

# Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities

## Performance Report



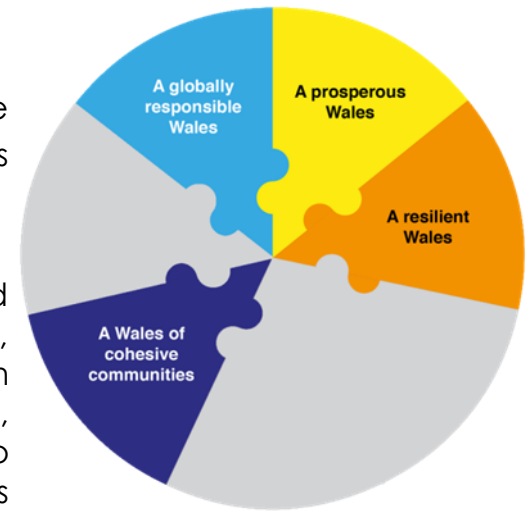
September 2021



# Foreword

The purpose of this report is to present service activity which highlights how we are contributing to the Council's overall aim of delivering a globally responsible Wales, a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales and a Wales of more cohesive communities.

The following overview pages set out our performance for the period along with some associated achievements and challenges aligned to the priority areas identified in the Corporate Plan 2020/22, which are: ► To increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets, ► To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control, ► To re-invest in highways maintenance particularly improvements to our residential roads, streets and pavements, ► To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors, ► To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits, ► To improve the quality of our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes ► To be a carbon neutral Council by 2030, and ► To build a collaborative culture between services, partners and communities working together and with people directly to shape and deliver services. i.e. (Community Asset Transfers).



This report is broken down into the themes below which have been identified for the Community Services area and support delivery of the priority areas above:

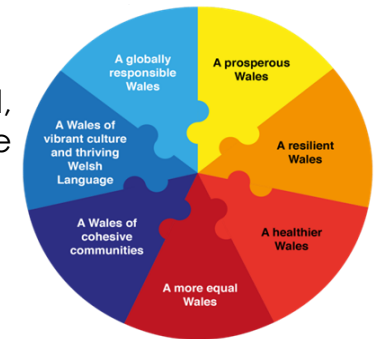
- Improving the Local Environment;
- Managing Our Estate;
- Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities;
- Healthy and Safe Communities; and
- Managing our Highways Network and Infrastructure.

Blaenau Gwent has a rich heritage and our buildings and countryside are part of Blaenau Gwent's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. Our local environment should be used to help improve the health and well-being of our families and communities and be enhanced for future generations to continue to enjoy. There is also a real desire to see the communities where people live kept clean, tidy and useable, creating areas that people can be proud of.



# Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is legislation which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The vision of this legislation is expressed in the seven National well-being goals.



The Act also puts a duty on public bodies to apply the sustainable development principle which states they 'must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

The sustainable development principle is made up of the following five ways of working, pictured below:



**Collaboration**



**Integration**



**Involvement**



**Long Term**

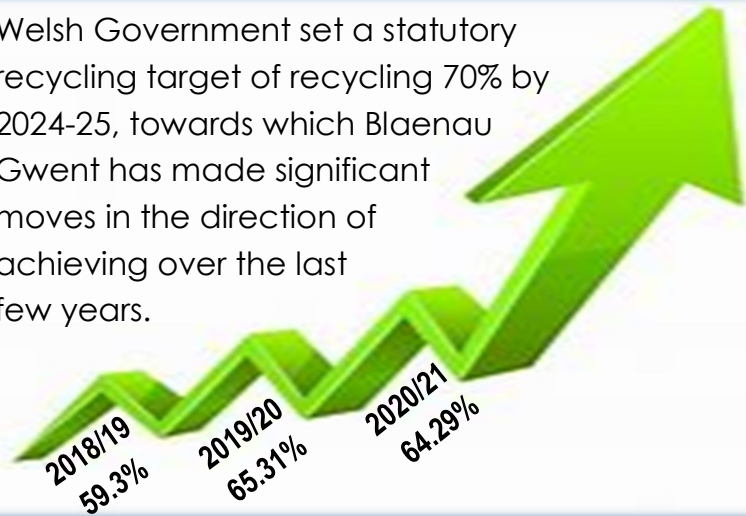


**Prevention**

Throughout this report some areas of performance that meet these ways of working are demonstrated by the above images.

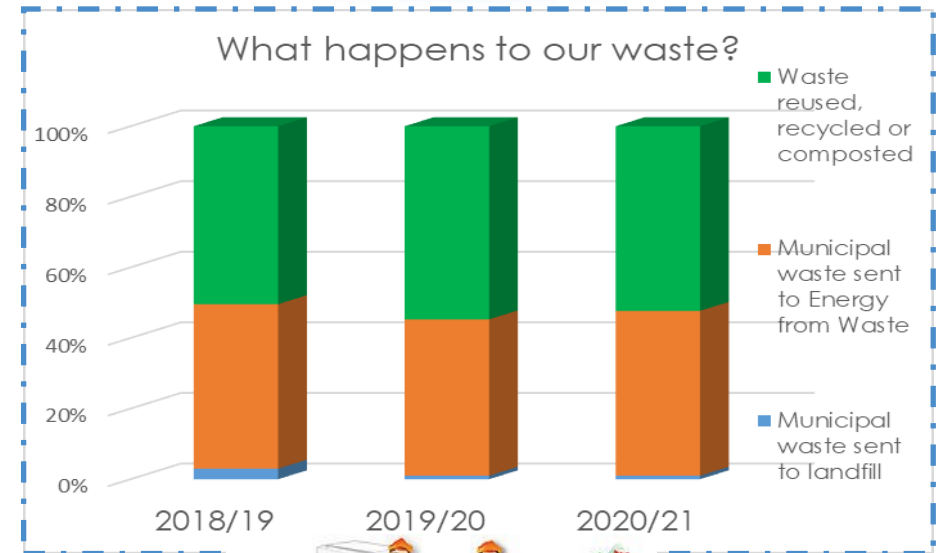
# Improving the local Environment

Welsh Government set a statutory recycling target of recycling 70% by 2024-25, towards which Blaenau Gwent has made significant moves in the direction of achieving over the last few years.



**66.7%**  
of waste produced was recycled in Quarter 1 of 2021/22. (Provisional figure)

Support to local community groups has continued, providing **litter champions** with materials, equipment, staff support and collection of waste following clean up and clearance work where COVID restrictions allowed. ✓



Dry Recycling collected at the kerbside during Quarter 1 has **decreased** by **412.851 tonnes (12.42%)** when compared to the same period last year.

This is due to the Household Waste Recycling Centre being closed and more people at home during this period last year due to the pandemic- resulting in higher than normal amounts of recycling being collected at the kerbside.



Blaenau Gwent yn ailgylchu  
Blaenau Gwent recycles

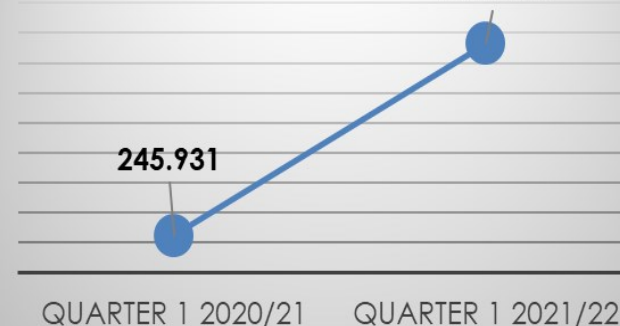
**Are you keeping up with the Joneses?**  
If you're not recycling, then being the odd one out could cost you £100

Working together

Work continues monitoring areas in relation to the "Keeping up with the Joneses" campaign.

