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St Dogmaels Community Council

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BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENT

St Dogmaels



St Dogmaels Community Council September 2025

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 : Section 6 - Plan to Maintain and Enhance Biodiversity and Promote Resilience

This report sets out what St Dogmaels Community Council has carried out already and what it proposes for the future to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience. Section 6 under Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (the S6 duty) for public authorities in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales. The S6 duty requires that public authorities seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems.

There are six objectives set out in the **Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales** that aim to help develop and guide actions to comply with the S6 Duty. These objectives are as follows:

- Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels
- Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management
- Objective 3: Increase the resilience* of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation
- Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
- Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring
- Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.

The Environment (Wales) Act sets out the following attributes of ecosystem resilience:

- Diversity - generally speaking, more diverse ecosystems are more resilient to external influences and their impacts. This includes biological, geological and physical diversity
- Connectivity within and between ecosystems
- Scale and Extent - the bigger the ecosystem extends, without fragmentation, the more resilient it is likely to be
- Condition - ecosystems need to be in a healthy condition to function effectively, to deliver a range of important ecosystem services
- Adaptability – the ability of ecosystems to adapt to events, understanding that ecosystems are not static and will change over time.

St Dogmaels Community Council has carried out and will continue with the following actions to contribute to these objectives and to promoting resilience:

Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

- SDCC is committed to taking biodiversity into account:
- In its ongoing management of the land, it owns e.g. The Pinog and Alexander Gardens
- When considering planning applications
- When examining environmental issues in its area, e.g. contamination of watercourses or invasive plants etc.
- The Council organises and runs a programme of free themed walks and talks, led by a professional ecologist to educate and engage residents with the areas varied biodiversity.

Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management

- SDCC has carried out or supported work to maintain and enhance areas for wildlife
- It monitors habitats to ensure that its management plan is effective
- It implements changes to its management plan as necessary to maintain and improve habitats

Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation

Objective 4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats.

SDCC undertakes to:

- Manage the Pinog area to be wildlife friendly
- Manages the areas adjacent to Alexander Gardens (SSSI), working with NRW, to protect the wildlife and also to facilitate the gardens for recreational use
- Look for opportunities to improve biodiversity both on SDCC owned land and within the St Dogmaels area
- Look for opportunities to support pollinators and be a wildlife friendly organisation
- Support local and community-based biodiversity action
- Support local action to improve wildlife corridors to help improve resilience
- Maintain and protect our areas of special scientific interest.

Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

- St Dogmaels CC carried out a Biodiversity Pilot project to measure the biodiversity and resilience
- SDCC has an ongoing monitoring programme in place
- Following the 3-year pilot plan a professional ecologist was commissioned to survey the biodiversity areas to advise on the plan and suggest further actions
- Residents are encouraged to submit wildlife sighting records via the Councils “St Dogmaels Goes Wild” Facebook page, to record evidence of wildlife found

Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.

- It produces an annual management plan based on its findings from the ongoing monitoring to protect and enhance biodiversity
- The plan is adjusted on an ongoing basis to ensure its management of its land meets the needs for supporting and enhancing the biodiversity and wildlife
- Works closely with National Resources Wales and other Government bodies

The Landscape, Village and Habitats

Located at the far north edge of the County of Pembrokeshire between the National Park and Cardigan, 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 Afon 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.

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.

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, form part of a wilder exposed and transient coastal seascape.

St Dogmaels has a population of 1210 (circa 2021) most of whom reside in the village itself with rural scattered hamlets and farms contributing to the numbers. It currently has two pubs, shop and car sale/repair business within the village boundary with a further pub/hotel in Poppit. Tourism plays a large part in the local economy and there are a variety of holiday businesses providing accommodation, therefore during the busy holiday periods numbers are much higher, with day visitors again bolstering the numbers.

(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). The land is adjacent to, or itself designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and much of it is also 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, as well as the work for the Biodiversity Project. Both the cutting schedule and biodiversity scheme parameters are annually reviewed and adjusted according to need for the following year. In addition, work is sometimes identified as an urgent intervention and this is actioned on an ‘as required’ basis. The council works closely, via the County Councillor, in monitoring other non-CC owned areas under the responsibility of Pembrokeshire County Council.

