

Cyngor Cymuned Llandudoch
St Dogmaels Community Council

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BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENT

St Dogmaels



St Dogmaels Community Council 2022

The Landscape

Located at the far north eastern edge of the County between the National Park and Ceredigion. St Dogmaels generally comprises a rolling lowland agricultural landscape with a variety of large and small scale regular and irregular fields with hedge bank and hedgerow boundaries of varied management, and the western shoreline of the River Teifi.

The agricultural landscape of rolling farmland contains scattered farmsteads and limited numbers of isolated dwellings. The field scape is made up of large and small regular and irregular fields bounded by hedgerow and hedge bank boundaries with trees within managed hedges with gorse and narrow bands of trees and scrub along stream corridors.

Where this character area extends into the low lying saltmarsh and dunes adjacent to the intertidal estuary, maritime influences at the transition between sea and dry land, forms part of a wild exposed and transient coastal seascape.

Habitats are dominated by improved grassland with low levels of arable to the south of the area, small areas of broadleaved and coniferous woodland, scrub and bracken which add interest to the improved grassland.

(Pembrokeshire County Council, 2019)

Land Owned by the Community Council

Much of the land owned by the Community Council is adjacent the Afon Teifi designated as an area of Special Area of Conservation ¹.

Much of the land is adjacent or designated as A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) ² and is registered village green.

The Community Council works in close collaboration with Natural Resources Wales to ensure that the land management schemes comply with the strict requirements associated with the responsibilities of safeguarding the important natural landscape.

The Council produces a detailed maintenance and cutting schedule each year – this incorporates the cutting work to its amenity land (Alexandra Gardens) and grass verges, Health and Safety maintenance of village paths and since 2021 the work required for the biodiversity pilot scheme. It is reviewed annually and adjusted according to need for the following year. In addition, work is sometimes identified as an urgent intervention and this is actioned on a 'as required' basis.

Appendix A shows a map of the owned by the Community Council designated SSSI.

Appendix B shows maps and an cutting schedule extract for 2022-23 on land owned by the Community Council.

Appendix C Gives an overview of Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) work

Appendix D Gives a brief overview of the ongoing Biodiversity Pilot Scheme

¹ A Special Area of Conservation (SAC) protects one or more special habitats and/or species – terrestrial or marine – listed in the [Habitats Directive](#).

² (SSSI) is a formal conservation designation. Usually, it describes an area that's of particular interest to science due to the rare species of fauna or flora it contains - or even important geological or physiological features that may lie in its boundaries.

Pinog

Sited adjacent the banks of the tidal River Teifi the land known as 'The Pinog'.

An area of historic interest due to its association with the Abbey Monks and the local fishing industry the land is frequently flooded. It is managed to retain a natural riverside character. The Pinog is one of the main areas identified in the 3-year bio-diversity pilot scheme, as having potential for improvements for flora and pollinating insects. Via the Public Footpath that runs through the area it is well visited by locals and visitors alike. In 2019 the approach to the slipway was resurfaced to improve and make the access safer for the commercial fisherman and leisure boat owners that launch from the slipway. It is a popular area for dogwalkers and those wishing to watch the birds that feed on the mud flats exposed at low tide.



The Pinog 2022



The Pinog, St Dogmaels - Davies

Alexandra Gardens

Managed as a formal recreation ground containing picnic seating and the village playground.

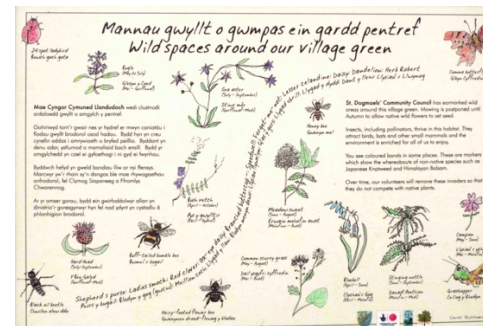
The river cliffs adjacent Alexandra Gardens are managed in accordance with a 10 year management plan.



Alexandra Gardens



Alexandra Gardens showing the historic net drying 'standards' to the left, used by the seine net fishermen to dry their fishing nets



Wildlife Information Board by Local artist Carol Kuhlman

Leased land

The Community Council also leases land from Y Felin. The land is managed by volunteers to emulate the herb garden that might have been kept by the monks of St Dogmaels Abbey. The Abbey, founded in approximately 1115, is now a ruin managed by Cadw. In addition the council maintains the public access area alongside the mill pond.



