



**Cyngor Tref Aberystwyth Town Council**

# **Biodiversity and Environment Plan**

## **2019-20**

**Approved by Full Council on 30 September 2019**

## National Context

### The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales both now and in the future.

To make sure that all public bodies are working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals:

1. A prosperous Wales
2. A resilient Wales
3. A healthier Wales
4. A more equal Wales
5. A Wales of cohesive communities
6. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
7. A globally responsive Wales

### Five ways of working

The act encourages five ways of working in order to achieve these goals:

- **Long-term:** *balancing short term and long-term needs by thinking ahead beyond at least a decade.*
- **Prevention:** *prevent problems by looking at the root cause.*
- **Integration:** *consider the impact of the well-being goals on the objectives of other partners*
- **Collaboration:** *work with partners to achieve the well-being objectives.*
- **Involvement:** *involve people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensure that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.*

## Local context

Aberystwyth town has a diverse population of just over 13,000 with an increase in the population of approximately 8000 students during term time.

Aberystwyth Town Council consists of 19 elected councillors who represent Bronglais, North, Central, Rheidol and Penparcau wards.

As of December 2018, the Town Council employs two members of staff, a Clerk and Deputy Clerk, whilst the 19 town councillors are unpaid. The Mayor is the civic head and representative of the Council and chairs the monthly full council meeting. The official committees of the Council are Planning, General Management and Finance and Establishments.

The Town Council receives an annual precept (£327,901 in 2018-19) which it uses to deliver projects and services. Although it does not provide services to the same extent as the County Council (which is responsible for statutory services such as education, social services, highways, environmental health and housing), as the largest Town and Community council in Ceredigion Aberystwyth has a duty to report what it is doing to meet the above goals and has produced a Wellbeing Plan for 2018-19: *Byw'n dda yn Aberystwyth*.

This Aberystwyth Town Council Biodiversity and Environment Plan expands on the information provided under Goal 2 of the national Wellbeing of Future Generations aims, and provides information on the Town Council's environmental projects to date.

### **GOAL 2: A resilient Wales**

*A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change)*

**In a nutshell:** this goal aims to limit the demands that we place on the natural environment, and repair damage to habitats and species, so that it can adapt to change (like climate change) and still provide future generations with clean air, water, food and resources

## **A resilient Aberystwyth**

The Town Council aims to support and protect the local environment to the best of its abilities and powers, and is proud to have achieved the following:

## **PARKS**

The Council has taken over responsibility of managing three playgrounds in Aberystwyth from the County Council - the Castle, Plascrug and Penparcau as well as two parks – Parc Kronberg and North Road Park. The Town Council is looking to develop these parks in a way which enhances and protects the environment.

### **Park Kronberg**

The Town Council has built, with Big Lottery support, a new community park and skatepark in Boulevard St Brieuc. Opened in December 2017 and once a wasteland, Parc Kronberg has been developed as an exemplar community park and skatepark, with a wildlife area incorporated as a key part of the plan. A large number of native trees have been planted within the park to enhance the existing riverside growth and natural plants and flowers have been encouraged to flourish across large areas of the park to create a visually stunning wildlife haven. It has proved very popular with all ages and school activities such as bug-house building and species identification sessions have been arranged with partners to make full use of the wild areas. A path has been mown through the wild area to enable educational access.