Between 2021 and 2024 the Council opted to run a Biodiversity ‘Pilot’ project, the aim being to assess the existing biodiversity, protect it and where possible change its maintenance programme to enhance it. At the end of the pilot, in 2024, a professional Ecologist was commissioned to carry out a survey of Council owned land to assess the project and make further recommendations. The findings of the report were very positive, and the Community Council will continue its project and implement recommendations where practical.

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

Appendix B shows maps and the cutting schedule extract for 2025-26 on land owned by the Community Council.

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

Appendix D Shows the cover extract from the commissioned ‘Biodiversity Report’ (available on the Councils website)

Pinog

Sited adjacent the banks of the tidal Afon 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 was one of the main areas identified in the 3-year biodiversity 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. 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 St Dogmaels



Alexandra Gardens

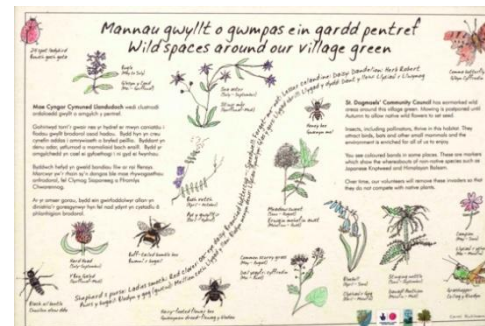


Alexandra Gardens

Managed as a formal recreation area containing seating, picnic benches and the village children’s playground. The river cliffs adjacent to the gardens are managed in accordance with a 10-year management plan and under a licence issued by NRW. The current maintenance programme is set to give a balance of preserving the biodiversity, facilitating recreational use and retaining the views over the river.



Alexandra Gardens showing the historic net drying ‘standards’ to the left, used by the seine net fishermen to dry their nets.



Wildlife Information Board by Local artist Carol Kuhlman

Partnership Working

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



Plant trough belonging to St Dogmaels Community Council, in High Street Car Park, kindly maintained by Merched y Wawr

The Council in 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. The Community Council continues to monitor its land and other areas for reinfestation. Between 2011-2017 Council supported another project to control of Himalayan Balsam which resulted in almost complete eradication of Himalayan Balsam in the area.

The People's Orchard Project (2016-2019) overseen by 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 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 wildflower 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 and the Community Council provides grant funding (via Abaty 900 -The Friends of the Abbey) to assist with this work.

The Council works closely with its County Councillor, Pembrokeshire County Council, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and National Resources Wales monitoring the local environment to deal with any issues identified.

Community organisations and volunteers help to maintain many of the public planters and public areas.

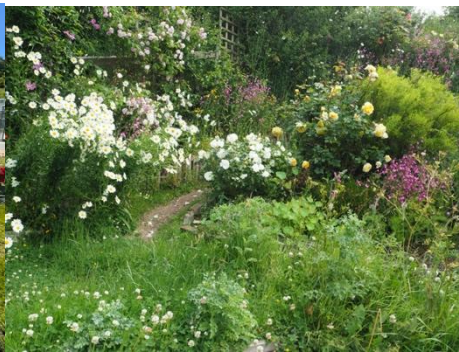
The Council is a member of the Wales wide 'One Voice Wales' Nature Network Partnership, which allows us to share our findings and also learn from other like-minded Town & Community Councils.

Village in Bloom

Most years the council has run 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 resident's houses. As part of the biodiversity project, it was decided to add an additional category for wild gardeners. This is judged not only on how attractive the gardens look but considered the benefit to pollinating insects and wildlife in general.



Wild Garden Winner 2023.



Container Garden Winner 2023.



Formal Garden Winner 2023

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. The infected trees which were deemed to pose an immediate health and safety risk i.e. those close to footpaths and public access areas were removed and continuous monitoring of the existing trees is carried out. A councillor attended a course on identifying the various stages of the disease and advice is regularly taken from the Pembrokeshire County Tree Officer. A full tree condition survey has been commissioned for 2025 and is ongoing.

