OLD ST MELLONS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

Biodiversity policy. The plan for conducting a biodiversity evaluation and encouraging biodiversity growth in Old St. Mellons and nearby areas.

The biodiversity project in Old St. Mellons focuses on evaluating and increasing biodiversity by enhancing local ecosystems. A baseline biodiversity assessment will be established, and monthly surveys will be conducted throughout the survey year using 1m x 1m quadrats at Ty'r Winch Playing Field, St. Edeyrn's Church Grounds and Village Hall gardens. Findings will be recorded and analysed across each year to track changes in habitat health and diversity.

Community planting initiatives, in collaboration with Cardiff City Council and local groups, aim to introduce pollinator friendly plants and wildlife habitats. The Council will also apply for grants to support training and education in improving biodiversity, and to engage wider support in identifying and applying practical ways to enhance biodiversity. In addition, an assessment of all the Council's assets will be undertaken to identify every opportunity for the Community Council to contribute to improving biodiversity across the area.

Old St. Mellons Community Council and volunteers, including Councillors, friends and family, schoolchildren, Scouts, and community members, will lead the efforts to monitor biodiversity, foster educational engagement, and drive improvements in habitat diversity.

Biodiversity evaluation procedure

1. Preparation and equipment

- Acquire 1m x 1m quadrats for sampling flora and fauna.
- Provide recording sheets, identification guides, and tools such as cameras, GPS devices, and magnifying glasses.
- Agree, at the Council meeting, the method by which biodiversity will be measured, the group responsible, and the time commitment required. See the biodiversity measurement section below.

2. Sampling plan

- Identify specific sites. These are Ty'r Winch Playing Field, St. Edeyrn's Church Grounds, and Village Hall gardens.
- Schedule monthly surveys across the survey year.

- Take a consistent, agreed number of quadrat samples each session, selecting diverse micro habitats within the areas for balanced coverage. The exact number per session is to be confirmed and applied uniformly so that results are comparable across sites and over time.

3. Recording data

- Classify all identified species of flora and fauna during each quadrat survey.
- Record environmental conditions, for example soil type, sunlight exposure and moisture levels.
- Ensure data is consistent and meticulous, compiling findings in a shared central spreadsheet.

4. Analysis

- Compare monthly findings to track seasonal biodiversity changes.
- Perform analysis across each year to identify increases or losses in diversity and habitat health, measured against the established baseline.

Biodiversity measurement, to be agreed

To ensure the survey produces reliable and comparable data, the Council will formally agree the following before surveys commence.

- The method. This is how biodiversity will be measured, for example the species count and percentage cover within each quadrat, supported by photographic and GPS records.
- The group. This is who will be responsible for undertaking the surveys and recording data.
- The time. This is the frequency and time commitment for each session, and the schedule for the year.

A practical proposal to begin establishing the baseline is for Councillors, together with friends and family, to spend one hour recording biodiversity immediately before the Council meeting, or at another time agreed by the Council. This proposal is to be added to the agenda and discussed at the meeting on 11th June 2026.

Baseline survey and participation

Establishing an accurate baseline depends on enough volunteers taking part in the surveys. Recognised challenges in recruiting and retaining survey volunteers include the following.

- Limited availability of volunteers and competing commitments.
- Varying levels of confidence in identifying flora and fauna.
- The need for clear, simple instructions and accessible identification guides.
- Sustaining engagement across a full survey year and through all seasons.

To address these challenges, the Council proposes a dedicated baseline recording session of approximately one hour, held before a Council meeting, open to Councillors, friends and family. Training, guides and equipment will be provided so that participants

of all experience levels can contribute. Grant funding will be sought to support training, education and ongoing engagement.

Biodiversity enhancement plan

1. Planting initiatives

- Collaborate with the Cardiff City Council horticultural team and the Old St. Mellons gardening group to select pollinator friendly native plants.
- Establish wildflower meadows and wildlife gardens across survey sites.
- Incorporate community garden raised beds with diverse flora.

2. Engagement, training and grants

- Recruit a team of volunteers, including members from Old St. Mellons Primary School, Scouts, and additional groups such as Keep Wales Tidy.
- Host workshops on native species planting and wildlife friendly gardening practices.
- Apply for grants to fund training and education in improving biodiversity, and to engage external support in finding and applying practical biodiversity improvements.

3. Infrastructure

- Install bug hotels, bat boxes, and bird nesting areas to support fauna diversity.
- Establish composting sites to improve soil and reduce waste.

4. Assessment of Council assets

- Undertake an assessment of all the Council's assets, including land, green spaces, buildings and other holdings, to identify every opportunity for the Community Council to contribute to improving biodiversity.
- Prioritise and act on the opportunities identified, in collaboration with partners and the community.

5. Community collaboration

- Integrate biodiversity activities into school projects and Scouts programmes.
- Share findings via newsletters and interactive maps.
- Organise seasonal planting events to involve wider community members.

With consistent evaluations and collaboration, Old St. Mellons can foster a thriving ecosystem that enriches both biodiversity and community engagement. Let's make every square metre count.