

## Environment (Wales) Act 2016 – Section 6 Reporting Schedule 2022

Name of Community Council – Higher Kinnerton Community Council (HKCC)

<p><b>OVERVIEW OF COUNCIL</b></p> <p><b>COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO BIODIVERSITY</b></p> <p>Short description of the Council &amp; its functions and context in relation how it could help biodiversity (through functions with regard to management of land, grant funding, education activities etc), spatial scale and place (e.g. how much land does it cover, population, precept?), public service delivery (e.g. is it subject to the Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) Act?)</p>	<p>Higher Kinnerton is a rural village in North Wales with a population of 1,697 situated approximately 7 miles from the historic city of Chester. The Community Council has seats for nine members who represent the interests of the community.</p> <p>Although the Community Council is not subject to the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, HKCC recognise the importance of protecting and enhancing the environment.</p> <p>Whilst not owning any land, the Community Council manages an open space area in the village and has also fostered good working relationships with Flintshire County Council (FCC) as the landowner of a number of areas and open spaces in the village. This has facilitated biodiversity improvements within the open space area managed by HKCC and within areas owned by FCC. HKCC has also engaged with FCC in its capacity as highway authority to plant pollinating bulbs in several highway verges.</p> <p>HKCC also proactively engages with other community groups, local businesses and residents to encourage and support biodiversity enhancements and to raise awareness of biodiversity issues.</p> <p>In accordance with HKCC's Environmental Policy, HKCC aims to carry out its activities with environmental efficiency, actively seeking to protect and enhance biodiversity, the environment and open spaces within its area of operation whilst endeavouring to ensure wider adverse environmental impact does not occur as a result.</p> <p>Protection of the environment and open spaces is included as a key thematic in the Higher Kinnerton Village Plan 2018-2030 with a key objective to preserve, protect and act to increase wildlife, hedgerows and trees within the village.</p> <p>Following a successful application by HKCC in April 2019 to secure grant funding from the Landfill Disposal Tax Community Scheme (administered by Wales Council for Voluntary Action) for an initial 2-year period from April 2019, a Nature Wardens Project ("the Project") was launched in Summer 2019. The initial 2-year period was extended to December 2022 due to the impact of Covid.</p>
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Action carried out to:		Monitored by:
-embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement	<p>In light of the Village Plan objective to protect the environment &amp; open spaces and following a successful application to secure grant funding, a Nature Wardens Project (“the Project”) was launched in Summer 2019. The initial 2-year period was extended to December 2022 due to the impact of Covid. The Project involved improvements to existing habitats and creation of new habitats and has been devised to focus on benefitting three species listed in Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, namely bees and other pollinators, bats and hedgehogs and also trees. In addition to the Project, HKCC has worked collaboratively with Biodiversity Officers at Flintshire County Council (FCC) to organise bulb planting events and the planting of wildflowers seeds in various areas around the village.</p> <p>In accordance with HKCC’s Environmental Policy, HKCC aims to avoid the creation of unnecessary waste by adhering to a policy of considered, strategic purchasing and to encourage contractors and suppliers to minimise their impact on the environment.</p>	HKCC with support from local volunteers and FCC.
-raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance	<p>HKCC has organised several community engagement events to increase knowledge and awareness of biodiversity including bee and hedgehog awareness events, tree planting sessions, the distribution of hedgehog food, bat boxes and pollinator bulbs within the community and the publication and distribution to all households of a comprehensive Nature Wardens booklet with a focus on biodiversity.</p> <p>HKCC has also worked collaboratively with Biodiversity Officers at Flintshire County Council (FCC) to organise bulb planting events and the planting of wildflowers seeds in various areas around the village.</p> <p>HKCC frequently raises awareness of biodiversity via the monthly village newsletter such as encouraging residents to take part in initiatives which promote biodiversity including “No Mow May” and the Welsh Government initiative offering a free tree to households in Wales to help tackle the effects of climate change.</p>	HKCC with support from FCC and local volunteers

