

BROWNFIELD, GARDENS AND URBAN OPEN SPACE GROUPED ACTION PLAN

Introduction and Vision Statement

This grouped habitat includes the Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land, urban open space and garden habitats.

Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land ('brownfield' habitat) includes land that is or was once occupied by industrial or other human uses but which has now become disused, derelict or is currently unoccupied (in some cases they may still be in use). Such sites might include former colliery sites, disused quarries, spoil tips, restored opencast sites, pulverised fuel-ash (pfa) and metaliferous slag substrates, demolished or derelict factory sites, industrial lagoons, derelict railway land, redundant dockland, contaminated land, former refuse tips, etc. This land may occur in both built-up and rural settings.



Brownfield sites can often remain unused for many years and recolonisation by plants and animals on these undisturbed areas can lead to the development of a diverse flora and fauna with a complex succession of habitats forming a mosaic (patchwork), from bare ground to grassland, scrub and woodland. These areas often provide alternative habitats for many species that have declined due to loss of their native habitats in the wider countryside because of intensification of agriculture and urbanisation. Often the biodiversity value of these areas is underestimated and can be important for many species, especially plants, birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles (herpetiles) and invertebrates.

Remnants of original habitats may remain within post-industrial sites which, although isolated and fragmented, can be important for biodiversity and act as a vital local genetic resource for recolonisation of disturbed areas. They can act as wildlife corridors in otherwise built-up or urban areas as well as providing valuable habitat in otherwise species-poor rural situations. Species may be introduced in dumped soil and ballast and exotic species may grow that are more often associated with other habitats or countries; these species may reflect the area's past international trade and could be seen to have some cultural value, e.g. certain annual species at Burry Port and Pembrey.

These areas are often valued by local people for casual recreation, such as for dog walking and often have informal amenity value. Research findings indicate that nature plays a vital role in human health and well-being, and that parks and nature reserves play a significant role by providing access to nature for individuals. There is compelling evidence that contact with nature can help maintain good physical health and recovery from illness, alleviate stress and mental health problems and enhance social interaction and improve community cohesion.

In recent years, brownfield sites have become increasingly recognized nationally as important havens for wildlife. They often support protected species and may now carry designations in order to safeguard such species. However, increasing numbers are being designated on their own merit as habitats of importance develop. These include, for example, sites of former alkali tips, pulverised fuel-ash (pfa) lagoons, coal-spoil tips and gravel pits.

Many brownfield sites in Carmarthenshire are richer in the number of species (whether plant, bird or insect) than large swathes of the intensively farmed countryside. One former settling lagoon at Pwll of the former Burry Port Power Station is actually a Site of Special Scientific Interest by virtue of an extraordinary mix of fenland and woodland plants, whilst another site nearby ('Ashpits Pond') is important for its wildfowl.

The majority of post industrial sites in Carmarthenshire occur in the south-east of the county, particularly on the Coalfield and the limestone quarrying areas, although most towns have derelict or development sites which are within the scope of this habitat definition.

Over recent years **gardens and allotments** have become increasingly important habitats for wildlife, including many species now rare in the wider countryside. Gardens and allotments can also be important wildlife corridors. In our towns, a large proportion of available wildlife habitat is provided by gardens, which are the 'green lungs' of our urban environment.

Gardens also play an important role in allowing people to have close contact with nature. However many gardening practices are detrimental from a biodiversity perspective and more work is needed to encourage wildlife-friendly gardening. For example, the use of peat has a detrimental effect on our peatland habitats.

As the wider environment loses species, gardens provide a refuge for a huge variety of birds and insects. Other species such as hedgehogs and amphibians may now have significant strongholds in urban back gardens.

Allotments can also cover a significant area of land in towns and can therefore make a valuable contribution to the wildlife potential of urban areas. The diversity of habitats found in allotments – cultivated and fallow ground, grassy areas, empty overgrown plots, compost heaps, sheds etc – make them important for a wide range of plants and animals. Allotments offer benefits for the whole community and contribute to the sustainable regeneration of towns and cities, providing green areas in urban environments.

Urban open space is a term used to describe parks, green spaces, and other open areas such as playing fields. They can be highly managed environments or relatively natural areas. They are commonly open to public access.

These areas are important because they offer good recreational opportunities for people. They can be islands of nature, supporting biodiversity and providing a habitat for natural species in environments that are otherwise uninhabitable due to urban development. Appropriately managed urban open spaces can be places where local communities can enjoy nature in an urban setting.

Carmarthenshire's towns have some good examples of parks and open spaces. Parc Howard in Llanelli contrasts with the more newly created open space within the Millennium Coastal Park. Betws Park in Ammanford is a good example of formal gardens alongside the natural river habitat with rough grassland at the end of the park. Small settlements have areas of recreational open space containing play sports areas. In Llandeilo Parc Penlan has recently been given Green Flag status and hopefully will start a trend of managing parks for biodiversity as well as more formal recreation.