The Herb Garden at Y Felin, St Dogmaels

Partnership Working

The Council works with various partners to enhance the local environment.

The Council has, since 2006, funded a knotweed control programme for the village. The area of infestation of knotweed has been reduced to approximately 5% of that originally treated at the start of the programme. Since 2011 It has supported the St Dogmaels Community Association in control of Himalayan Balsam in areas around and adjacent the village. (See Appendix C.)

The Community Dogwatch Scheme working with Pembrokeshire County Council, Dyfed Powys Police and other local groups continues to monitor around the village, ensuring where possible public areas are maintained in a clean and Hygienic condition.

The People's Orchard Project (2016-2019) -Hanes Llandocho, was a three year environmental enhancement project for the ward of St. Dogmaels and the adjacent area. It supported the removal of invasive species and aimed to create to create a series of bio-diverse ecosystems throughout the area to encourage a pollinator friendly environment. Orchards were planted on both public and privately owned land. Working in partnership with CADW a wild flower meadow was created in the grounds of the Abbey. Whilst the project ended in November 2019 volunteers continue to manage and maintain the areas created during the project.

The Council works closely with it's County Councillor and Pembrokeshire County Council monitoring the local environment to deal with any issues identified.

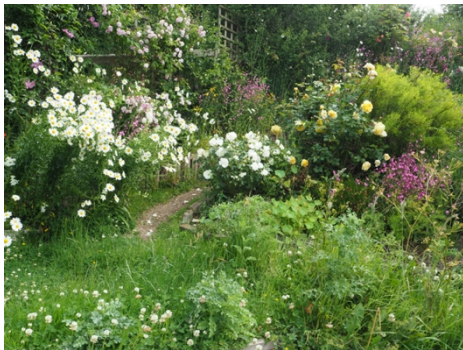
Community organisations help to maintain many of the public planters and public areas such as Halkett Square.



Village in Bloom

The council runs a popular annual village in bloom competition open to all residents. Villagers are encouraged to send in photographs of their gardens which are then judged. A cup and certificates awarded to the winners. As well as being a 'fun' competition it encourages everyone to maintain their gardens for everyone's enjoyment, especially at the front of peoples houses. There are various categories so to be inclusive as inclusive as possible.

In 2021 and as part of the bio diversity pilot and following request from the Village Wild Gardeners Club, it was decided to add an additional category for wild gardeners. This is judged not only on how attractive the gardens look but takes into account the benefit to pollinating insects and wildlife in general.



Wild Garden Winner 2022.



Container Garden winner 2022.



Formal Garden Winner 2022

Ash Die-Back

Like everywhere across the UK, Ash Die-Back has taken a hold in St Dogmaels and West Wales. The Community Council constantly monitors the trees on its land. In 2021 it drew up a detailed map of all the Ash trees and a detailed plan on how it would monitor and subsequently remove the affected trees. Infected trees which were deemed to pose a health and safety risk i.e. those close to footpaths and public access areas were highlighted as a priority for removal.

A councillor attended a course on identifying the various stages of the disease and advice is regularly taken from the Pembrokeshire County Tree Officer.