We continue to support when needed, to ensure that the Authority's Residents are maximising opportunities to recycle wherever possible.

Recycling collected in tonnes



The amount of recycling collected has **increased** by 520.55% to **1526.136 tonnes** during Quarter 1, compared to the same period last year.



# Improving the local Environment

**2.8 million** has been invested to develop an **additional Household Waste Recycling Centre** in the Ebbw Fach Valley.

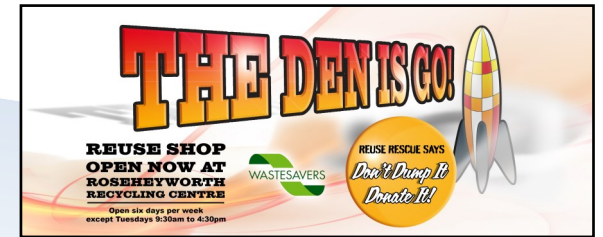
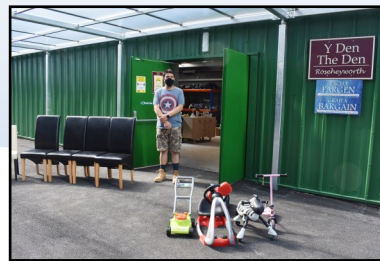
The new Recycling Centre in Roseheyworth was opened to the public in April 2021. The construction of the site is a significant achievement as the majority of the work was carried out at the height of the pandemic, through several lockdowns and the restrictions associated with them. The new site is large and spacious allowing residents to recycle a range of materials including wood, electrical items, garden waste and paint.

The site also features a reuse shop

**'The Den'** which is operated by the charity Wastesavers, which is dedicated to social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

Residents can donate items, such as books, toys, bikes, crockery, ornaments, DVDs and small furniture, that are in good condition and free from defect so that they can be bought and re-used by someone else. "The Den" is already proving popular with locals who want to get rid of reusable items they no longer want but want them to go to a new

home. It's also proving very popular with people looking for a bargain.

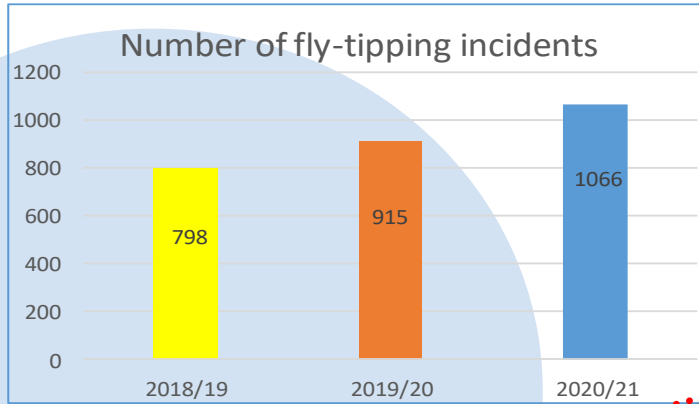


## The new Trade Waste service

was rolled out in May 2021 with two bespoke vehicles funded by Welsh Government. These new vehicles allow for separate collections of materials from businesses and ensure the service is compliant with the requirements of the Environment Act (Wales). The service has been well received by many customers with the Trade Waste Officer on hand to help deal with any issues some local businesses may have.



# Improving the local Environment



**1125**

Fly-tipping incidents were reported during Quarter 1 2021, the average number of days taken to clear was **4.26 days**

*The numbers of fly-tipping incidents are increasing year on year*



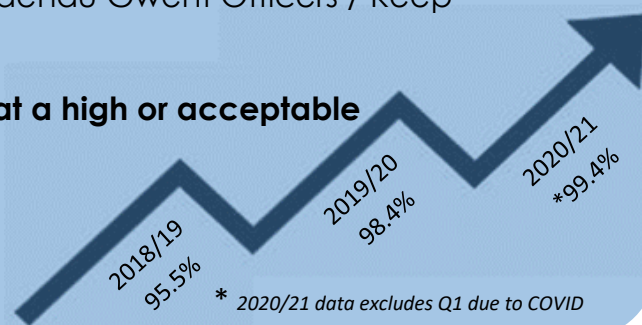
**LONG TERM**— Blaenau Gwent is one of the first councils in Wales to develop its own **litter and fly-tipping strategy**, which has been designed to reduce the problem of illegal littering.



During the first quarter 2021/22, 30 streets were inspected by Blaenau Gwent Officers / Keep Wales Tidy.

Of these **100%** were rated **at a high or acceptable standard on cleanliness.**

Based on the past 3 years data, street cleanliness is an improving picture.



## Recycle your plastic bags and wrapping

Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil residents together already recycle more than 67% of their waste, but we want to help you recycle even more.

We're introducing a new 12-week trial to see how we can recycle your plastic bags and wrapping.

This trial aims to discover if what we collect from you can be recycled into new products, such as bags for life and bin bags.

**What should I do?**

- Place any empty plastic bags and wrapping you have in the sacks provided with this leaflet. (See the rear page for examples of what you should put in the sacks.)
- Tie the sacks securely then put one into each wheelie bin alongside your recycling containers on your usual collection day. (We may collect these sacks in a different vehicle to the one that collects your usual recycling.)

**Enter our prize draw to win a £50 Gift Card**

Tell us what you think about the trial by filling in our quick survey, and enter £5 every you into a prize draw to win a £50 LoveShop Gift Card. The survey is open from Monday 19 July and Sunday 8 August 2021.

To enter the prize draw, or for more information about the trial, visit [www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/merthyr/wwa/recycling/recycling-plastic-bags](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/merthyr/wwa/recycling/recycling-plastic-bags)

Starts on **MONDAY 10 MAY 2021**  
Ends on **FRIDAY 30 JULY 2021**

LOVE/SHOP



## What should I put in the sacks?

✓ Plastic carrier bags, including bags for life	✓ Plastic bread bags (bake out crumbs)	✓ Plastic wrapping from cans/bins for metal goods	✓ Plastic wrapping from tins/tins/ kitchen foil packs
✓ Plastic freezer bags	✓ Plastic wrapping from magazines, that come in the post	✓ Thin plastic inner market bins and vegie bin bag	✓ Bubble wrap
✓ Plastic salad bags	✓ Flat licensed tea towels	✓ Plastic frozen chip/vegetable bag	✓ Molar bag
✗ Cling film	✗ Food, drink and pet food packets	✗ Crisp packets	✗ Film lids from ready meals and food trays

Thank you for doing your bit for the environment and helping to protect our planet by recycling all that you can.

## New trial - Recycling plastic bags and wrapping

The plastic film trial run for **12 weeks, 10th May 21—30th July 21** and Blaenau Gwent worked in collaboration with WRAP and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

**10,685 properties** across the Borough were **selected to take part**, a roll of bags and a leaflet was delivered to the properties outlining the initiative.