A key aim of conserving biodiversity where people live is to enable them to have positive/enjoyable contact with everyday wildlife, from sparrows in the park, to butterflies in

the garden and frogspawn in the local pond, with the ultimate objective that people will find nature such an inseparable part of their lives that they will be prepared to use their time, energy and influence to conserve it.

Our vision for this habitat is to maintain and enhance the wildlife value and potential of brownfield habitats, gardens and other urban open spaces, and increase awareness of the biodiversity of importance of gardens and the opportunities they provide for public engagement with conservation at a local level.

Associated species:	Small Blue	Round-headed club rush
Common linnet	Dingy Skipper	Small-flowered catchfly
Yellowhammer	Grayling	Lead-moss
Herring gull	Wall	Maidenhair fern
Common starling		
Northern lapwing	Slow worm	Dark Spinach (moth)
House sparrow	Common toad	V-moth
Song thrush	Common lizard	The Cinnabar
Hedge accentor	Grass snake	
Kestrel	Adder	Brown-banded carder bee
Ringed plover		
	Cornflower	
Brown hare	Deptford Pink	
Hedgehog	Darnel	
Bat spp.	Pennyroyal	
	Bird's Nest	

Action Plan Objectives

- BR1ME** To ensure there is the right amount of appropriate quality open space in the right places in built up areas of Carmarthenshire to provide for biodiversity and people's need to have contact with it
- BR2ME** To maintain the extent of brownfield habitats in Carmarthenshire that support BAP/S42 habitats and species
- BR3AC** To secure appropriate management for biodiversity of significant areas of public open space/brownfield sites within the county
- BR4AC** To increase the number of wildlife-friendly features in gardens in the county
- BR5EX** To increase the number of allotments in Carmarthenshire
- BR6SP** To maintain and expand the range and/or population of species associated with these habitat types

CODE	TEXT	START /END DATE	Lead organisation	Action Goals	Key Partners	Funding?	Priority L,M,H	Report Jan–Dec 2010	Report Jan–Dec 2011
BR2ME1	Ensure all landscaping schemes for developments on previously developed sites contain locally native species (of local origin) and are managed to retain biodiversity interest	2010–ongoing	CCC	100% of relevant planning applications	WAG Developers CCW	✓ Developer	H	100% Habitat Mgt Plan S/22331 Ongoing Applications – W/23542 – W/23545.	
BR2ME2	Establish a example site in Llanelli area for public demonstration of brownfield plant and animal communities	2010–2014	CCC	At least one site established	Joint Venture	✓	H	Plans drawn up for site at Machynys Mound, Llanelli (SN401197), which includes an area of ‘brownfield’ habitat developed with help from LBAP Partner. Planning application in early 2011.	
BR2ME3	Ensure the biodiversity value of all coal spoil sites with the potential for development is treated as a material consideration	2010–ongoing	CCC	100% of relevant planning applications	CCW BSBI			100% Ongoing applications – S/18128, S/23696.	
BR3AC1	Increase the biodiversity management of our parks and public open space by creating more ‘Green Flag’ parks	2010–2014	CCC	1/year for 5 years	Grounds Maintenance	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penlan Park in Llandeilo in second year of designation as GFP – designated in 2009 (SN626222). • Llyn Llech Owain Country Park designated in 2010 (SN566150). • Gelli Aur Country Park designated in 2010 (SN596199). 	
BR3AC2	Manage the wild meadow area on the brownfield habitat at Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park to increase floristic interest	2010–2014	CCC	One site managed	Mynydd Mawr WP	✓		Unable to manage site this year as no budget to get equipment to remove arisings. (SN539125)	
BR4AC1	Meet targets for wildlife-friendly features through pledges to have nest boxes, bat boxes, compost bins, wood piles in Carmarthenshire gardens as part of biodiversity gardening project	2010–12	CCC,	100 pledges	WTSWW, NBGW CCW	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited success with this project, despite good publicity and online pledge facilities. Only 12 pledges received. • Will continue to promote in 2011 using a slightly different approach. 	
BR4AC2	Together with EcoSchools/EcoChallenge project seek funding to create more wildlife gardens within school grounds.	2010–2014	CCC	10	Eco Schools project CCC EcoChallenge	✓		No action yet – but EcoChallenge for Secondary Schools to undertake sustainability project including wildlife areas – 14 schools submitted applications.	
BR5EX1	Increase the number of allotments in the Carmarthenshire as part of a county-wide allotment scheme	2010–2014	CCC	At least 50 allotments	Llanelli Green Network National Trust	✓		Nine new sites have been identified as potential allotment plots and are at	• CCC report on allotment provision produced Feb 2011.