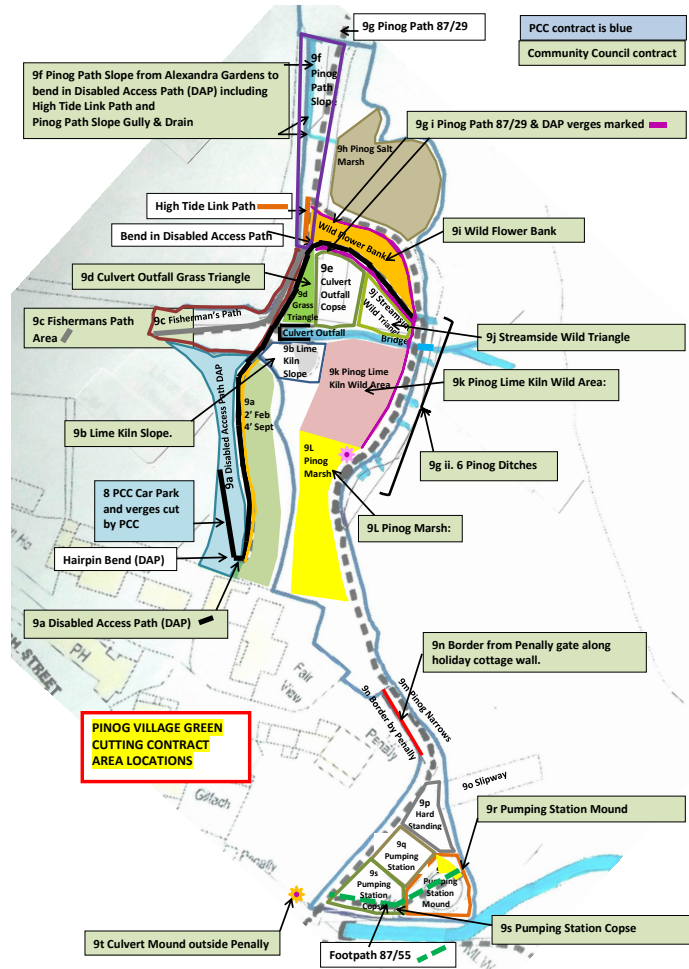
The trees most seriously affected and at the highest risk of collapsing were removed by a contractor in the winter of 2021-22. Where it was deemed safe to do so some trees were not completely felled but reduced to a 2-3 metre safe height, this was in line with conservation thinking with the aim of either the tree regenerating itself and gaining resistance to the disease or falling that becoming a useful 'dead-wood' resource for beetles and insects.

Monitoring and further removal work is ongoing.