During the trial

**28,994 bags** totalling **16.6 tonnes of plastic film** was collected.

Following feedback via waste warden the trial **was well perceived by residents**, we await the full results from WRAP.

Pre planning application has been submitted and is awaiting approval to design and build an Education Centre located at the new Roseheyworth Household Waste Recycling Centre. Lead times have been extended due to delays for construction materials and build costs higher than expected.



# Managing Our Estate

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council directly manages seven cemeteries, carrying out maintenance works as and when needed to ensure that families have good access to sites and comfort in the knowledge that the burial place of loved ones is secure.

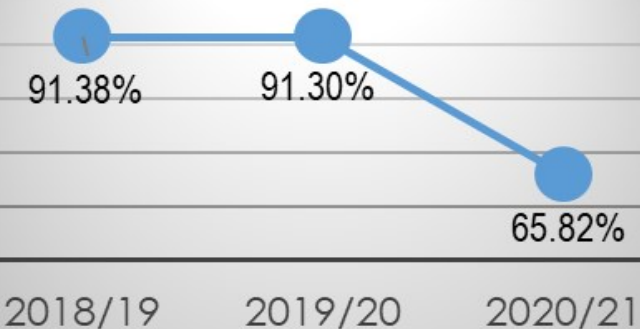
## Cemetery works completed in 2020/21 included :-

- Approximately 8,094 m<sup>2</sup> of road and pathways improved;
- Boundary fences repaired / improved at all seven cemeteries;
- 6 cattle grids installed to prevent access to live stock;
- 2 cemetery properties improved - Sextons House Ebbw Vale, Cemetery and Chapel of rest building at Brynmawr Cemetery;
- 65 metres of stone wall repaired at St Peters Church cemetery, Blaina;
- 30 new waste Bins to be installed (on order); and
- Overgrown vegetation at all sites has been removed.

The funding allocation for 2021/22 financial year is £200,000 and further maintenance works have commenced.

There is just over two years before burial capacity will become a major issue for the area - Cemetery expansion works are in the process of being explored.

COVID / staffing issues has impacted upon the **percentage** of Blaenau Gwent **Bridges** that were compliant with statutory **inspections** in 2020/21.



The ReFit Scheme has been used to implement various energy improvement projects. Work is being undertaken to consider the downsizing of the Council's property portfolio in order to assist with reducing the energy costs across the estate.



## Upgrading our street lighting to LED is key to us providing a more energy efficient, low carbon lighting network.

Following securement of funds the contract was awarded to E-ON, and works commenced.

**5,410 LED lanterns** were installed in Street Lights throughout the County Borough, the programme started in September 2020 and was completed by the end of April 2021. The energy savings achieved will intern pay back the Salix funding.

# Managing Our Estate

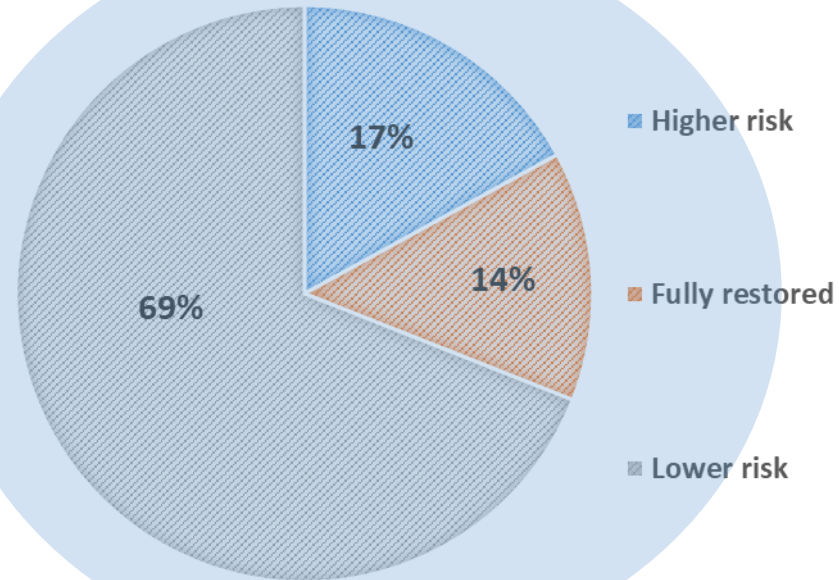
## Disused Spoil Tips

The Authority continues to maintain a database of disused tip sites and to inspect and take action if needed to prevent danger to the public.

**'Walk over' inspections of the highest risk sites have been undertaken and no signs of instability was identified.**

Inspection of the lower risk sites is scheduled to be undertaken over the forthcoming months – subject to staff availability

Revised Preliminary Categorisation



Despite the increased frequency of storm events adding pressures on services

**100%**

of **emergency issues / complaints** regarding

**falling trees**

continue to be

**dealt**

with

**within**

**1 day**



**LONG TERM** - The current depot buildings and site requires major updating and investment to conform with modern working standards and future proofing to meet the new carbon reduction agenda. The physical restrictions together with the cost of the work to meet these modern standards now identifies the need to relocate to an alternative site in order to construct new modern facilities to meet future demands on services.

**Community Asset Transfer (CAT)** process is nearing completion with only the following works ongoing:-

- External assistance commissioned to deal with legal standing of selection process for the Tredegar site.
- Works continuing in respect of gaining Charity Commission consent for Ebbw Vale and Cwm.
- Working closely with Brynithel Rugby Football Club and Llanhilleth Football Club to finalise transfer. Response now received and a position paper is currently being drafted by Estates for discussion at Council [as the Trustees].