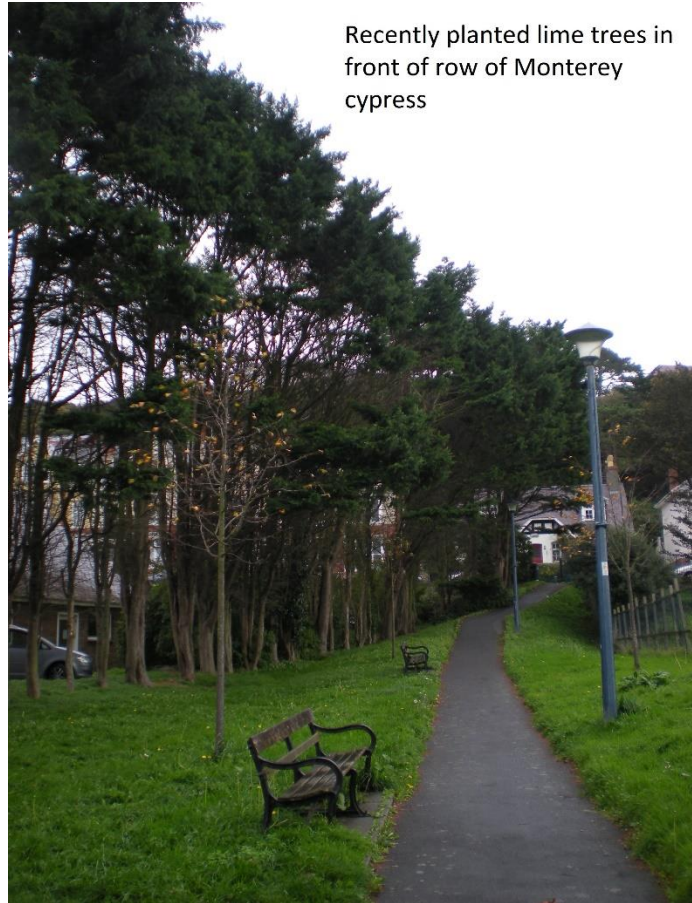


## North Road Park

North Road Park is a work in progress. It is much loved and has already benefitted from being planted with eight new native trees such as limes and crab apples to add to the existing holm oaks. Whilst the Town Council is in the process of engaging with the community to identify future uses for the park, to date, creating a natural haven has featured strongly within the public responses. A rope maze has recently been removed (featured below) and people have started enjoying the park as an open space once again whilst we carry out more consultation and finalise plans. Unfortunately, five poplars had to be removed for legal reasons and in order to protect the less aggressive native Holm Oak trees (featured). A row of closely packed Monterey cypresses, an outgrown hedge, is also being removed in order to protect the native trees and to allow for more native tree and hedge planting. The aim is to create the ecological diversity needed to both sustain wildlife and to encourage the wellbeing of Aberystwyth residents and the park provides the opportunity to achieve this.



Recently planted lime trees in front of row of Monterey cypress





# TREE PLANTING

## Policy

The Town Council has a tree planting policy whereby two trees are planted for every tree lost as well as an ambitious annual programme of street tree planting. The budget allocation has been doubled to enable as much tree planting as possible. However, the Council is limited in terms of locations that it has responsibility for and therefore has to work with partners such as the County Council and Trunk Road Agency to achieve its targets.

## Partnerships

A meeting was held with Ceredigion County Council and the Trunk Road Agency in 2018 to identify key planting sites, and in addition to the trees planted within the Council's parks, last year three street trees were planted in the Park Avenue area of the town. This added to the successful Coed Aber partner project which saw an avenue of **????** trees being planted all along the main access route of Boulevard St Brieuc/Park Avenue and willows planted in the adjacent area near the playground in Penparcau. Further sites are being identified for autumn 2019.



## ALLOTMENTS

The Town Council manages 38 allotments in Fifth Avenue, Penparcau and is working with the University to develop growing spaces on the old bowling green in Plascrug Avenue. Within the last year improvements have been made including the provision of a toilet within the Fifth Avenue allotment enclosure and a water tap for the Caeffynnon allotments. Each year the allotments are opened to the public as part of the National Garden Scheme.









## **PARTNERSHIPS and CAMPAIGNS**

### **Bee Friendly Aberystwyth**

The Town Council took over responsibility for many of the town centre summer flower displays from the County Council in 2017. The Town Council supports the planting of bee friendly flowers and in addition to sourcing bee friendly plants for the summer tub and border displays it is looking at ways of providing as many bee friendly plants as possible in other locations. In the autumn of 2018 the Council planted native daffodil bulbs at various locations within the town and is currently identifying suitable bee friendly plants for borders.







## Plastic Free Aberystwyth

Aberystwyth was the first town council in Wales to support the plastic free initiative and Aberystwyth became the first town in Wales to achieve Plastic Free status. The Town Council is actively supporting this initiative by providing a meeting place and back office facilities as well as actively participating in campaign events and providing some funding for projects.



**Refuse collection:** The Town Council contributes annual funding for additional evening cleaning of the promenade and beaches during the summer to ensure impact on the environment is minimised and people's experience of the sea front is a positive one.

**Signage:** This year highly visible feather banners have been commissioned to deter the public from taking dogs onto the beaches, littering and feeding seagulls. Management of the signs will be carried out in partnership with Ceredigion County Council.

**Community litter picks:** Town councillors organise community litter picks within their wards and support those organised by Beach Buddies.



## Grants

The Town Council supports groups such as Parc Natur Penglais, Greener Aberystwyth, Plastic Free Aberystwyth and others with an environmental interest through its community grant system. Parc Natur Penglais have been supported to carry out path improvements and tree planting whilst Greener Aberystwyth have been supported with money for tree planting and interpretation of species.



## Strategy and Policy

Through developing green planning policies and through detailed scrutiny of planning applications by the Town Council's Planning Committee, councillors aim to preserve trees, and the green environment generally, as well as the historical heritage of Aberystwyth. The Town Council's Planning policies include the preservation of trees and the provision of cycle parking spaces and electric charging points in new developments.

The Council has also declared a state of Climate Emergency and is looking to work with partners to achieve as much as possible to combat climate change. It is currently talking to other Town Councils to identify appropriate renewable projects for Aberystwyth.

## **Key Plans going forward**

- Continue to safeguard Aberystwyth's natural environment and to support conservation initiatives.
- Continue to provide green leisure spaces, allotments and growing spaces and continue to plant as many native trees and bee friendly flowers as possible.
- Continue to work with and support environmental groups and partners to identify local actions to combat the climate emergency.
- Improve North Road Park as a wildlife haven and community space