**Biodiversity Statement**

The Town Council recognises the importance of biodiversity. Biodiversity is recognised as underpinning human health and can contribute to physical and mental well being.

The widespread reduction in species across the UK coupled with the impact of climate change threatens a major environmental disaster.

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduces a new duty on public authorities in Wales to maintain and enhance biodiversity and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems in the exercise of their functions. The Town Council as a public authority will comply with this duty in relation to the scope of its activities. The Town Council owns no land or buildings and its decisions and actions will only indirectly influence ecosystems.

The Town Council has identified four specific areas where it will take proactive action:

1 Financial Assistance

The Town Council provides grants to local organisations for a variety of purposes. Depending on the nature of the proposal it may be appropriate to ask the applicant to incorporate biodiversity considerations, or impose conditions on the grant. Given that the maximum grant available under the financial assistance scheme is £1000 any conditions should be proportionate.

2 Floral Decorations

The Town Council funds the hanging baskets and planters in the Town Centre which enhance the street scene between May and September. The plants are and will continue to be sourced from suppliers in South Wales. The type of plants used are pollinator friendly.

The Town Council works closely with the Caerffili in Bloom group which involves various community groups and local businesses. The activities are a combination of floral displays, horticulture and conservation elements, and sustainable planting. The group secured a Gold Award in the Wales in Bloom, City and Town Centre Category in 2022. Although primarily an urban area with green spaces the work of the group has had a positive impact on improving the biodiversity across the town.

The Town Council will promote the use of nectar rich plants such as bladderwort, hollyhocks, marigolds, California poppies and salvia in all floral planting around the town.

3 Sustainable Procurement

Due to the scope of the Town Council’s activities expenditure on goods and services is very limited. Where it is practical to do so and consistent with achieving value for money the Town Council will use local suppliers (defined as within South Wales), will look to use products made from sustainable resources or that use recycled materials. In addition, the Town Council has made a commitment to plastic free alternatives and supports Plastic Free Caerphilly. The Town Council will adopt arrangements to ensure packaging and end of life equipment is recycled.

4 Awareness Raising

The Town Councillors have well established networks with local community groups, schools, and businesses and use social media to impart information. They can raise awareness about the serious challenge of tackling biodiversity, which is as important as climate change, plastic pollution, and carbon neutral, issues which are all inter linked.

If the scope of the Council’s functions changes in the future the biodiversity statement will be reviewed.

Approved by Town Council 21.10.19

Reviewed by Town Council and detail updated 26.9.22

**Report to Welsh Government**

**Caerphilly Town Council**

The Town Council covers two unitary authority wards within the centre of Caerphilly Town (Morgan Jones and St Martins). It covers a population of 15,000 and approximately 6,200 households. The precept for 2019/20 is £15-50 for a band D property and raises £97,000. The Council has received £7,379 in Community Infrastructure Levy for 2019/20 which will be added to the restricted reserves to fund specific projects (match funding for artwork, public toilets, electric charge points). The Council owns no land or buildings and employs 0.7FTE administrative staff. Around a third of the Council’s annual expenditure is on the administration of the Council. The Council’s main expenditure is on running its own events (Fireworks Display and Christmas Lights), providing sponsorship for events organised by others, funding the summer floral displays (hanging baskets and planters), and providing grants to local community groups. In relation to biodiversity the Town Council only has indirect influence due to the scope of its activities.

**Actions Carried Out**

A report was submitted to the Town Council in October 2019 outlining the duty imposed by Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The Town Council has published a Biodiversity Statement in October 2019. This outlines 4 specific areas where the Council has undertaken to embed biodiversity considerations. These will be subject to monitoring by the Town Clerk.

If the scope of the Town Council’s activities change, in particular through the acquisition of land and buildings, the Biodiversity Statement will be reviewed.