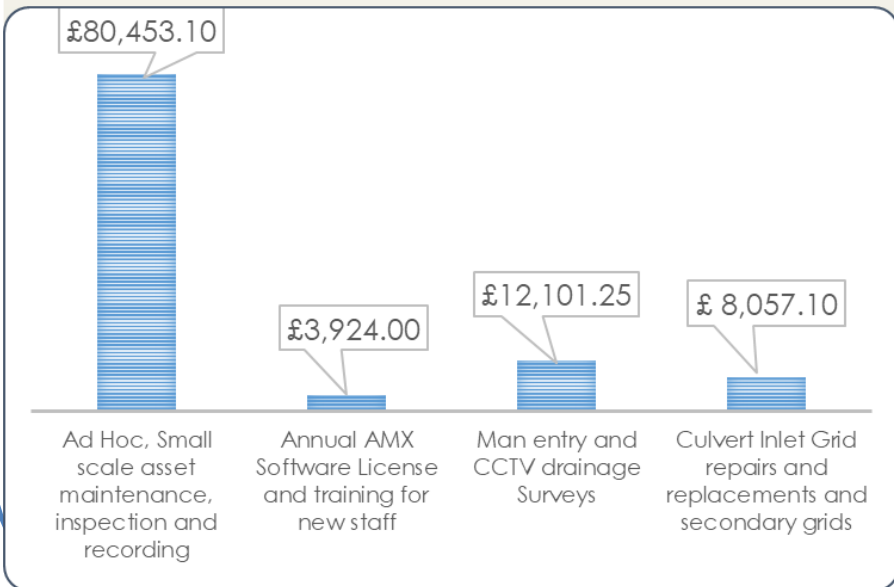


# Managing Our Estate

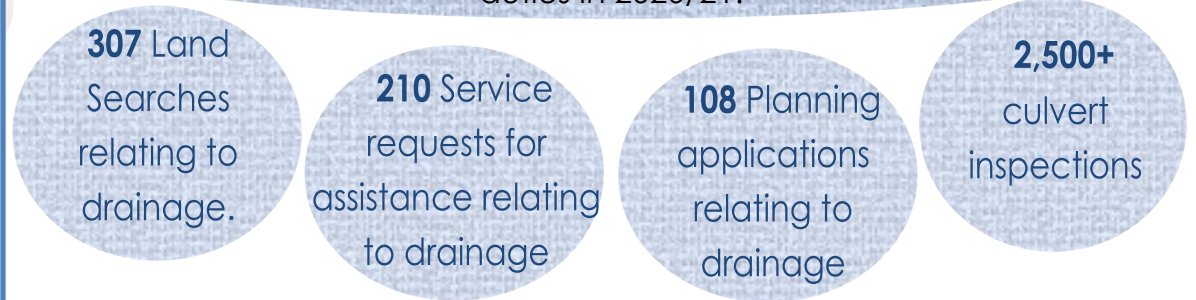
Progress continues to deliver the Councils **Flood Management Plan**, with the following works being undertaken:-

Undertook CCTV and Man Entry surveys of our culvert inlets to inspect their condition at numerous locations including:-	Undertook significant schemes to alleviate flooding at the following locations.	Smaller but no less urgent works were undertaken at the following locations:
Abertillery Old Ash Tip	Ladies Row and King Street Tredegar.	New trash screens to culvert inlets at various locations.
Abertillery Bowls Club	Culvert repairs at Victoria, Ebbw Vale.	Land drainage to stabilise landslip at Briery Hill.
HOV Culvert near Garnlydan.	Remedial works at Cwmtillery Culvert.	Temporary flood relief works at Market Street, Tredegar.
Melbourne Rd, Abertillery	Remedial works to the embankment at Railway Terrace Aberbeeg.	Holland Street, (School House) flood relief investigation and maintenance works.
		Melbourne Rd, Abertillery. Repairs to Drainage.
		Church Street additional drainage to relieve flooding.

A successful application for 100% funded Welsh Government Revenue Grants to the value of **£104,535** enabled us to also undertake the following works and objectives.



The following actions were undertaken as part of our statutory duties in 2020/21.



**PREVENTION** - Further Schemes have taken place across the borough to help store water and slow down surface run-off. These include tree planting, woodland management, green infrastructure and footpath repairs. This was funded by Welsh Government Access improvement grants of approximately £68,000.

# Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities



Bee Orchid

## Grassland Management / Pollinators

Due to the changes made to the grass cutting regime at Rhos Y Fedwen Primary, Bee orchids have been found growing in the grassland this year. Discussions are ongoing in relation to the relaxation of cutting regime in other schools.

Funding for **access improvements** has been **delivered** to the value of

**£34,000**

to sites across the Borough .  
**Funding for 2021/22 has also been awarded in the value of £54,000.**



## ACTIVE TRAVEL

Work continues to explore and develop the **Active Travel** routes and the Public rights of way network for walking and cycling whilst developing cross boundary links where opportunities exist with our neighbouring authorities.

Project work was **delivered** throughout **2020/21** in the value of **£240,000** and included projects at Parc Bryn Bach, Glyncoed and Brynmawr to Beaufort.

A further **£399,000 funding** has been **secured** for **2021/22** with potential projects to include:-

- Route Ebbw Vale - works site to station;
- Localised Active Travel route minor works;
- Bridge enhancement, Heathfield Roundabout, Tredegar;
- Glyncoed - Off-road route North to South; and
- Dingle, Brynmawr - Intermediate Road to Garnlydan.

**INVOLVEMENT** - We continue to work across the Borough with community groups and both internal and external partners to improve the quality of and access to our green spaces.



**COLLABORATION** - Working collaboratively across the five Gwent areas whilst funded by the Enabling of Natural Resources and the Well-being Grant, has allowed work on 'Resilient Gwent' to begin and remain on schedule.



**PREVENTION** - During COVID restrictions the green spaces and public rights of way network have been maintained and kept open for public use offering open green spaces which cater for social distancing, proving a valuable asset for the citizens of Blaenau Gwent in terms of maintaining health and well-being .





# Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities



The funding application for the **Gwent Green Grid** has been approved allowing the delivery of various work programmes to progress.

The project will help deliver a range of environmental projects working with partners and organisations.

**INVOLVEMENT** - Currently in discussions with Education regarding a schools carbon project, which will link to the Council's Decarbonisation Plan.



Funded by the Green Recovery Fund, a consultant ecologist has been appointed to update the Ecological Management Plan into a more user friendly document.

This funding has allowed the recruitment of an access officer to begin to address the backlog of rights of way issues and ensure delivery of Welsh Government funding for access improvements.  
**( £96,000 for this financial year)**

## Urban Biodiversity -

The Urban Diversity Project continues with members of the community helping hedgehogs in the neighbourhood. Some Tai Calon fencing has helped enable the animals to move safely through gardens feeding and finding mates, without being forced on to roads.



*Hedgehog tracking tunnel and hog footprints from a community members garden*

The Welsh

Government ENRAW funded **Resilient Greater Gwent project**

has made good progress despite some minor delivery issues. The project continues to deliver the agreed outputs and outcomes.



Through the Resilient Greater Gwent project, **The Greater Gwent State of Nature Report was launched**



**COLLABORATION**- Japanese Knotweed enquiries are being dealt with and a treatment programme will begin in Autumn 2021. As part of the Resilient Greater Gwent, tackling invasive species is one of the work streams that Local Authorities across Gwent are working collaboratively on.

# Improving the Well-being and Resilience of our Communities

**21 activities** were delivered to schools regarding **Natural Resource Management**

School	No. of pupils	No. of events
Coed Y Garn	26	1
Blaen Y Cwm	40	2
Deighton	73	4
Georgetown	30	1
St Mary's RC	4	1
All Saints RC	10	2
Beaufort Hill	28	3
Pen Y Cwm	5	1
Willowtown	4	2
St Joseph's RC	4	2
Coed Y Garn	29	1
All Saints RC	102	1

with a total of **355 children** benefiting from these events

**PREVENTION** - A Bioblitz was undertaken to help celebrate 'Love Your Burials Grounds Week'. 4 children from Willowtown and 9 members of the public attended.



A late award of **£90,000** was made from Welsh Government for **Green recovery** which has been used for **biodiversity enhancement and woodland management**.



As part of the Green Recovery Fund the following groups received a native mix of perennial wildflower plug plants and native bluebells in the green. This is to help diversify the grasslands to help create better soil structure and diversity which will help with carbon sequestration and pollinators.

- Parc Nant y Waun Local Nature Reserve;
- Beaufort Ponds and Woodlands Local Nature Reserve;
- Cwmcelyn Local Nature Reserve;
- Cwmtillery Local Nature Reserve;
- Bryn Bach Park;
- Sirhowy Woodlands and Community Group;
- Six Bells;
- Trevor Rowson.



