University of South Wales
Prifysgol De Cymru

Biodiversity Action Plan 2019 - 2022

University of South Wales

Estates & Facilities Department 2019

Introduction

As a University, we have a duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to maintain and enhance biodiversity across all of the University's functions, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems. To achieve this the University is committed to working within the six objectives of the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales (NRAP12), which have been identified to contribute to reversing the decline of biodiversity in Wales. Working within these objectives will not only help the university become more sustainable, but will also contribute towards seeking the best outcomes for the economic, environmental, social and cultural wellbeing of Wales as required by the WFG Act.

The six objectives to maintain and enhance biodiversity are:

- **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.

USW Campuses

The University has five campuses, which reside in various locations and range in size. This adds to the complexity of maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity of these Campuses as each of the landscapes are different and must be managed accordingly.

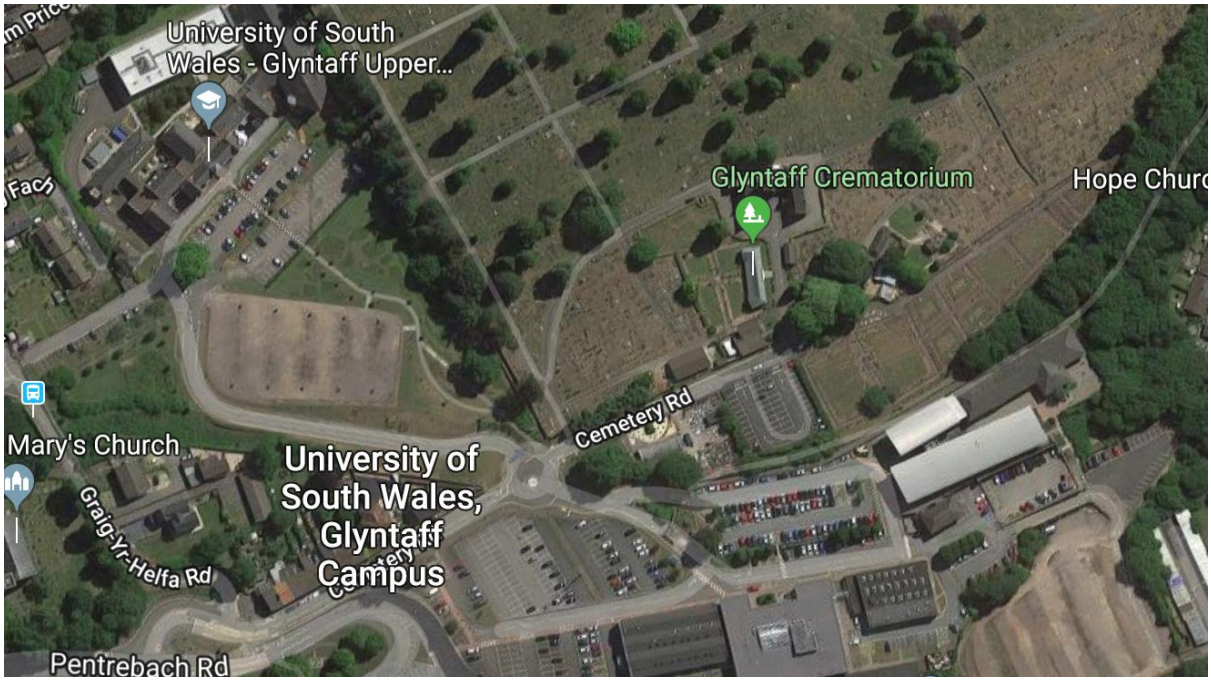
Treforest

Our Treforest Campus is approximately 16ha and comprises numerous campus buildings, a mix of amenity and semi-improved grassland, with introduced shrub planting forming soft landscaping, an area of semi-natural woodland, hardstanding with car parks, and mixed scattered trees throughout the Site. The site is immediately adjacent to a continuation of semi-natural woodland to the west and north-west, and to the south.

