life of the community that we serve.

Dr Sharon Evans

Community Councillor

Biodiversity lead

15 September 2024