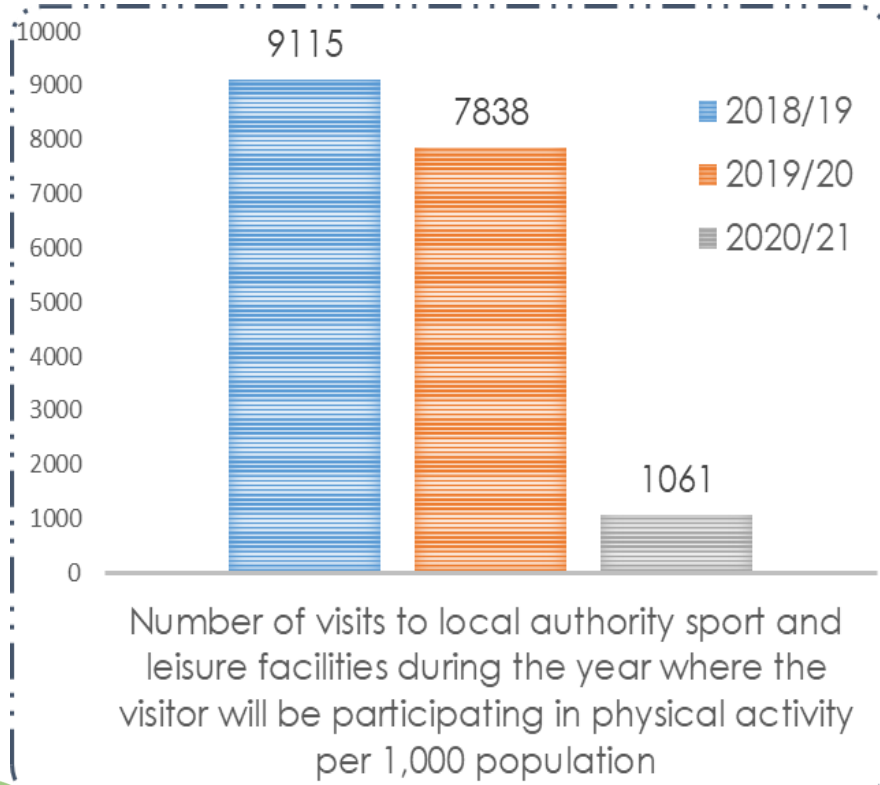
**INVOLVEMENT** - A Bioblitz was undertaken with the local community - in total there were Children from St Josephs Primary school attended along with another 11 attendees.





# Healthy and Safe Communities

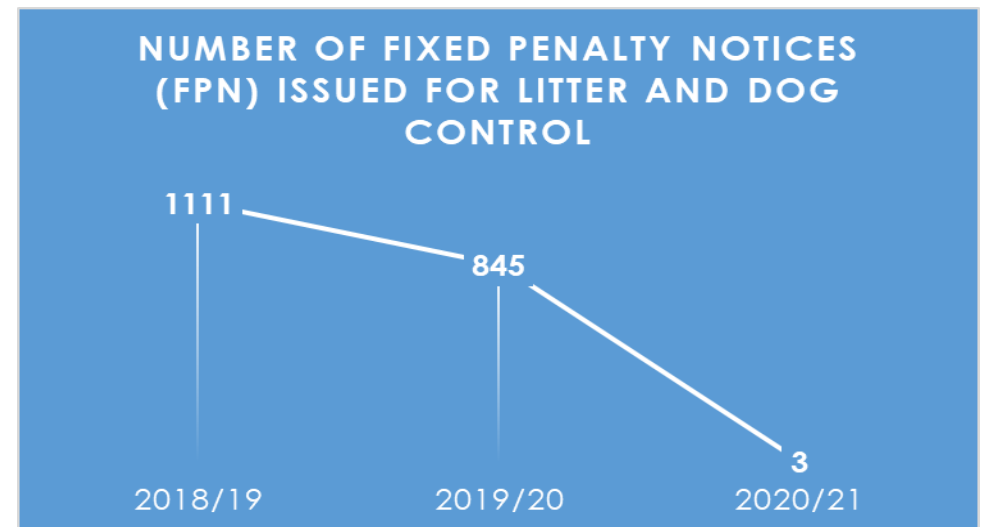
The chart below demonstrates how numbers of attendees at leisure facilities have been greatly impacted by the pandemic - subsequent closure and then restrictions on numbers. Online classes were delivered during lockdown but capacity was not available to record the number of participants.



**COLLABORATION** - Actions are being implemented to alleviate the issues arising involving straying Animals. These actions will involve working with local Farmers, Commoners, The Police, Natural Resource Wales and many internal service areas of the Council to ensure the effective containment and removal of animals from public areas / highways.

The **Fixed Penalty Enforcement Litter and Dog Control Service** was **suspended** in March 2020 due to the pandemic. Interaction with multiple clients needed to be avoided and also lockdown restrictions meant a reduction in littering. **The 2020/21 figure of 3 in the table below reflects this service suspension due to Covid 19.**

Service reinstatement 6th September 2021.



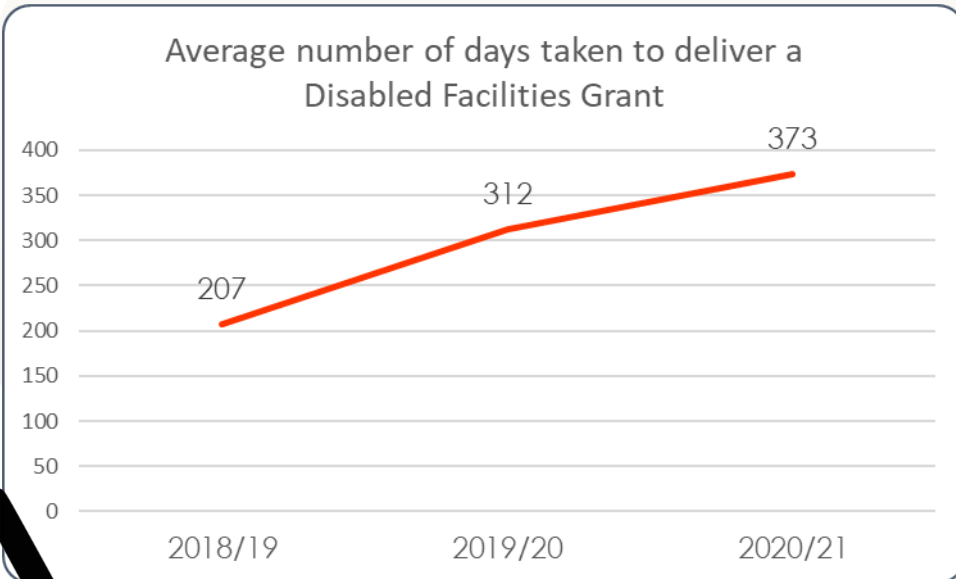
During the **Quarter 1** period (April to June 2021) there were

**0 fixed penalty notices issued for litter and dog control.**



# Healthy and Safe Communities

We have seen a decline in the average number of days taken to deliver a disabled facilities grant. Due to capacity issues there has been a lack of capacity to deliver the grants.



Air quality monitoring is carried out at a variety of locations including domestic properties, schools and community buildings.

## Air Quality in Blaenau Gwent continues to be generally good.

As in previous years, it is unlikely that any of the air quality objectives that the Council are required to have regard to, are being exceeded or will be exceeded within the Borough.