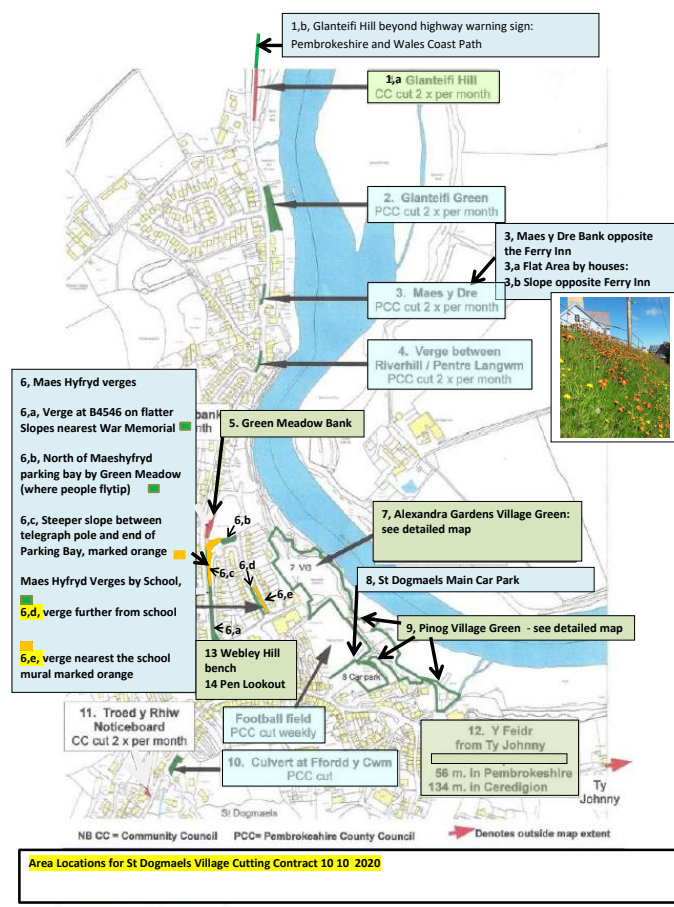


Diseased Ash on The Pinog 2021

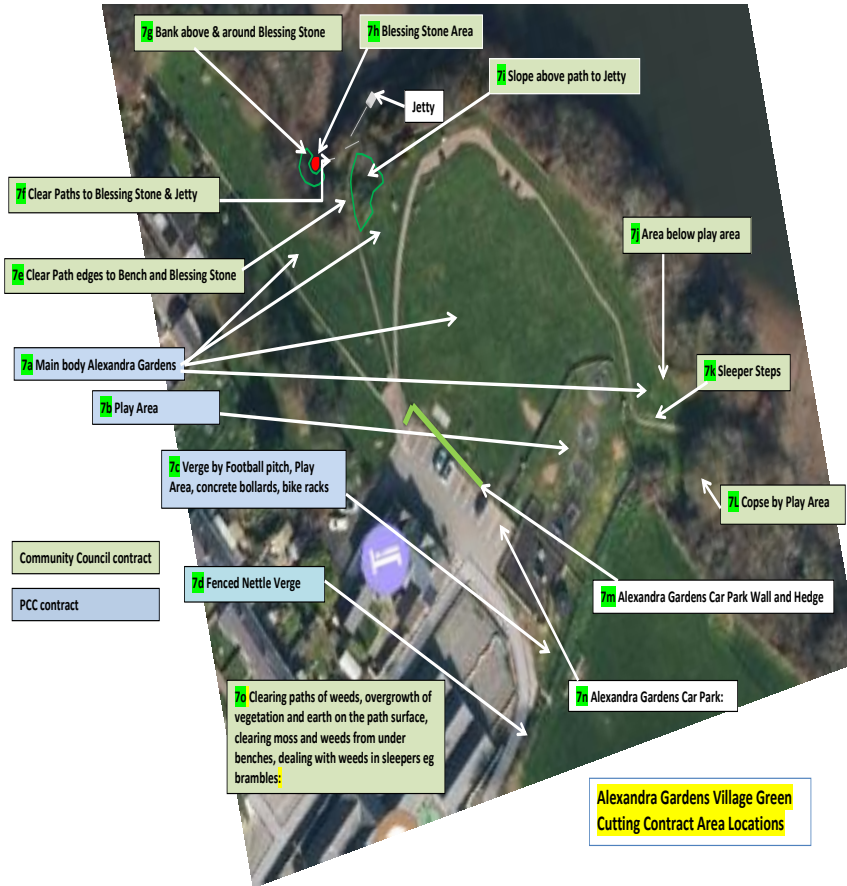
Appendix B – Maps of Community Council owned land and cutting schedule extract 2022-23



Pinog Area Schedule Map



Village Schedule Map



Alexandra Garden Schedule Map

Location	Description of Location	Description of Work	M: ID
Glanteifi Hill Area			
Glanteifi Hill	Verge as far as Highway Sign 'Pedestrians in Road'	Full Cut except Daffodil Strip	1 a
Green Meadow Area			
Green Meadow Bank	Green Meadow Bank	Full Cut (to prevent Dog Fouling and Fly Tipping)	5
Blessing Stone Area			
Blessing Stone Path and Bench	Access path edge and around bench	Keep path edges trimmed back and clear around bench	7 e
Blessing Stone and Jetty	Path Around Blessing Stone and Path to Jetty	Clear paths of earth and weeds and any over growth to prevent trip/slip hazard. Maintain Drainage channels by Blessing Stone	7 f (1)
Blessing Stone	Blessing Stone Trees	Coppice Sycamores by Blessing	7 f (2)

Extract from 2022 schedule

Appendix C

Invasive Species

Japanese Knotweed

St Dogmaels Community Council has been coordinating community based control of Japanese Knotweed since 2006 covering 107 sites in the village & in the PCNPA area. The area of knotweed has reduced by approx 95%. However, sites are carefully monitored to ensure that the treated plants do not reappear. The Community Council continues to fund a treatment programme on public land with individuals helping and advising private land owners to control the Knotweed on their private land.

Himalayan Balsam

St Dogmaels Community Association (Cymdeithas Llandudoch) have been coordinating community based control of Himalayan Balsam since 2011 with initially 18 acres in the PCNPA area of Poppit Marsh and then expanded to include a further 32 acres on Cemaes Head. In 2004 Poppit Marsh was alive with dragonflies & damselflies, with numerous birds living among the native plants. However by 2011 Poppit Marsh was almost a monoculture of Balsam and with no bird song, no space for native flora and insects had vanished from the marsh. Himalayan Balsam dominated the marsh with up to 150 Balsam plants per square metre. However, after 8 years of intensive Balsam clearance there remained only about 500 balsam in 21,000 square metres of marsh. Slowly the area was repopulated by the birds, wild flowers and the insects that once thrived there and birdsong could be heard once more. It is not only the birds that have gained from the clearance of Balsam Frogs and Newts have also returned and the once common place native wild flowers are again regenerating and returning to take their rightful place in the Marsh. There was a similar success at Cemaes Head, where the fields and woods that were once covered in Balsam was reduced to Balsam for example from 350 plants per square metre to 3 per acre by 2020.