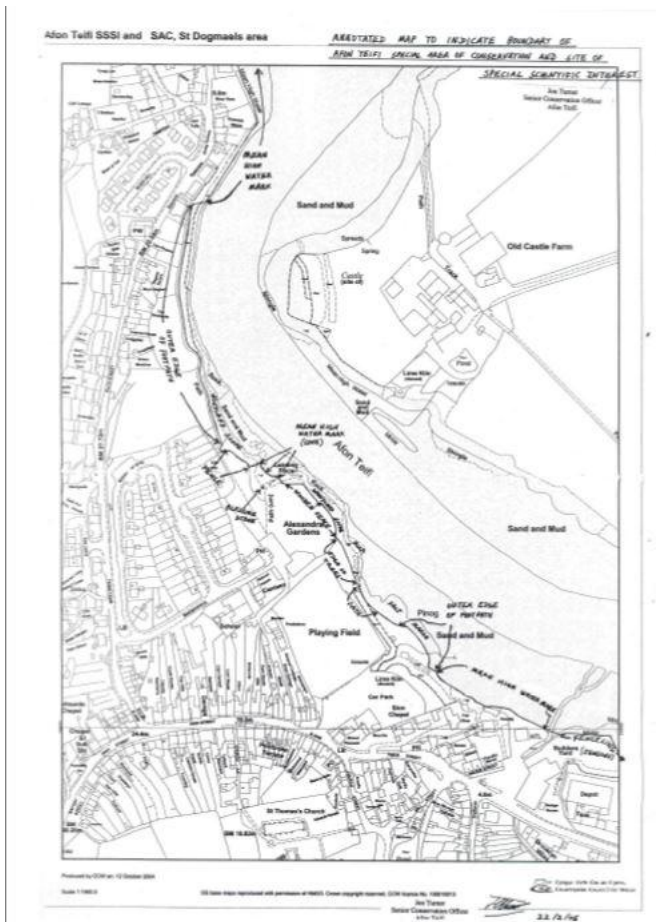
The trees most seriously affected and at the highest risk of collapsing were removed by a contractor in the winter of 2021-22. Where it was deemed safe to do so some trees were not completely felled but reduced to a 2-3 metre safe height, this was in line with conservation thinking with the aim of either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



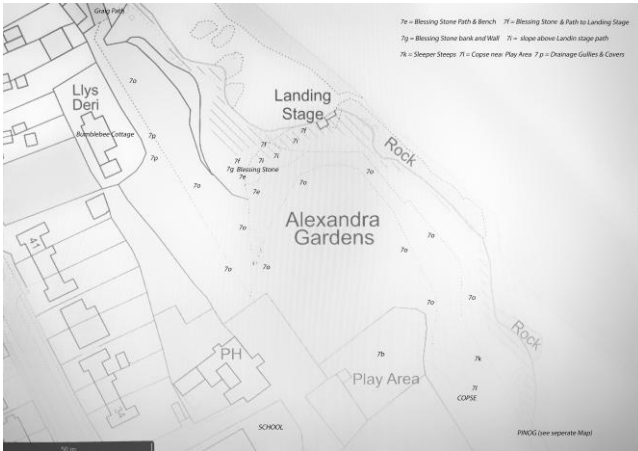
Diseased Ash on the Pinog

Appendix A

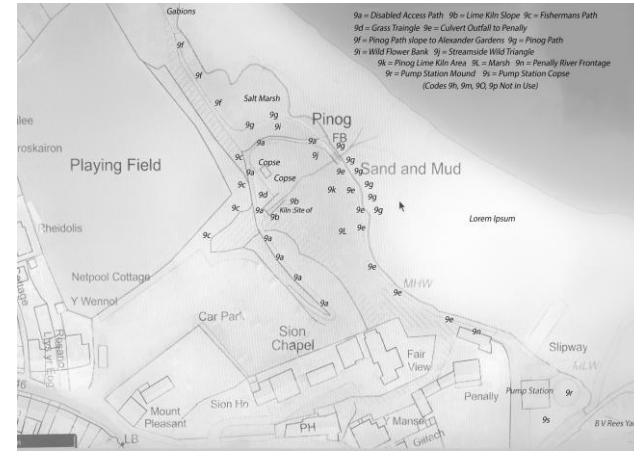
Map showing location of SSSI on Community Council owned land