**PREVENTION** - The Authorities Pest Control Treatment Service continues to be outsourced and delivered by a private company, Rentokil. By proactively treating pest infestations in specific locations the Authority is preventing further spread and proliferation of infestations to other areas of the County Borough. This service provides improved public health through the free treatment of rat infestations in domestic premises and the prevention of the spread of infestations to third party land.



**COLLABORATION** - For its partnership working with Rentokil, the Authority was nominated for a National Pest Control Award and came second.



**LONG TERM** - The ability for the Council to operate a Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) function is critical for the safe and efficient management of the Borough's highway network. The Council would not be able to manage and enforce Traffic Regulation Orders within the Borough without an effective CPE service. Indeed, the introduction of CPE has allowed the Council to successfully monitor and target areas where complaints of illegal and dangerous parking are received. The Council receives a high volume of requests for consideration of parking enforcement.





# Managing our Highways Network and Infrastructure

The current gross replacement value of the Highway Network is estimated at £1.093 billion and is the Authority's most valuable material asset

Highway Capital Works Programme 2021-22

## 2021/22 Highways Asset Management programme

investment of **£900K +**

will continue to pay due attention to high priority works to the Network whilst retaining a focus around improving the residential / unclassified network.



£320k of additional works to be spread across all 16 Wards [approx. 400m2 patching works per ward].



**LONG TERM** - Investment in the residential highway network is identified to ensure sustainability for the future, bringing our roads up to a good standard and improving our highway infrastructure to meet the service requirements of the future.

**Un-classified roads make up 74% of the total Highway network [198 miles] and forms the majority of the local road network .**

As a result of investment over the previous three years the

**% of poor conditioned Un-classified roads** has

**reduced to 11.4%**

from a previous 17%.

During 2020/21  
Total resurfaced highway area  
**51,587m2 / 6.0 miles**

made up of the following:-

- 24 residential highways (40,937m2 / 5.1 miles)
- Tafarnaubach Ind Est (7000m2 / 0.6 miles)
- Llangynidr Road (3650m2 / 0.3 miles)

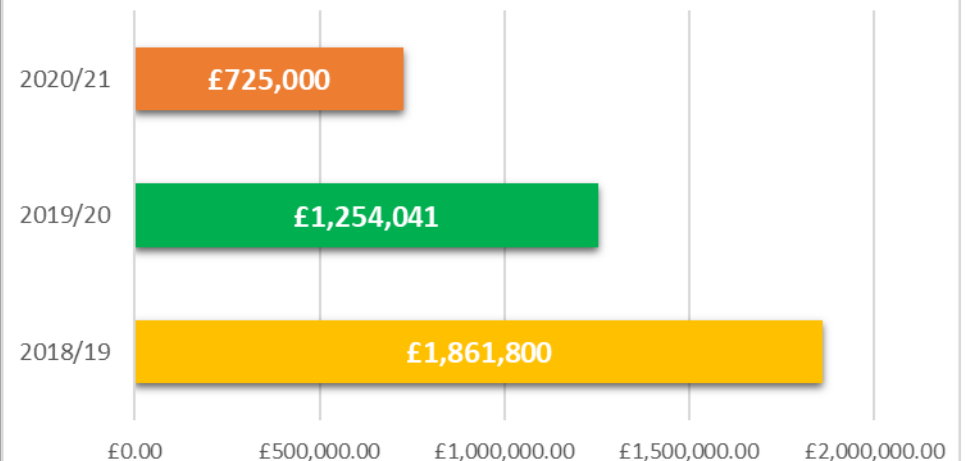


To date **82** residential highways have been resurfaced along with priority works to the A & B Classified Network.

### Other related works included:

- Crash Barriers
- Illuminated Traffic Signs
- Traffic Management Features

## Highway Capital Works Programme Spend



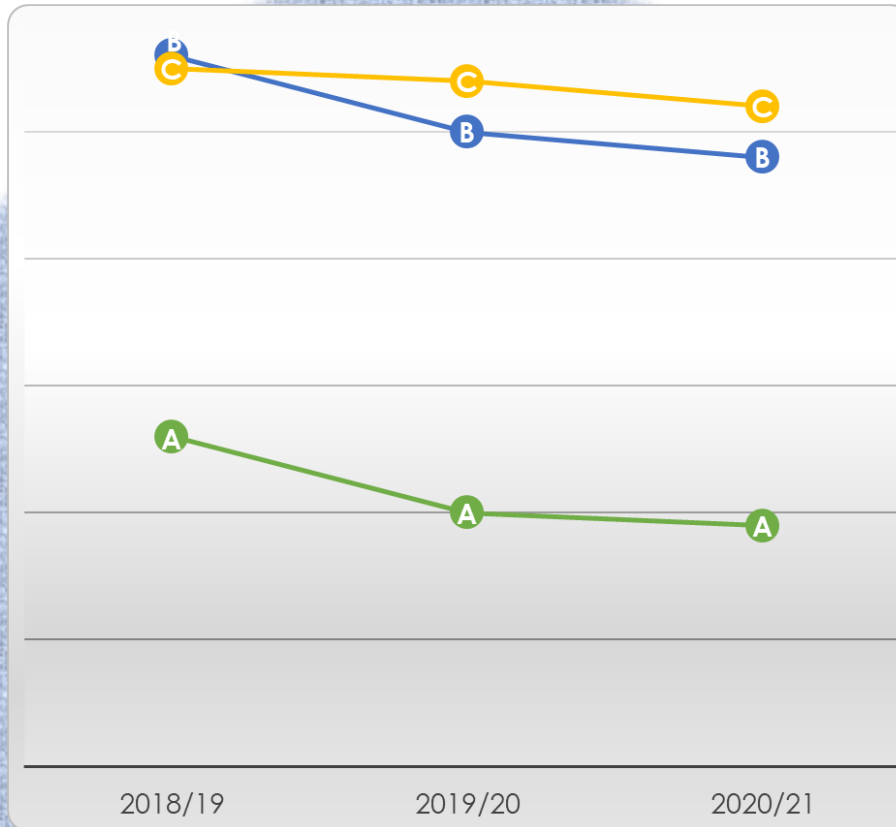
# Managing our Highways Network and Infrastructure

All schemes within the original highway surfacing programme are complete .



Following the Welsh Government Grant / Capital Allocation for 2021/22, the areas of A, B & C roads to be surfaced and other highway ancillary works to be undertaken are due to be confirmed shortly.

## Percentage of A, B & C Roads In Poor Condition

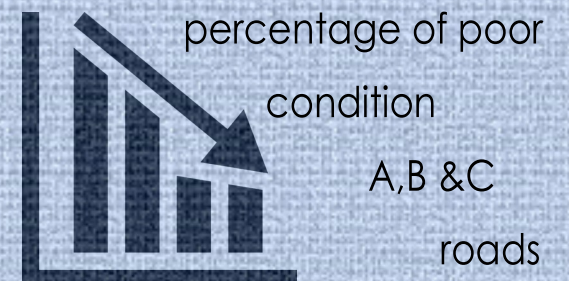


	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Percentage of A roads in poor condition	2.6%	2.0%	1.9%
Percentage of B roads in poor condition	5.6%	5.0%	4.8%
Percentage of C roads in poor condition	5.5%	5.4%	5.2%

### Additional grants have also been received to improve our A roads:

- Local Transport Fund - **£990,000** to improve the junction on the A4048 at Bedwellty Pits, Tredegar
- Resilient Road Fund - **£300,000** to undertake a feasibility study of the condition of A4047 between Aberbeeg and Cwm Roundabouts - to identify its current issues / improvements to form the basis of future Welsh Government grant application.