Treforest Campus

Glyntaff

Glyntaff Campus is approximately 6.4ha and comprises numerous campus buildings, a mix of amenity and semi-improved grassland, with introduced shrub planting forming soft landscaping, hardstanding with car parks, and mixed scattered trees around the boundaries to the north, north-east, east, south-west and south-east of the Site.



Glyntaff Campus

Atrium

This Campus is measures approximately 1.5ha, and comprises the campus building and surrounding amenity grassland and hardstanding with a car park to the north. Areas of planted hedgerow, scattered trees and shrubs surround the car parking area and are present to the east of the main building. Tall stone-walls provide the eastern and western boundaries.

Atrium Campus

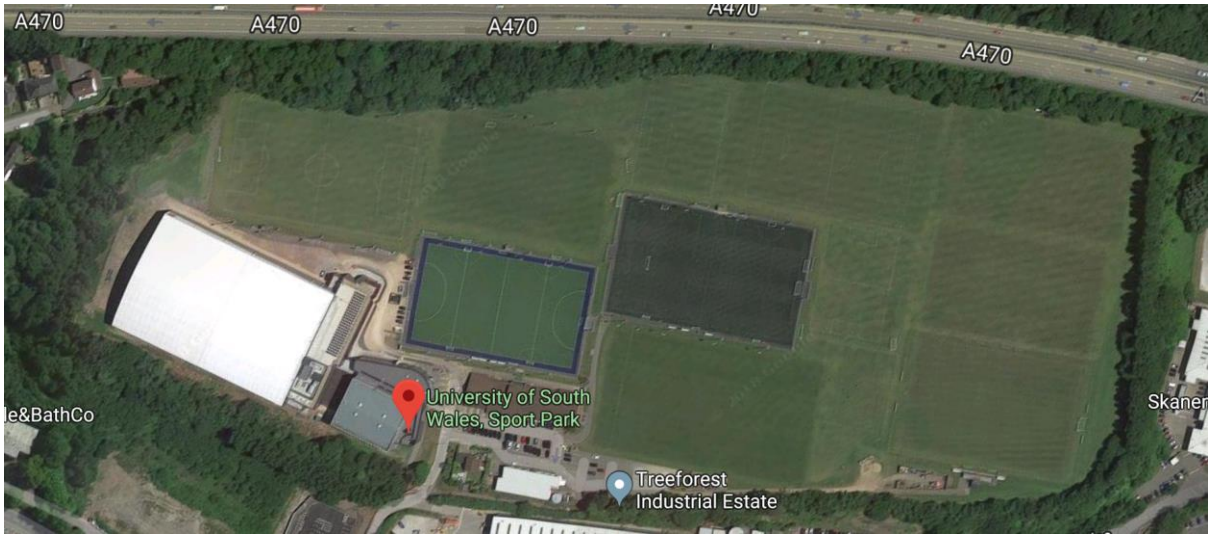
Newport

Newport Campus is situated in a low-lying, urban location in the centre of the city of Newport. The site measures approximately 0.8ha, and comprises the campus building, and surrounding hardstanding with a small car park to the rear. Areas of planted hedgerow, scattered trees and shrubs surround the car parking area.

Newport Campus

Sports Park

This campus measures approximately 15ha, and comprises three campus buildings, amenity grassland in the form of playing fields, hardstanding with car parks, and areas of mixed plantation and woody scrub towards the north, west, east and southern boundaries, and within the north-western quarter of the Site.



Sports Park Campus

Habitats on Campus

The University recognises the impact we can create on the biodiversity at our campuses. In 2018 a Phase 1 Habitat Survey was undertaken at each of our campuses to understand the habitats that are present and to create a baseline for improvements to be made.

The surveys involved the recording of conspicuous fauna species, such as birds, herptiles (i.e. amphibians and reptiles), mammals and invertebrates, such as butterflies and dragonflies, paying particular attention to the presence of any rare or protected species. Built structures were not included within this survey, beyond a brief external assessment.

