

CASE STUDY - ABERMULE WITH LLANDYSSIL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Introduction

A small Community Council with eleven Councillors, covering Abermule, a key settlement in the Unitary Development Plan, Llandyssil, a small village, and the surrounding area which includes small settlements such as Green Lane and Llanmerewig, as well as scattered farms and rural dwellings.

The Council is part of the Vale of Montgomery Rural Cluster of Councils (VMRC), which includes Montgomery Town Council, Berriew Community Council, Forden with Leighton and Trelystan Community Council and Kerry, Dolfor and Sarn Community Council.

The Project

In November 2021, a Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust (MWT) staff member attended a VMRC meeting, where they introduced the Green Connections Powys project to the Councillors. Three Councillors from Abermule/Llandyssil were present, one of which was very keen to have advice and guidance from the Trust to help improve biodiversity across the Community Council area.

In January 2022, MWT staff visited several sites in Abermule and Llandyssil with one of the Councillors, offering advice on how to improve the sites for biodiversity, but also with people in mind. There were concerns that if some areas were left to “grow wild” that it may be seen as untidy or that dog owners would be more likely to leave behind dog mess. MWT staff also held a Swift Day event at Llandyssil Church for members of the church and community, where participants constructed Habi-sabi flat pack swift boxes and gave a brief talk about swifts and how they can help swifts in the village.



Habi-sabi swift boxes assembled and ready to go up in the village © MWT

Community Council striving on

The Community Council started to implement some of the advice they were given in 2022. Areas of longer grass were left in the park in Abermule and fruit trees were planted.

Members of the community embraced these areas of longer grass; no complaints were made about the area looking untidy. A wildflower area was created in Llandyssil using a grant from National Lottery Community Fund, and the local Peter Warlock Society also donated some money. Over 200 plants were planted by volunteers and a tree was planted to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. In June 2022, Iolo Williams, who lives near the village, officially opened the meadow.

The Community Council really want to help make a difference in the area for wildlife, whilst also keeping the community in mind. MWT staff have been supporting the Council with their biodiversity action plan. In the future the Council would like to plant a small native hedgerow along a pathway leading to a park and reduce the regularity of mowing in some areas of the churchyards and graveyards.



The new wildflower area in Llandyssil being planted up by volunteers ©County Times

Project Outputs

| Activity | Engagement |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Councillors engaged | 3 |
| Biodiversity action plan | Advice given |
| Fruit trees and wildflowers planted | 200+ |
| Swift Event | 10 |
| Swift boxes made | 10 |

MWT engaged with local Councillors to bring about a better understanding of how the Council's could improve the biodiversity of the area.

MWT assisted by organising a fruit tree and wildflower planting event, attended by Councillors and the local community.

Project Outcomes

- MWT provided advice and guidance for the Council's on improving biodiversity and is helping them formulate a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The BAP will provide a framework within which to develop habitat management in the future.
- Habitat improvements in Abermule and Llandyssil involving the local community in tree and wildflower planting has increased participation within the local community, providing an army of volunteers to support the ongoing development of the BAP.