Ongoing works over the past 3 years supports the positive downward trend of the





# Managing our Highways Network and Infrastructure



**Piling works to support the proposed reinforced concrete carriageway**



**Big Arch, Ebbw Vale**  
**CADW approval received due to its listed building status.**

Liaison with the specialist contractor about the works is now in progress and work on site is intended to commence later this year.



**Reinforced concrete carriageway**





# Case Study - New five-year council Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy

Blaenau Gwent Council is one of the first councils in Wales to develop its own litter and fly-tipping strategy, which has been designed to build on the successful work of its past schemes and to reduce the problem of illegal littering. The new strategy includes a comprehensive action plan to show how the council and its partners can work together and reduce the impact of waste crime throughout the borough.

There are a range of actions specifically for tackling this growing problem which include community engagement, enforcement and education and awareness. Overall the plan will ensure the borough's residents, landowners and businesses understand their waste responsibilities. For instance the council has recruited over 200 Litter Champions who are provided with equipment, whilst increased partnership work (through a multi-agency approach Police, Natural Resources Wales Agency) will help identify those responsible for enviro-crime, such as fly tipping Incidents.



At the heart of our ambitious and vital Strategy is the need to change behavior around litter and fly-tipping. We want to create a culture here in Blaenau Gwent where littering and fly-tipping is socially unacceptable.

**Councillor Joanna Wilkins, Executive Member for the Environment says:** *“Fly-tipping and littering is an awful stain on our beautiful landscape and towns. Not only is it an illegal eyesore but often adds to the risk of flooding by blocking water courses and drains. Our new litter and fly-tipping strategy will show our commitment to keeping Blaenau Gwent a clean and green environment, making it not only a great place to live and work but also to visit. As fly-tipping has been on the increase this new approach will help reduce the current yearly clean-up costs. Maintaining clean streets and our environment has been a high priority for the council for a number of years and the minority of illegal fly-tippers have a negative impact on the majority of our responsible residents. We are doing everything we can to try and stop it and I am sure the people of Blaenau Gwent will show the same commitment as we introduce this new strategy”.*

The five-year bespoke strategy has recently won the backing of the councillors and will now be adopted by the council. Overall, it aims to significantly reduce the existing litter and fly-tipping issues and adhere to the document's vision “to radically reduce litter and fly-tipping so we can improve our natural habitats as well as our wild and urban landscapes, increase pride and awareness of our local heritage and desire to keep it litter free”.



# Case Study - Refurbishment Works

## Advanced Engineering Centre



A full refurbishment  
of the Former Monwell Building  
located on Letchworth Road, Ebbw Vale  
is underway to create

### **a State of the Art Education Facility**

for Coleg Gwent designed to carry out their  
Advanced Engineering Curriculum / Course.

Value in the region of

**£8 Million**

with an anticipated  
completion approximately

September 2023.

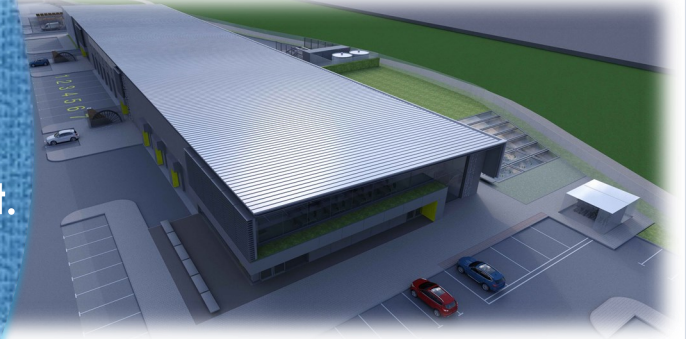


# Case Study - New Council Centre of Operations

## New Build - Council Centre of Operations

(New Central Depot) on the  
old Marine Colliery Site, Cwm.  
A State of the Art Central Depot  
Facility to carry out the existing  
functions of the existing Central Depot.

Value in the region of  
**£20 Million**  
Approximate  
completion  
June 2024.





# Case Study - Resilient Uplands (SEWRU) Project

We are now in the final year of delivering the **regional South East Wales Resilient Uplands (SEWRU) project (2018-2021)**.

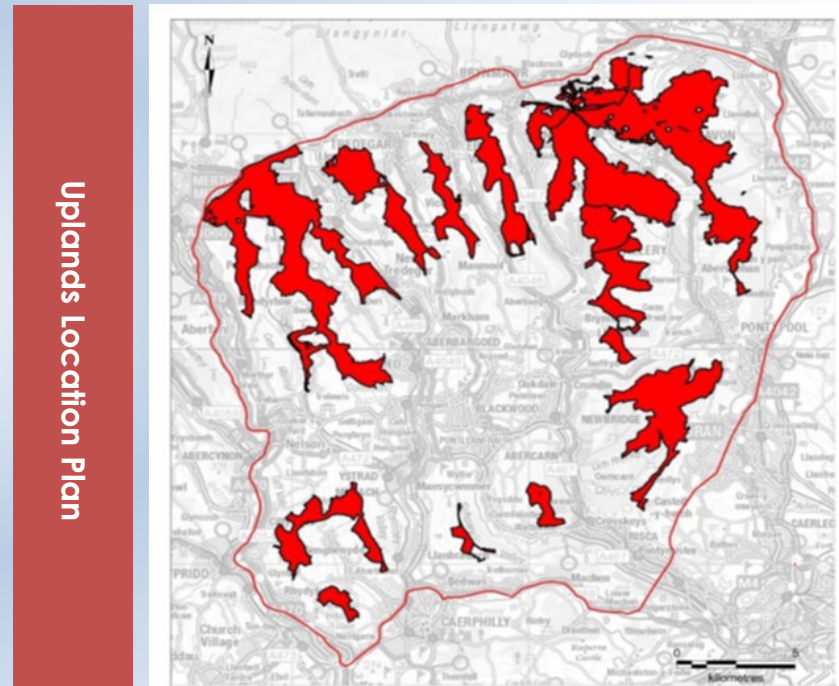
The SEWRU is a collaborative project arrangement, involving Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen Councils, Natural Resources Wales, Police, Fire and Rescue Services, Gwent Wildlife Trust and the Brecon Beacons National Park. Torfaen County Borough Council is the project Lead for the collaboration.

This **£399,000** capital and revenue project covers an area of some 200sq km, on land which is over 200m in altitude within Torfaen, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent.

To date the project has identified and completed the following:-

- Several peatland restoration projects;
- Produced common land management plans (including a detailed management plan for Mynydd Llanhilleth);
- Restored many kilometres of commons boundary stock fencing;
- Installed physical barriers to reduce landscape crime on commons; and
- Managed important upland heathland to reduce fire risk and facilitate conservation grazing.

Ongoing work includes currently working with Gwent Police and other partners to update the Natural Resources Management Plan and produce upland-focused landscape crime management plans for each common within the project.



This project also supports the Carbon Reduction Strategy and includes enhancement of our Upland Heath and Bog habitats which are an excellent Carbon Sink. Enhancing these habitats will improve their performance in terms of carbon sequestration, making a positive contribution to the carbon reduction strategy.