	<p>HKCC also organised a Best Pollinator Garden competition in 2022 with a view to hosting the competition in future years.</p> <p>Following participation in the Best Kept Community Competition in 2022 which focused on encouraging participants to support biodiversity, the village has been awarded silver status by demonstrating very good aspects of community involvement, biodiversity and environmental enhancements including several projects and initiatives undertaken by the local primary school that support and contribute to the local environment and biodiversity including planting lavender and lobelia in new planting beds to encourage bees and butterflies and planting sunflowers to then use the seeds for bird feeders.</p>	
-safeguard principal species and habitats	The Nature Wardens Project and the various HKCC led initiatives have involved improvements to existing habitats and creation of new habitats and has been devised to focus on benefitting three species listed in Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, namely bees and other pollinators, bats and hedgehogs and also trees.	HKCC with support from FCC and local volunteers
-restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks	The Nature Wardens Project and separate initiatives organised by HKCC have involved improvements to the wildlife area and willow arch in Park Avenue Play Area, hedging improvements in various locations around the village, creation of a number of wildflower areas and distribution of pollinator bulbs, bat boxes and hedgehog homes to residents.	HKCC with support from FCC and local volunteers
-tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature-based solutions, address invasive species	The Nature Wardens Project included hedgerow improvements to mainly ivy hedges with old boxus and small amount of hawthorn present to remove ivy growing in excess and planting of new hedgerow including dog rose hawthorn crab apple etc. As part of the Project, free trees were secured from the Woodland Trust and planted in Park Avenue Play Area. Additional hedging has been planted in the Park and on Bennetts Lane Corner. Pollinator friendly plants are selected for the various planters in the village and new pollinator and wildflower areas have been created and left to re-wild. Seeds have been sown from local wildflowers and plants collected by residents from roadside verges.	HKCC with support from FCC and local volunteers
-use, improve and share evidence	At the beginning of the Nature Wardens Project, baseline recordings were taken such as photos of all the areas of the village scheduled for improvements and enhancements which were used to inform decisions regarding the locations which have been improved and enhanced via the replacement of hedging which the Ecologist and Biodiversity officers at FCC concurred provided	HKCC with support from FCC and local volunteers

	<p>limited environmental benefit and should be replaced with native hornbeam, hawthorn and holly to improve the biodiversity of the hedging and improve visual amenity for residents. In addition, FCC shared evidence regarding various FCC biodiversity focussed initiatives and supported HKCC with the creation of wildflower areas and bulb planting sessions with HKCC and FCC sharing evidence such as photo of the areas when in flower. The additional planting should strengthen the bee and butterfly population in the village.</p>	
-support capacity, and/or other organisations	<p>The Nature Wardens Project has been delivered by a group of volunteers a number of whom during the Village Plan consultation process expressed interest in undertaking environmental improvements within the village and who, with other volunteers, continue to support and assist with environmental improvements such as maintaining the willow arch, assisting with tree and hedge planting and maintenance and planting bulbs and pollinator-friendly plants. As part of the Nature Wardens Project, wildflower areas and pollinator planting areas have been created within the churchyard grounds and within the outdoor space at the local coffee shop. In addition, FCC have provided guidance and support with the creation of wildflower areas and bulb planting.</p>	<p>HKCC with support from FCC and local volunteers</p>
<p>Review of s6 duty</p> <p>What has worked well?</p>	<p>In addition to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and promoting the resilience of eco systems, Nature Wardens Project and other initiatives arranged by HKCC have also benefitted residents in the village with environmental improvements contributing to general wellbeing and with organised events and initiatives such as tree and bulb improving community cohesion. HKCC will continue to work with the biodiversity officers at FCC to further support and enhance biodiversity in the village going-forward. HKCC will also undertake independent improvements such as maintaining pollinator friendly planters, hosting the Best Pollinator Garden competition and encouraging participation in national initiatives such as Wales Nature Week, the Big Garden Birdwatch and the Big Butterfly Count. Additionally, HKCC are also planning to implement a village heritage trail with of particular focus on village heritage and a focus on nature and biodiversity in the surrounding village.</p> <p>The Project along with the various initiatives arranged by HKCC will benefit three species listed in Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, namely bats bees and hedgehogs, which are now better catered for and sustained as a result of the various initiatives. The installation of bat boxes around the village including maternity roosts should continue to give long term benefit. Additional planting should strengthen the bee population in the village, and the distribution of a hedgehog food has successfully ensured residents are encouraged to support and protect hedgehogs in the village. By participating in the Project and HKCC led initiatives, residents should have increased awareness and understanding of biodiversity and eco-systems and also be better connected to their community.</p>	

	By working collaboratively with FCC going forward and by members of HKCC attending various biodiversity focussed conferences and events, HKCC will be in an increasingly strong position to further support and improve biodiversity in the village.
What have the barriers been?	A number of events which HKCC had planned as part of the Nature Wardens Project could not be progressed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Also, plans for the creation of a number of wildflower areas and additional planting in some roadside verges had to be reconsidered after consultation with residents resulted in objections.
What will you change?	Going forward, HKCC will ensure the collaborative working relationship that has been forged with the biodiversity officers at FCC continues in order to harness invaluable support and resource for initiatives and projects to further enhance and support biodiversity. HKCC will host awareness raising events, facilitate collaboration between residents who wish to support biodiversity enhancements and will continue to utilise the village newsletter and the website to help ensure residents have increased awareness and understanding of biodiversity and eco-systems.
How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?	<p>A key requirement of the grant funding secured in 2019 involved sharing the successes and challenges of the Project to enable the Wales Council for Voluntary Action to demonstrate and publicise what the Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme is delivering for the benefit of communities in Wales. Consequently, detailed 6 monthly returns were completed which effectively monitored and reviewed compliance with the S6 duty.</p> <p>In addition, HKCC will continue to embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their early thinking and budget planning and ensure due consideration to biodiversity is included in any relevant policies, plans and projects, as well as HKCC's day to day activities and ensure a review of the S6 plan is undertaken annually.</p>