



Reporting on Section 6

Community and Town Councils

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6 *The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty*

| The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2025 | | |
|---|--|---|
| Name of Community or Town Council: | Usk Town Council | |
| Group: | 2 | |
| Introduction and Context | | |
| <p>Usk Town Council serves a population of around 2,300. The parish covers around 1.5 square miles which consists of town, woods and fields. The parish is north of the River Usk with the south being covered by Llanbadoc Community Council. The A472 is a major primary route running through the town from the A449.</p> <p>Usk Town Council has 7 councillors, one of which is a County Councillor. Staff comprises of a part-time Clerk and a part time RFO. Precept for 2024/25 was £173,112.00 and the precept for 2025/2026 is £186,500.00</p> <p>Usk Town Council and the town own the Sessions House building at 43, Maryport Street, Usk, where all council business is conducted. The Sessions House is managed by the clerk and the council, the grounds are owned and maintained by the council giving a unique opportunity to adopt projects to enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>Usk is a hundred of Monmouthshire and Monmouthshire County Council are responsible for the upkeep of the highways, grounds and planning within the town.</p> | | |
| Action Report 2023 - 2025 | | |
| NRAP Objective | Action carried out to... | Monitored by: |
| 1 | <p>-embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement</p> <p>Usk Town Council established a Biodiversity Committee in September 2025. All councillors are encouraged to attend meetings and Biodiversity has been added as an item to the monthly Hybrid Meetings.</p> <p>In 2025 Usk Town Council applied for One Voice Wales Biodiversity packages and were present for their site visit to discuss development opportunities.</p> | <p>Clerk and Biodiversity Committee Full Council and RFO</p> <p>Clerk and Councillors</p> |



| | | | |
|----------|--|--|---|
| | <p>-raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance</p> | <p>Council members are made aware of when Biodiversity meetings are to be held and are encouraged to attend.</p> <p>Agendas and Minutes of meetings are posted on the town council’s website. Meetings are open to the public.</p> <p>Social media posts, website news and noticeboards are used to inform residents of Biodiversity news and environmental events taking place in the town.</p> <p>Successes of Biodiversity and environmental events/community work are reported in the local monthly magazine, The Diary.</p> <p>Usk Town Council conducts regular reviews to ensure the sustainability and maintenance of the historic, listed Sessions House, preserving its heritage while optimizing efficiency.</p> <p>Usk Town Council have been successful in bidding for ‘It’s for Them’ OVW Biodiversity signage for their site. Two signs will be installed Spring 2026, this will make residents aware, will be a barrier to mowing and a prevention to gorilla planting.</p> | <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk and Sessions House Committee</p> <p>Clerk and Biodiversity Committee</p> |
| <p>2</p> | <p>-safeguard principal species and habitats</p> | <p>As part of our commitment to biodiversity and sustainable land management, Usk Town Council have adopted a <i>mowing/not mowing</i> approach for their grounds</p> <p>Appointed areas are cut back firmly in March, ensuring a clean start to the growing season. These areas are then left unmown until the end of Summer, allowing wildflowers and grasses to flourish, supporting pollinators, and enhancing local habitats.</p> <p>This practice balances the need for tidy, accessible spaces with our responsibility to protect and encourage biodiversity.</p> <p>200 native bulbs were planted by councillors in the gardens of the Sessions House in November 2025.</p> <p>Invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed are monitored and reported to the Local Authority and National Resources Wales.</p> | <p>Clerk and Biodiversity Committee</p> <p>Clerk and Councillors</p> <p>Clerk and Councillors</p> |



| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| | | <p>Usk Town Council and Monmouthshire County Council do not use glyphosate weed killer. Most hedges and verges are left to nature and are protected under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.</p> <p>Trees have been pollarded not chopped.</p> | Councillors |
| 3 | -restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks | <p>In September 2025, One Voice Wales' Biodiversity Officer met with the Clerk and Councillors to carry out a site visit in preparation for the bid for project funding. Usk Town Council secured a wildflower package from One Voice Wales which will be planted in Sessions House Spring 2026 to create a wildflower garden with pathways. This will be mown according to guidance.</p> <p>Funding for a pond-scape and ecological survey has been secured for Castle Oak pond (which supports the habitat for the greater crested newt) to enhance and develop the site with the prospect of building further ponds to develop ecological pathways.</p> <p>In May 2025, Usk Mayor donated £600 to Usk Primary School for the enhancement and development of their gardens. She has requested that the money helps towards the restoration of the pond and its habitat.</p> <p>Usk Town Council supports the work of Usk Together for the Climate and their organic garden. They grow fruit and vegetables to provide an 'outside larder' and have a PEG policy – Please Eat the Garden.</p> <p>Usk Conservation and Environmental Group manages areas within the town to promote habitats for insects and wildlife. A wide range of native flowering plants have been sown in 'Jane's Meadow' to encourage bees and butterflies. The site is well developed and frogs are often seen at the meadow site. Rosa mundi have been planted to attract bees and the autumn hips provide sustenance for birds. Eco-piles of cut residue have been stacked to provide winter shelter for amphibians, mammals and insects, and bird boxes have been added to surrounding trees.</p> <p>Usk Memorial Hall Trustees have maintained their gardens and carpark beds, Usk WI provided a 'Help Yourself' bed during the summer months.</p> | <p>Clerk</p> <p>County Councillor</p> <p>Councillor</p> <p>Councillors</p> <p>Councillors</p> <p>Councillors</p> |



| | | | |
|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| | | Usk Town Council follows the work of Usk Swifts who have organised Swift Walks and provided workshops for installing nesting boxes during the past 2 years. | Councillors |
| 4 | -tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature based solutions, address invasive species | Usk Town Council support the Usk Litter Action Group which meet once a month to clear verges and communal spaces. | Councillors |
| | | Usk Town Council support the environmental group Save the River Usk who have launched The Clean Water Bill for Wales by calling on the Senedd to introduce strong legislation that protects our Welsh rivers and coastal waters. Usk Town Council have regular updates from the group and endorse their campaigns. With a team of 120 citizen scientists, including several Usk residents, Save the River Usk team participate in a weekly water sampling programme to monitor phosphate levels and E. coli. | Councillors |
| | | In October 2025, Usk Town Councillors visited the Sewer Pumping Station, at Usk Wastewater Treatment Works to view improvements to the operation of their wastewater assets in the Usk area. A £10 million investment project to improve the way the waste network operate in Usk has now been completed. Investment ensured that the waste network has enough capacity to deal with the waste that it receives and treats before safely returning it to the local environment. | Councillors |
| | | Usk Conservation and Environmental Group (a community group) organise Balsam Bashing as and when the need arises. | Councillors |
| | | Usk Town Council provides 8 dog waste bins throughout the town and offers free dog waste bags for the community. Councillors regularly attend Dog Fouling Awareness training and meetings and have a strong relationship with the Health and Safety Office at Monmouthshire County Council. Recognising dog waste as a persistent hazard on Pook Lane, councillors and Local Authority officers have worked together to instal clear signage and chalk- | Clerk and Councillors |



| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|---|
| | | <p>marking deposits, helping raise awareness and protect the environment. Regular social media posts regarding dog fouling are used to encourage dog owners to respect the communal areas of the town.</p> <p>Councillors have worked with the Usk Air Quality Steering Group to receive and share information and data on Usk traffic pollution, predominantly along Bridge St, the A472.</p> <p>Sessions House recycles its paper, plastic and food waste. Sessions House has a used battery collection box for the community.</p> <p>Usk Town Council has a 'plastic free' policy, e.g. using only card and paper packaged gifts for children at Christmas,</p> | <p>Councillors</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Councillors</p> |
| 5 | -use improve and share evidence | <p>Councillors are actively looking to support and design projects that will enhance the local area and support biodiversity. Planning has begun on developing two areas, one a raised walkway through countryside with the development of the surrounding habitat, another to provide a cleaner public community space.</p> <p>Councillors and Clerk have undertaken Environmental training through One Voice Wales. Councillors have been made aware of future training opportunities.</p> <p>Usk Town Council reviews its Action Plans annually and publishes a report every 3 years. Reports are published on the council website and on the Wales Biodiversity Partnership website.</p> <p>Usk Town Council have shared environmental successes and information via social media.</p> <p>Community notices and events are shared via posters on the Digital Noticeboard Board in the centre of town.</p> <p>Regular reminders to make the best use of public transport are posted and timetables are frequently shared widely through the town. Newport Buses, which service the town, use electric buses.</p> | <p>Councillors</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk and Councillors</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Councillors</p> |



| | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------|
| 6 | -support capacity and/or other organisations | <p>Usk Town Council supports Usk in Bloom with a financial package each year. Usk in Bloom is a community run organisation that tends to all the planters in the town. One of their key aims is to address environmental issues and protect and preserve wildlife. 2025 saw a new initiative of planting more wildflowers and sourcing them sustainably. 9,000 native daffodils have been planted this year at the entrance to the town and along the riverbank. Usk in Bloom continues to have great success with their achievements at Wales and Britain in Bloom.</p> | Councillors |
| | | <p>Usk Town Council provided funding support for the Usk River Festival in 2024 and 2025. The festivals provide a great way of raising awareness within the community and wider to the plight of our rivers.</p> | Councillors |
| | | <p>Usk Town Council has a good partnership with Monmouthshire County Council who respond to environmental concerns raised.</p> | Councillors |
| | | <p>Usk Town Council considers all local planning application for comment which is then passed to the local authority. If a proposed development involves buildings, trees, or structures that could potentially host bats, the local planning authority requires a bat survey before granting permission.</p> | Councillors |



Review of S6 duty actions for 2023-2025

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <p>What has worked well?</p> | <p>Establishment of a Biodiversity committee and involving all councillors on decision making.</p> <p>Securing Biodiversity packages from One Voice Wales to sustainably develop the ground of the Sessions House, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting of 250 native bulbs • Wildflower Meadow Package • Bespoke site signage – ‘It’s for Them’ <p>Continued support for Usk in Bloom and environmental groups including Usk Together for the Climate and their Climate Café, Save the River Usk and Usk Conservation and Environmental Group.</p> <p>Securing contracts with local suppliers and tradespeople.</p> <p>Sharing information and initiatives via social media and noticeboards.</p> <p>Monitoring of Air Quality in the town carried out by Monmouthshire County Council has shown that there has been a successful and sustained reduction in air pollution at Bridge Street in Usk. There will be a revocation of the AQMA in Usk. Air Quality will still be monitored.</p> |
| <p>What have the barriers been?</p> | <p>With a council of only 7, covering all the initiatives effectively has proven challenging.</p> <p>Availability of funding.</p> <p>Inability to install sustainable measures (such as double glazing) and cost-effective heating to the building due to its listed status.</p> <p>Land other than at the Sessions House is owned by the local authority, so permission needs to be granted to adapt or develop spaces.</p> <p>Weed removal around cobble stones in town is very time consuming without the use of chemicals and areas are challenging to maintain. Local authority time and operatives are limited.</p> <p>Overflowing litter bins throughout the community, where residents are putting their household waste. Councillors have spent their own time emptying these bins on weekends.</p> |



| | |
|---|---|
| <p>What will you change?</p> | <p>Create a webpage for Biodiversity news and achievement on the council website.</p> <p>Clearly communicate the town's initiatives with Monmouthshire County Council's ground maintenance teams and contractors to ensure mowing is done effectively and at the correct times.</p> <p>Contractors to be made aware of Biodiversity requirements.</p> <p>All councillors to attend Biodiversity training provided by One Voice Wales.</p> |
| <p>How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?</p> | <p>The S6 duty will be monitored by the Biodiversity Committee and reviewed seasonally by the Full Council.</p> <p>Action Plans will be reviewed, refined and implemented annually.</p> <p>The next report will be published in December 2028.</p> |

Report compiled by

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Morgan".

Angela Morgan

Usk Town Clerk
Proper Officer

December 2025