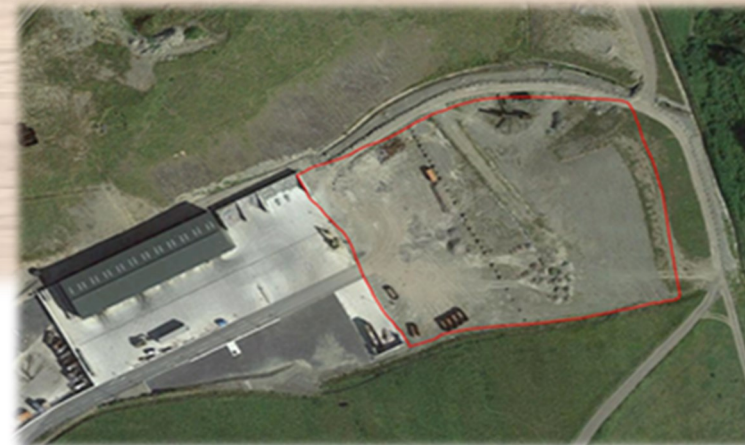
# Case Study - Silent Valley Wood Facility

The Welsh Government, through Local Partnerships, approached Blaenau Gwent to develop a regional facility for municipal wood waste reprocessing at Silent Valley. Following confirmation from Blaenau Gwent agreeing to be the Lead Authority on the project, the Welsh Government allocated funding to develop the project to an Outline Business Case (OBC).



The OBC introduces a viable opportunity for the public sector to set up and operate its own waste wood recycling facility. The OBC sets out the case for public sector capital investment into a public-owned, wood waste recycling facility in South East Wales, harnessing a configuration of advanced wood recycling machinery installed in a purpose-built processing building at Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's (BGCBC) Silent Valley waste site. The five cases of the OBC (Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management) explore how the proposed integrated wood recycling facility can realise significant cost savings, economic and environmental benefits for the public sector.

The Outline Business Case is currently being reviewed following the 1st Health Check carried out by Welsh Government. It is proposed that with government support in the form of capital funding, this project will enable Blaenau Gwent and participating Local Authorities to create an effective public sector investment model to create a more efficient and transparent approach to the management of its waste wood in South Wales.



The development of the regional wood recycling facility required support from Technical Services, Planning, Procurement, Legal and Finance. Also integration with Chief Commercial Officer to develop the asset as a commercial opportunity.



# Case Study - New Commercial Development

Construction of the

## Lime Avenue Business Units

continued throughout the pandemic with required and organised Covid restrictions in place and the project being supervised by our staff.

The 3 new commercial blocks were completed in August providing a little under

**2350m<sup>2</sup> of hybrid office and workspace accommodation.**

The project was funded by a combination of Welsh Government and Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) at a

**cost of £5.7m**

and leases for two of the three BREEAM very good buildings have been agreed with the multinational technology company Thales.

Currently occupying the REGAIN building on the Works site in Ebbw Vale, Thales are expanding their investment in Blaenau Gwent as part of the £12m National Digital Exploitation Centre (NDEC) initiative supported by Welsh Government.

This represents the first stage of the Thales's development on the site, which already has two more phases of construction planned for 2021-2022.



# Case Study - Resilient Greater Gwent Project



A Resilient Greater Gwent

The Resilient Greater Gwent Project aims to reverse biodiversity decline and increase ecosystem resilience. There are two project work streams; Resilient Ecological Networks and Sustainable Communities. The Sustainable Communities work stream, being coordinated by Monmouthshire County Council, aims to encourage people to make changes in their behavior so they are more connected with nature, to support their physical and mental well-being.



Some of the activities being undertaken as part of the Sustainable Communities work are outlined below:-

- **Pollinator packs** have been **distributed** across the Gwent authorities. The packs contained insect houses, wildflower seeds and illustrated wildlife guides, and were distributed to schools, community groups and interested households in the community.
- **Wildlife cameras** have been purchased through the project and are currently **sited in school grounds and community spaces**. We hope to see some exciting footage captured by these cameras.
- The Resilient Greater Gwent Sustainable Communities project is **supporting the citizen science Bugs Matter survey**. Insects underpin our natural world and their numbers can help us to better understand what is happening in our environment.



**Managing Churchyards for Wildlife** - Community groups/volunteers currently managing the grounds of churchyards/burial sites for 'tidiness' and general maintenance were invited to apply for a 'package' of advice and equipment to help them look at their sites in a different way and create opportunities to provide a net benefit for biodiversity in the community.



**'Love Your Burial Ground'** Week ran from Saturday 5th to Sunday 13th June, and this year, the Council, along with partner organisations, led on several sub-projects under The Resilient Greater Gwent work programme, funded by Welsh Government's Enabling Natural Resources & Wellbeing Grant.

Now in its final year, work will be undertaken to meet outcomes within the Sustainable Communities sub-project. This project focusses on community action and engagement, behaviour change, and skills and capacity building.

Churchyards and burial sites are important historic sites that reveal evidence of the past, including people who have lived and worked in the parish. They can also be important sites for wildlife offering unique habitats for a significant variety of plants, animal and ancient trees.



## Case Study - Blaenau Gwent help towards creating an ecologically resilient Gwent

The Gwent State of Nature Report has been produced by the Resilient Greater Gwent Partnership, which provides valuable information that will provide a baseline to assess the effectiveness of conservation work. For many of the 100 species included, this has been the first time that regional trends have been recorded.

The monitoring and collection of wildlife data is incredibly important and will help inform the Resilient Greater Gwent Partnership in going forward; directing further recording and monitoring. It demonstrates the need for awareness raising and education, as well as policy change and future conservation action.

One such example where the information and data has helped to direct action is through the **implementation of Blaenau Gwent Urban Hedgehog project**. Local residents have been creating hedgehog highways, providing nesting sites and recording our prickly friends' activity via hedgehog footprint tunnels.

Tai Calon has also supported the Urban Hedgehog project by also ensuring hedgehog passes have been installed in any new boundary fencing that they have been installing. This was later followed on by Tai Calon offering their tenants Urban Hedgehog packs.

In the Spring 2021 the urban hedgehog project expanded to several Blaenau Gwent schools, and with 8 schools taking part in a National pilot project with Hedgehog Friendly Campus. These schools are now all taking the extra steps to make their school grounds a better and safer place for these amazing animals.

The schools have already been running hedgehog footprint and wildlife camera surveys, litter picks, planting hedgehog friendly plants and doing their bit to raise awareness in their local community.

Both the Gwent State of Nature Report and the Urban Hedgehog project is part of the overarching project: 'Resilient Greater Gwent'. This is funded by the Welsh Government's Enabling of Natural Resources and Well-being Grant.

*"This is a really interesting project for Blaenau Gwent, Gwent and partner agencies. The report provides us with vital information that will help inform the actions we need to take to help tackle biodiversity decline and increase ecosystem resilience. I really look forward to seeing how this progresses."- Cllr Joanna Wilkins*

*"This project is very exciting for the Borough of Blaenau Gwent and its neighbouring authorities and I wish it the best of luck, it shows a great collaboration of many local organisations and also provides the opportunity for citizen science!"- Cllr Lee Parsons, Blaenau Gwent Nature Champion*