The surveys identified a number of habitat sites and species that were present at each campus, the suggested management techniques that should be applied to maintain biodiversity, as well as the enhancement techniques that could be applied to enhance it. The results have been complied within the two tables below:

Habitat Type	Location	Management Technique	Enhancement Technique
Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	Treforest	Where opportunities arise, replace non-native trees with native trees. Any arisings from tree management can be sawn and stacked to form piles of wood Removal of any invasive non-native shrubs, such as Rhododendron, should be undertaken	
Planted mixed woodland and scattered trees	Sports Park	Managing to increase habitat value for biodiversity	Re-planting with native species, opening of canopy to form glades and rides, management of woodland verges to increase floral diversity
Amenity grassland	Treforest, Glyntaff, Atrium, Sports Park	Any areas of grassland where there is limited human access could be further enhanced by reducing the mowing regime to twice a year in early spring and late summer only Manage to increase biodiversity of sward	Re-seed with native wildflower-rich seed mix, where appropriate
Scattered mixed trees and shrubs	Treforest, Glyntaff, Atrium, Newport, Sports Park		Plant native trees where possible Plant nectar-rich plants
Watercourse	Treforest, Glyntaff	Where these watercourses are shaded within the woodland, careful opening up of the canopy above would increase opportunities for aquatic plants Manage Himalayan Balsam (invasive, non-native)	
Building	Glyntaff, Atrium	Roosting should be confirmed by a suitably qualified and licenced ecologist. Depending on the outcome of that assessment, management may be recommended that is species and site specific.	Introduce bird boxes
Intact hedge, Native species rich	Treforest, Atrium, Newport	Managing to increase height and value for biodiversity	Create new native species-rich hedgerows, and supplement or replace current ornamental/non-native hedgerows

Species Type	Location	Enhancement Technique
Noctule bat	Treforest, Glyntaff, Newport, Sports Park	Bat boxes
Common Pipistrelle	Treforest, Glyntaff, Newport, Sports Park	Bat boxes
Soprano Pipistrelle	Treforest, Glyntaff	Bat boxes
Long-eared bat	Treforest	Bat boxes
Lesser Horseshoe bat	Treforest	Bat boxes
Myotid Myotis sp. bats	Sports Park	Bat Boxes
Birds (various)	Treforest, Glyntaff, Atrium, Newport, Sports Park	Swift boxes; Sparrow boxes; boxes for woodland birds
Invertebrates (various)	Treforest, Glyntaff, Atrium, Newport, Sports Park	Nectar rich plantings; insect boxes Improved hedgerow management and nectar rich plantings; insect boxes
Slow Worm	Glyntaff	Improved grassland management Creation of reptile hibernacula

Objectives and Targets

Following the Phase 1 Habitat Surveys, a number of objectives and targets have been set across all of our campuses for each habitat and species type:

Objective 1: Increase the population of native trees on our campuses through tree management

> Target – Ensure any external project work includes the planting of new native tree species.

Objective 2: Increase the floral and species diversity at our campuses

> Target – Manage woodland areas to create open canopy areas, forming glades and rides
>
> Target – Re-seed appropriate areas of grassland with native wildflower rich seed mix

Objective 3: Increase the number of nectar rich plants on our campuses

> Target – Purchase native plants that which are nectar rich for planting

Objective 4: Look to eliminate non-native, invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam on our campuses

> Target – Ensure appropriate management plans are implemented to remove these species responsibly, keep records of any species removal

Objective 5: Increase the species presence at our campuses

> Target - Install swift boxes, sparrow boxes, insect boxes and bat boxes at all of our campuses

Objective 6: Improve the Slow Worm habitat at Glyntaff campus

> Target – Create reptile hibernacula in a suitable position near the Horse Chestnut Tree in upper Glyntaff

Objective 7: Boost the biodiversity awareness amongst staff and students

> Target – Assist students and staff with coursework and fieldwork on our campuses

Monitoring

The University is committed to achieving the above objectives and targets within the three year timeframe of this Biodiversity Action Plan. Each of the above objectives and targets will be monitored regularly. Any deviation from achieving these will be recorded and justified as necessary.

Useful Links

Information on the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 can be found via:
https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/180314-section-6-guidance-en.pdf

The 2018 Phase 1 Habitat Surveys can be found via the following link:
https://various2.southwales.ac.uk/estates-and-facilities/sustainability/biodiversity/