The effectiveness of the community education campaign and the involvement of volunteers was a ground breaking project. It's success gave PCNPA the grounds for the ongoing Pembrokeshire wide 'Stitch in Time Project' coordinated PCNPA and formed the basis for the 'Himalayan Balsam "What is the Problem & How do we tackle it?" leaflet. Whilst the bulk of the Balsam was successfully removed a small group of local residents carefully monitor the sites removing the plant where it recurs.

Other

Other problem plants are removed where found, recent species identified and removed have been Monbretia (*Crocsmia*) {Pinnog} and the Thorn apple *Datura stramonium*{Poppit Sands}. Hemlock Water Dropwort is controlled on public access sites.

Appendix D

Biodiversity Pilot

In 2019, after requests from our community. Councillors decided to look at ways of improving the biodiversity on the land it owns. A detailed study was carried out to identify potential sites that may benefit from a less rigorous cutting regime. Sites were assessed based on what wildlife was already in situ and the potential for improvement. During this process certain areas (particularly steep slopes) were found to have very low levels of plant cover which was leading to a rapid erosion of soils. Improving the level of growth would therefore help to stop further erosion and the problem of soil being washed onto footpaths causing slip hazards.

Each area identified as suitable for the pilot was broken down into 'sub' areas so that different techniques could be implemented that would benefit different conditions and flora.

The pilot scheme was introduced into 2021-22 maintenance programme and in 2022 we are currently midway through the 3-year pilot. Early results have been positive with many areas showing a spread of native plants and an increase in pollinating insects using the sites. Not all areas have benefitted to the same degree and ongoing monitoring and comparisons with the pre pilot records will continue to be made.

Areas where erosion was apparent have benefitted from the scheme and it is already noticeable that erosion has reduced dramatically. A full assessment and comparison with pre pilot records will be made and reported in 2024.

There has been a lot of interest from residents who have generally been supportive of the aims. Other local organisations have shown a keen interest in the St Dogmaels CC scheme and this has enabled us to pass on our initial findings both the positives and problems we have encountered, thus helping with the instigation of their own schemes.

The Council is a member of the Wales wide 'One Voice Wales' Nature Network Partnership, which allows us to share our findings and also learn from other like-minded T&CC's.

Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

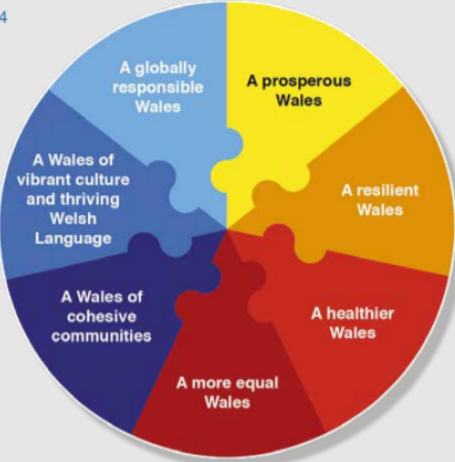
Wales was one of the first countries in the world to define a concept of Community Governance in law, with a unique piece of legislation, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Wales is doing things differently

Wales is one of the first countries to introduce a law like this. The Act says that 44 public bodies, such as Local Authorities, the NHS, Fire and Rescue and others, must work together towards seven well-being goals.

The seven well-being goals:

- 1** A prosperous Wales – where everyone has jobs and there is no poverty
- 2** A resilient Wales – where we're prepared for things like floods
- 3** A healthier Wales – where everyone is healthier and are able to see the doctor when they need to
- 4** A more equal Wales – where everyone has an equal chance whatever their background
- 5** A Wales of cohesive Communities – where Communities can live happily together
- 6** A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language – where we have lots of opportunities to do different things and where lots of people can speak Welsh
- 7** A globally responsible Wales – where we look after the Environment and think about other people around the World.



To show that they are working towards the seven well-being goals they have to think about:

- The long term
- How they involve people in making decisions
- How to stop problems happening in the first place
- How connected our lives are
- How they work together with others

(7 Wellbeing goals - Wales is doing things differently, 2015)