Appendix B – Maps of Community Council owned land and cutting schedule extract 2025-26



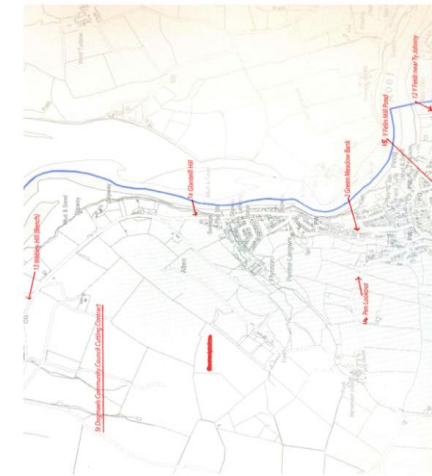
Alexandra Gardens schedule map



Pinog schedule map

ST Doomaels Community Council Cutting Contract for 3 years - 2025-27 to 2028-29 Seasons (Produced September 2025)				
Location	Description of Location	Description of Work	Number of cuts/interventions per year	Map ID
Giantiff Hill Area				
Giantiff Hill	Verge as far as Highway Sign 'Pedestrians in Road'	Full Cut (Next The Daffodil Strip April - June)	12	1 a
Green Meadow Area				
Green Meadow Bank	Green Meadow Bank between pavement and boundary	Full Cut	12	5
Alexandra Gardens - Blessing Stone Area				
Blessing Stone Path and Bench	Access path edge and around bench	Keep path edges trimmed back and clear around bench	12	7 e
Blessing Stone and jetty	Path around Blessing and Path to Landing Stage	Clear paths of earth and weeds and any over growth. Maintain Drainage channels by Blessing Stone	3	7 f (1)
Blessing Stone	Blessing Stone Trees	Copse Sycamores by Blessing Stone and approaches	1	7 f (2)
Slope above the Path to Jetty	Bank Above and Around Blessing Stone	Remove growth from retaining wall and overhanging plants where safe to do so. Remove Weeds around the Stone	2	7 g, 7h
Slope above path to Landing Stage	Slope above path to Landing Stage	Brush Cut Bank to remove Brambles, Gorse etc	1	7 i
Alexandra Gardens - Below Playground				
Sleeper Steeps to Pinog	Sleeper Slope Steeps	Clear Earth and weed from sleeper steeps	1	7 k

Extract from 2025-26 schedule



Village Map (Cutting Contract)

Appendix C

Invasive Species

Japanese Knotweed

St Dogmaels Community Council continues to treat Knotweed where it occurs on council owned land, and funds treatment of other areas of public land where should the species spread it could impact on the village, Whilst knotweed has been reduced by approximately 95% across the ward, sites are carefully monitored to ensure that the plants do not reappear.

Himalayan Balsam

Following a programme of control between 2011-2017, most of the sites where Balsam occurred are now free of the plant, resulting in the areas being repopulated by the native species that once occurred. Whilst the bulk of the Balsam was successfully removed a small group of residents continue to 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*) {Pinog} and the Thorn apple *Datura stramonium*) {Poppit Sands}.

Appendix D

Extract of the Biodiversity report

Biodiversity Survey and Conservation Management of Y Pinog and Alexandra Gardens, St Dogmaels



Carried out on behalf of St Dogmaels Community Council

by Steve Halton, Ecologist

December 2024

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.

Here are the 7 Goals:

1. **A Prosperous Wales**: An innovative, productive, and low-carbon economy.
2. **A Resilient Wales**: A nation that maintains the natural environment and uses resources wisely.
3. **A Healthier Wales**: People live longer, healthier lives, with more time to enjoy them.
4. **A More Equal Wales**: Reducing inequalities and fostering fairness.
5. **A Wales of Cohesive Communities**: Strong, resilient, and supportive communities.
6. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language**: Promoting Welsh language, culture, and heritage.
7. **A Globally Responsible Wales**: Playing its part in a fair and sustainable world



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