

Report of the Biodiversity Implementation Officer (PNP)

Subject: Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership

Main Issues

The Nature Emergency

We have seen long term declines in all major groups of plants and animals in terms of population size, distribution and species diversity¹. These declines continue, with specialist species suffering the worst declines and generalist species faring a little better. Loss of habitats has resulted in fragmentation across the landscape and there is often poor ecological condition in the remaining habitat². This is as applicable in an intensively farmed landscape as it is in the urban setting.

Wales is now ranked 16th from the bottom of the 240 countries assessed under the biodiversity intactness index (BII)³. Wales' BII stands at 51%. 90% is generally considered the threshold below which ecosystems can no longer reliably meet the needs of society.

Consequently, the Senedd declared a nature emergency in Wales on 30th June 2021⁴. PCC Signed the Edinburgh Declaration in October 2021⁵, but has yet to formally declare a nature emergency.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority has a duty under the Environment (Wales) Act (2016) S6 to 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems'⁶. The Authority is also bound by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015), which includes a goal of 'A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse

¹ State of Nature Report – A Summary for Wales. State of Nature Partnership (2019): <https://nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019/reports/>

² State of Natural Resources Report. Natural Resources Wales (2020): <https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/state-of-natural-resources-report-sonarr-for-wales-2020/sonarr2020-our-assessment/ecosystems-are-resilient-to-expected-and-unforeseen-change/?lang=en>

³ Biodiversity Loss – The UK's Global Rank for Levels of Biodiversity Loss. RSPB (2019): <https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/about-us/48398rspb-biodiversity-intactness-index-summary-report-v4.pdf>

⁴ Motion available to view here: <https://record.senedd.wales/Motion/7725>

⁵ Debate available to view here: https://pembrokeshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/555173 The declaration can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/edinburgh-declaration-on-post-2020-biodiversity-framework/pages/endorsement/>

⁶ Environment (Wales) Act (2016) S6 Duty: <https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Environment-Wales-Act>

natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change)⁷.

Social and Economic Impacts

Natural systems underpin our society and economy⁸. These ecosystems provide essential services such as temperature regulation, flood attenuation, pollination of crops, air purification and carbon sequestration. These are collectively known as ecosystem services. For example:

- The Pembrokeshire economy benefits from tourism valued at over £589 million, supporting 21% of all employment⁹. A further 8.7% of employment is in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector¹⁰. All these are fundamentally underpinned by the quality of our natural environment.
- Welsh Government put the value of pollinators to UK agriculture at £690 million per annum¹¹.
- Access to natural green space (proportion of houses within 300m of green space) is used as an indicator in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation¹². The health and wellbeing benefits of simply living with a view of green space are estimated at £300 per person per annum¹³.

The World Economic Forum now judges biodiversity loss to be the fourth greatest risk to the global economy over the next 10 years¹⁴.

Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership (PNP)

The PNP exists to co-ordinate, promote and record existing and new actions to conserve, promote and enhance nature in the County of Pembrokeshire, including the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, the inshore waters and seabed around the Pembrokeshire coast to 12 miles offshore, taking account of local and national priorities. It has operated continually for the last 23 years, hosted by Pembrokeshire County Council and guided by a steering group of key partners, chaired by the PCNPA Biodiversity Officer. The Partnership's Terms of Reference can be viewed here:

<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/biodiversity>

⁷ Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) Resilience Goal:

<https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Environment-Wales-Act>

⁸ Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review>

⁹ <https://www.visitpembrokeshire.com/wp-content/uploads/Economic-Impact-of-Tourism-Pembrokeshire-Report-2019.pdf>

¹⁰ Pembrokeshire Wellbeing Assessment 2022: <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/public-services-board/well-being-assessment>

¹¹ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/action-plan-for-pollinators-review-and-future-actions-en.pdf>

¹² <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2022-01/welsh-index-of-multiple-deprivation-wimd-a-guide-to-analysing-indicator-data-2019-onwards.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/55271888/green-infrastructure>

¹⁴ World Economic Forum Global Risks Report 2023, 18th Edition:

<https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-risks-report-2023/digest/>

The Partnership employs a Biodiversity Implementation Officer (0.6FTE) to run the core functions of the Partnership, input to policy groups and develop project collaborations, and a Partnership Implementation Officer (full time) to deliver large capital projects. The Partnership has published a Nature Recovery Action Plan for Pembrokeshire to guide action on the ground in line with strategic priorities¹⁵.

The operation of the PNP has been flagged as an exemplar and used (with funding from WG Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing [ENRaW] grant) as a template in recent years to re-energise a network of LNPs across Wales which had become dormant due to lack of funding in other Authority areas. It is the long term commitment of PCC and PCNPA to the Partnership which has been the key to its success. The work of the Partnership officers levers in grant funding and contributions in-kind from delivery partners and facilitates efficient, coordinated delivery of actions on the ground.