								various stages of development. Details of 3 schemes are: • Llwynhendy - being developed in spring 2011 – 18 allotments. • Dafen (Llanelli) is currently on hold (SN527007) • Pontyberem – planning ongoing.		
BR5EX2	Establish a best practice allotment at the NBGW to show how to manage a plot for food and wildlife	2010-2013	NBGW	One best practice allotment established		✓		Allotment established within the walled garden – a replica of one taken to the Royal Welsh show in 2010. (SN521183)		
BR5EX3	Project to create of public open space at edge of Carmarthen town	2010-2014	CCC	1 area created and managed	WTSWW EAW	✓		Land in process of being purchased. Project to proceed in 2011.		
BR6SP1	Lead-moss <i>Ditrichum plumbicola</i> - monitor sites in Rhandirmwyn (ex mineral sites) and raise awareness of presence of the species here: Nant y Bai (SN787446) and Nant y Mywn (SN781434)	2010–2014	CCW	At least one site visit Info passed to planning	CCC			No action in 2010	Info to Community Council, Planning ecologist and Minerals Officer – Feb 2011.	
BR6SP2	Prepare management plan for Bird's nest (<i>Monotropa</i>) at Ash Pits Pond area to include annual monitoring (SN475008)	2010–2014	Llanelli Nats	Management Plan prepared	CCC (MCP)		H	Not started – priority action for 2011 – SJ.		
BR6SP3	Investigate the possibility of a partner project to promote bee keeping in the county	2010–2014	NBGW	Introduction to bee keeping course at NBGW	Carms Beekeepers Assoc	✓		Two introductory courses and one advanced course on beekeeping held in NBGW in 2010–11.		
DCM2BR1	Identify and record on GIS all coal spoil habitat in the county with particular focus on lichen-rich heath communities	2010–2014	CCC	One GIS layer produced	WWBIC BSBI CCW	✓		Not started.		
DCM2BR2	Identify and record priority areas of brownfield habitats on GIS within Carmarthenshire, including those owned by the council	2010–2014	WWBIC	One GIS layer produced	CCC BSBI CCW	✓		Not started.		
DCM2BR3	Survey identified areas of previously developed land of biodiversity interest in Carmarthenshire	2010–2014	Llanelli Nats, BSBI	At least 5 key sites surveyed	CCW	✓		Not started.		
RA1BR1	Produce PR on health benefits of gardening/getting outdoors and importance of biodiversity in these activities	2010–2014	CCC	At least one PR produced	NBGW WTSWW		L	Not started – 2011 action.		
RA2BR1	Hold seminars on importance of brownfield habitats at Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park	2011-2012	CCC	One seminar held for CCC planning/regeneration officers 1 School session	CCW BSBI	✓	M/H	Not started – possible 2011 action		
RA2BR2	Use existing biodiversity gardening information to promote wildlife gardening	2010–2014	CCC	Info on website One public event	WTSWW	✓		• Online advice available. • Leaflet produced.		

	through NBGW, local garden centres and other identified outlets			Info at garden centres				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laminated poster version available for events. • Event held at NBGW on 18 May – RSPB/WTSWW/BC attended. • Leaflet still to be distributed to garden centres – 2011 action 		
RA2BR3	Raise awareness and problem of invasive aquatic plants	2010–2014	CCC	Leaflets to all major garden centres/ nurseries	WAG	✓	H	No progress – CCC wildlife gardening leaflet and WAG invasive aquatic species leaflet to be distributed in 2011.		
RA42BR4	Promote organic/permaculture/wildlife gardening practices on allotments	2010–2014	CCC	Distribute wildlife Gardening leaflet to Allotment Grps	NBGW	✓		Not started		
RA4BR1	Raise awareness of the importance of urban green spaces for biodiversity and wildlife gardening, through walks/activities at targeted sites in the county.	2010–2014	CCC	At least one guided walk/talk every 2 years	Llanelli Nats		M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk held during WBW at Morfa Berwig site – June 10 2010. • Walk held at Pwll Lagoon and Ashpits Pond – 12 August. Llanelli Naturalists • Talk to Cwrt Henri Gardening Club July 2010 	• Talk to Bronwydd Gardening Club – 19/02/2011	
RA4BR2	Add a descriptions of brownfield habitats to the Carmarthenshire Biodiversity website with maps and photos	2010	CCC	Description on website with map			M	Completed – map still to be done.		
RA4BR3	Develop interpretation at NBGW on wildlife gardening (SN521183).	2010–2014	NBGW	Interpretation panel		✓		Allotment supplemented by plastic bottle greenhouse, wildlife nest boxes and sound box interpretation.		
POL2BR1	Identify a list of candidate brownfield SINC's in the county – prioritising habitat within settlement limits	2010–2014	CCC	List/map produced	WWBIC BSBI	✓	H	Not started		