

# USK TOWN COUNCIL

## USK TOWN COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT

### Usk Town Council - Review of s6 duty February 2023

How Usk Town Council has helped with biodiversity

- ❖ Planning Applications - all planning applications are considered with their impact on biodiversity. UTC wishes to prevent the unnecessary removal of trees and considers the impact of local drainage and watercourses
- ❖ As a Town Council we have declared a Climate Emergency
- ❖ UTC has sixty-two allotments and there is currently a waiting list
- ❖ UTC has a green and ethical procurement policy
- ❖ Proud to be the Birthplace of Alfred Russel Wallace and the ARW nature trail
- ❖ Physics Garden in the Roger Edwards Building
- ❖ Community Garden by St. Mary's Church
- ❖ Usk Primary School has its own growing garden/pond/forest school
- ❖ Fortunate that the town sits on the River Usk
- ❖ Tree Trail with rare species
- ❖ UTC planted a tree for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee & plan to plant an oak tree for the King's Coronation
- ❖ UTC in conjunction with Monmouthshire County Council refurbished the Maryport Street South car park.

Much consideration went into the works. In order to comply with Sustainable Urban Drainage four rain gardens topped with 200mm of free draining topsoil were planted. The Usk Environmental Group volunteered to take on the rain gardens and planted a rose hedge at the bottom of the car park and wildflowers in the central area. This was followed with further planting of daffodils, crocus and snowdrops.

- ❖ UTC is looking to introduce a Community Fridge to help reduce food waste in the former Usk Household Recycling Centre in the near future.

UTC encourages the various organisations to share best practice and ideas and works closely with the following voluntary groups, offering support with their initiatives and awareness campaigns.

### Usk Together for the Climate

The "Usk Together for the Climate" meet regularly. The group instigated the Usk Winter Feast, which was a community meal offered on a 'pay as you feel' basis. It was delivered by 15-20 volunteers and brought sixty people together to share an interest in food and support the local farmers' market.

- ❖ The group delivered a number of Swift Box courses
- ❖ Intends to set up a community growing garden

## **Save the River Usk**

The purpose of the group is

- To stop pollution in the River Usk.
- To give a non- political voice for Nature and the River Usk.
- To report issues to Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Welsh Government (WG), Monmouthshire County Council (MCC),

Save the River Walk Usk has set 40+ volunteers to test the river for phosphates, nitrogen & electro current. There is an App (Epicollect) on which testers upload their data.

## **Usk Rotary Club**

Usk Rotary Club has set up an arboretum with two hundred trees planted in a disused area of Usk

## **Usk in Bloom**

Usk in Bloom (UiB) is a community-led project that works to enhance the appearance of the town of Usk. The project is run by a dedicated team of volunteers who work to create a vibrant and attractive environment for residents and visitors alike.



This year UiB completed the first phase of an improvement to the town's main road route from the A449, adding raised beds planted with grasses and insect friendly plants. This project highlights the efforts made by Usk in Bloom to protect and conserve the local environment and its biodiversity. It is also a sign of the commitment to sustainable development and the importance of preserving the natural environment. The second phase will be completed this year (March/April 2023).

Other activities this year have included the following

- ❖ Usk in Bloom has planted a new daffodil area in the ground outside the school, which includes planting five thousand new Welsh Tenby bulbs
- ❖ UiB produced a Tree Trail leaflet with information to enhance visitor and residents' experience while walking through our lovely town.
- ❖ Their maintenance of the Girl Guide garden (now five years old) and the Play Park project garden continues
- ❖ Replacing the compost in the Twyn Square with peat free.
- ❖ Reusing the old compost at the Towns allotments and cricket club
- ❖ Pollinator friendly plants sourced locally

## **Usk Environmental Group**

This group is actively engaged with Jane's Meadow, and both encourages and supports wildflower projects

Other organisations UTC works with are

- ❖ Monmouthshire County Council & the "No Mow May" – this is now practised on all Council land.

- ❖ Welsh Water, Dwr Cymru – they are investing more than £10m in Usk over the next three years to improve the town's water treatment works and upgrade a combined storm overflow.

### **Summary**

The reduction from twelve councillors to seven has meant less time for members to allocate time to matters of concern. However, UTC considers it has the ability to raise awareness about the serious challenge of tackling biodiversity, and therefore will ensure the duty be monitored and reported on with the help of the various local organizations.