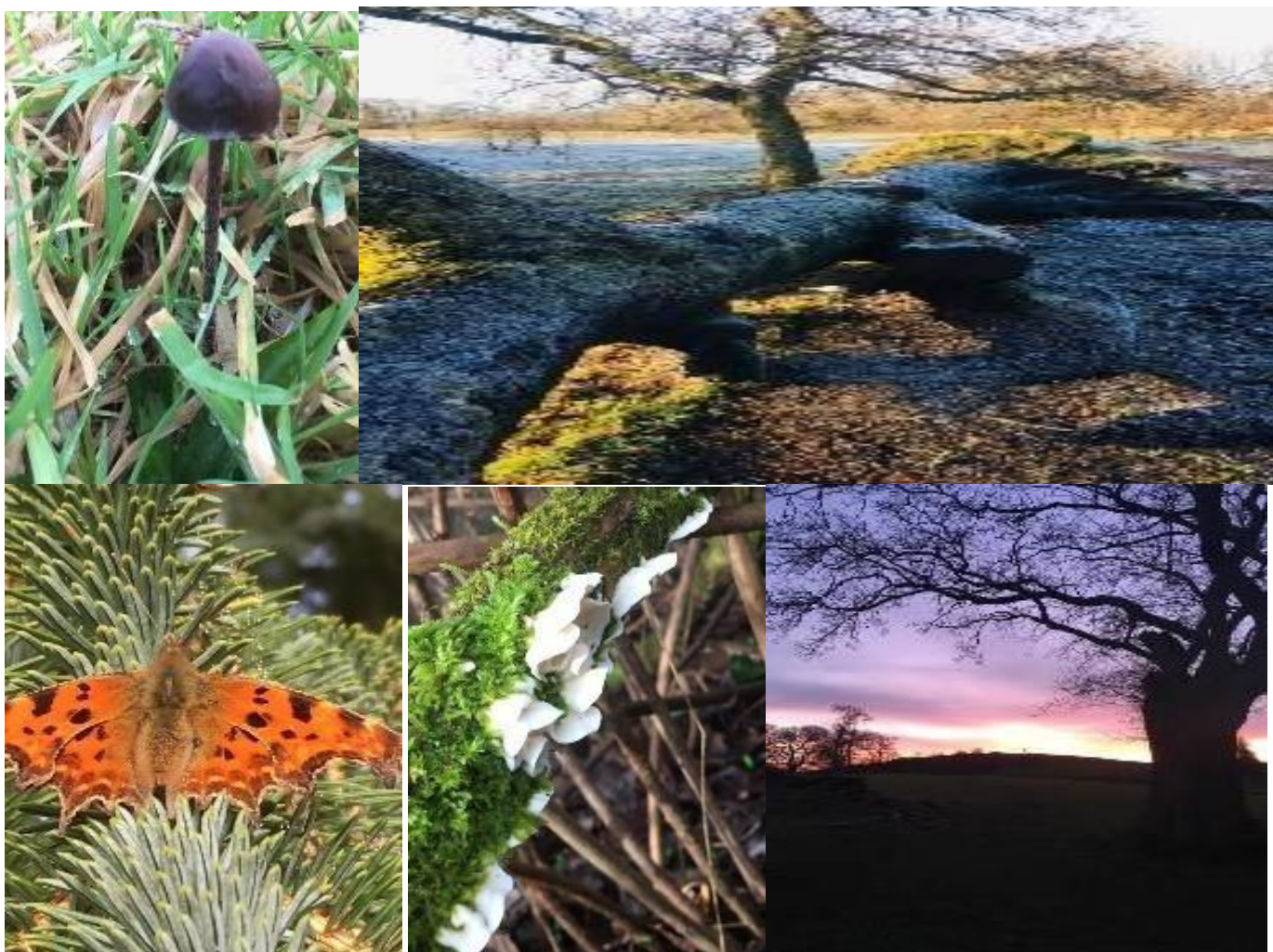




Van Community Council

Biodiversity Report

2023



VAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL/ CYNGOR CYMUNED Y FAN
Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1
Section 6 The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty.

Van Community Council serves approximately 2500 dwellings including the areas of Lansbury, Porset, Castle Park and Mornington Meadows in Caerphilly. The precept for 2023-24 is £28,500

Van Community Council comprises of ten elected Members and one paid part-time member of staff.

The Community Council does not own or manage any buildings but does own one piece of land which was acquired in October 2018. This is lying to the south of Van Terrace in Caerphilly. This land is currently earmarked for an orchard and flower beds. Van Community council successfully obtained a grant for this project through Local Places for Nature, and this is to be managed by volunteers over a period of five years.



The local school in partnership with the community centre in our ward have also planted a range of vegetables and flowers in raised beds, in its grounds.

Within the geographical areas served by Van Community Council, there is one industrial area known as Caerphilly Business Park. In addition, there are currently substantial areas of open countryside including Gwern y Domen, Castle Mound, Van Mansion and Coed y Maerdy.

There is a thriving ecosystem and a wide range of wildlife lives in this vicinity. Extensive areas of mature trees over pasture, hedgerows, scrub and ruderal herbs, as well as some protected species. It has rare wildflower meadows, several types of fungi, insects, birds and more. Residents benefit from this ancient greenfield land, which is greatly used by the local community for walking, riding and enjoying the natural environment.

Services and Activities

The Community Council provides a range of services to its local community which have an impact on biodiversity. These include:

- Gwern y Dolen is currently under threat from developers wishing to build 600+ homes with associated infrastructure. Van Community Council have noted their objections which assisted in the rejection of a recent planning application.
- Giving grants for projects in the Council's area. These impact on biodiversity through cascading funding criteria.
- Actively supporting litter picks.

Action

Tackle negative factors: e.g. Reduce pollution

- Office supplies such as paper are sourced locally
- Where possible items are made from recycled materials
- Increase use of communications technology to reduce paper
- Use of energy saving lighting
- Grant-making policy to require any organisations receiving a grant from Council to demonstrate how this will contribute to supporting biodiversity as part of their project .

Support capacity and/or other organisations

Restore and create habitats and resilient ecological networks

- Encourage the planting of hanging baskets and planters with native pollinator friendly flowers
- In recent years, wildflowers have been planted at roundabouts, road islands and road verges – to provide a refuge for bees, butterflies and birds, encouraging pollination and reducing grass cutting requirements.
- Van council strives to source funding to provide accessible nature to their residents and use the CIL levy responsibly.

Raise awareness of biodiversity and its importance

- Members who are School Governors work with schools and partner organisations to increase activity at sites such as St James Primary School
- Promote local green projects and initiatives on the Community Council website and social media pages.
- Supported litter picking events, including local schools and voluntary groups as an opportunity to raise awareness and promote the “reduce, reuse and recycle” ethos.
- In 2022 executive detached houses were built on Van Road, The Paddock. Van Community Council are aware that this kind of development encourages people to buy here and commute to the city.

Safeguard principal species and habitats

- Van Community Council will ensure that biodiversity is high on our priorities when considering the land at Van Terrace.

Embed biodiversity into decision making and procurement

- Van Community Council take into account biodiversity when considering planning applications. Formal objections in relation to speculative applications from developers on green field sites, impacts of developments on public rights of way, tree preservation orders and the safeguarding of SINC areas have been submitted as a result.

Monitor

How and when will the S6 duty be monitored and the S6 plan reviewed?

- Council will work on identifying additional opportunities to embed biodiversity and ecosystems into Council activities.
- The plan will be reviewed on a 3-yearly basis by the Clerk in conjunction with the Full Council.