Financial Implications

PCC and PCNPA make annual cash contributions to the running of the Partnership (£10,000 and £7,488 respectively in 2022/23). The Partnership Implementation Officer is paid full time from a revenue allocation as part of a capital programme called Local Places for Nature (LPfN). The Biodiversity Implementation Officer is paid partly under this programme and partly by the cash contributions from PCC and PCNPA. These officers then draw down and deliver large grant funded projects and undertake wider work with partners across the sector which benefits the people of Pembrokeshire. As an example, funding for the last three years is set out below:

2020/21 FY

• Cash Contribution PCC	£10,000
• Cash Contribution PCNPA	£6,000
• WG ENRaW Funding (revenue)	£17,884
• LPfN PCNPA(capital)	£25,287
• LPfN PCC (capital)	£194,560
• TOTAL	£253,731

2021/22 FY

• Cash Contribution PCC	£10,000
• Cash Contribution PCNPA	£6,000
• WG ENRaW Funding (revenue)	£21,426
• LPfN PCNPA (revenue)	£20,000
• LPfN PCC (revenue)	£22,143
• LPfN PCNPA (capital)	£27,933
• LPfN PCC (capital)	£440,500
• Nature Networks Fund (capital)	£2,314
• TOTAL	£550,316

2022/23 FY

• Cash Contribution PCC	£10,000
• Cash Contribution PCNPA	£7,488

¹⁵ Nature Recovery Action Plan for Pembrokeshire (2018). Available here: <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/biodiversity/pembrokeshire-nature-partnership-plans-and-guidance>

- LPfN PCNPA(revenue) £62,400
- LPfN PCC (revenue) £62,400
- LPfN PCNPA (capital) £50,000
- LPfN PCC (capital) £467,600
- Nature Networks Fund (capital) £173,335
- Coastal Capacity Fund (revenue) £151,602
- WG Biodiversity (revenue) £72,000
- **TOTAL** **£1,056,825**

The LPfN Revenue Funding in 2022/23 is being used in PCNPA to part fund the work of the Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Officer and two Rangers. The Minister for Climate Change announced revenue support for Nature Partnerships in October 2022, which totals £72,000 in the 2022/23 year and £96,000 in each of the following two years for the Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership, but we do not have full details yet. The indications are that LPfN funding will also continue at least for the next two years.

Example Projects

A mapping tool to display Nature Partnership projects is under development and can be accessed here: <https://lnp.cymru/Content/Upload/embed.html> .

Some recent examples include:

Wild Coast! Coastal Lagoons for the Future

In December 2022, WG made an £800k revenue fund available exclusively through Nature Partnerships for building capacity in coastal communities to respond to the nature emergency. The deadline for applications was in early January 2023, with all projects to be complete by 31st March the same year. Despite the tight deadlines for project development and delivery, the Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership was able to successfully draw down £151,602 of this funding spread across 4 projects. One project (worth £9,570) was with PCNPA as lead partner to develop an options appraisal for future management of the Pickleridge and Neyland Saline lagoons, taking account of prevailing environmental conditions and potential future changes due to climate change and sea level rise based on UKCP 18 climate modelling projections.

Connecting the Commons

In the 2021/22 financial year, Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership successfully secured £125,000 from the LPfN Challenge fund to survey and improve the management of parts of the North West Pembrokeshire Commons SAC and create new habitat on private land to connect fragmented SAC habitats on the St David's peninsula. This work was an exemplar of work to improve the condition, extent and connectivity of habitats in protected sites, building ecosystem resilience. The project has been followed by two successful projects under the Nature Networks Fund.

See: <https://www.thebugfarm.co.uk/research-farm/connecting-the-commons/>

Plant! Pembrokeshire

Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership has been running a flagship tree planting scheme in the heart of Pembrokeshire since 2019/20. Originally the idea of a

community midwife, we work with Hywel Dda Health Board, PCNPA Rangers, PCC Property Team and Pembrokeshire Lamb (tenant farmers at the site) to plant at least 1,300 trees each year (one for each child born or adopted to a Pembrokeshire family). The landowners (PCC) have made the land at West Ford Farm available to create woodland in perpetuity with public access. PCNPA Rangers manage volunteer input. The NHS Midwife Team use the project as an ice-breaker to have conversations with new parents about sustainable parenting. As of the 2022/23 planting season, 6,560 new trees have been planted under the project, utilising 775 volunteer hours. In addition to the tree planting, the PCNPA Community Archaeologist has used the site to train volunteers in survey and maintenance of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs), resulting in the SAM at the site being removed from Cadw's register of at risk monuments.

See: <https://carboncopy.eco/initiatives/plant-pembrokeshire>
and: <https://www.lnp.cymru/plant-pembrokeshire>

Threatened Butterflies

In 2020/21 £2,500 was made available to PCNPA from the Partnership to develop a Marsh Fritillary strategy for Pembrokeshire. This led to a project in 2021/22 to carry out habitat quality mapping in one of the core functional landscapes for this species identified in that report to target areas for improved land management. £3,000 funding was provided by the Nature Partnership and matched by £3,000 from PCNPA. In the 2022/23 financial year, this work was expanded to include Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary and Brown Hairstreak in a conservation strategy (£3,500 from the Partnership and £1,000 from PCNPA).

Conclusions

Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership provides an effective and efficient framework for action to halt the decline in biodiversity and promote nature recovery, in line with local, national and international commitments. PCNPA's support has been key to the Partnership's success, which is recognised as a model for local action. The level of funding from external grant sources has been growing over recent years and looks set to continue over the next few years. However, the support of PCC and PCNPA is crucial to the successful operation of the Partnership and the modest cash contributions are vital to cover short term funding gaps where there are delays to grant awards, allowing retention of experienced staff.

Recommendation:

That the Committee notes the work of the Nature Partnership, recognising the benefits to the Authority and to the wildlife and communities of Pembrokeshire.