



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru

Mid and West Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

2020 - 2023

FOREWORD

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS) operate in a vast area of land throughout Wales, **covering a total of approximately 4,500 square miles**. We aim to protect the environment through our activities and this is central in our training and operations. We work closely with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to ensure Operational Incidents are dealt with to keep the risk to the natural environment as low as is reasonably practicable.

Biodiversity can be explained as the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular area, many of which is usually considered to be important and desirable. According to the National Geographic, biodiversity can also refer to the variety of ecosystems – communities of living things and their environments.

This can include forests, grassland, hedgerows and fields.

Biodiversity is important because all species are interconnected and depend on one another. To remove or damage one ecosystem can have a negative impact on another that relies on it. Over the past 100 years, our environment has suffered from human hands.

This is the first Biodiversity Action Plan published by MAWWFRS and is intended to outline the objectives and actions we will use to encourage a wide variety of biodiversity to our sites over the next 3 years and to ensure we maintain and enhance the species already on our site.



As a Service we have achieved **Level 5 of the Green Dragon Environmental Management Standard in 2014** which is maintained and externally verified through an Audit each year. This ensures our procedures and activities are centred around limiting unnecessary environmental damage, and continual environmental improvement.

As a Public Service Authority, we have a duty under the **Environment (Wales) Act 2016** to maintain and enhance biodiversity across all of the Service functions, and in doing so promote ecosystem resilience. In relation to this, the Service is required to publish a report to outline our actions to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem resilience by the end of 2019 and every 3 years hereafter. The Section 6 Report has been written to align with the Biodiversity Action Plan.

Jess Millard

Sustainability & Environment Manager



INTRODUCTION

MAWWFRS activities cover six Counties and work out of 58 Fire Stations and a number of administration buildings. Even though the land each individual Station occupies is only small, the majority sit within rural areas so can have an effect on surrounding habitats and ecosystems. As a Service we are committed to sustainable development and environmental protection principles as set out in the Sustainability and Environmental Strategy. As an integral part of that, we recognise the need to both mitigate the negative impact our activities may have on biodiversity and where possible enhance the level of biodiversity of which we have a direct or indirect control over.

BIODIVERSITY MEANS THE VARIETY OF PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE IN THE SURROUNDINGS OR IN A PARTICULAR HABITAT.

We recognise that biodiversity protection and enhancement can offer a range of benefits for our organisation, which may include:

- Protection and enhancement of open spaces, wildlife and habitats;
- Improved physical and social access to nature and open spaces encouraging healthy leisure pursuits;
- Supporting social regeneration, making our Stations a more inviting and attractive community resource;
- Alleviate the effect of climate change through habitat creation;
- Adopt sustainable economic procurement practices through the responsible maintenance of ecosystem functions;
- Compliance Obligations and voluntary obligations;
- Avoidance of fines and prosecution through Pollution prevention procedures.

Due to the wide range of benefits we can gain from biodiversity protection and enhancement, we recognise that a range of our core business activities are significant to this area of work.

As outlined in the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales (NRAP), the six objectives to maintain and enhance biodiversity are:

OBJECTIVE 1

Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout the 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

SECTION 1 OUR DUTY AND AIMS



The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on all Public Authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems. This replaces the duty placed on Public Authorities under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act.

MAWWFRS will aim to do the following over the next 3 years

PARTNERSHIP

- Seek to build further relationships with the Local Authority Biodiversity Partnership encouraging the recognition of the potential fire Service role in species and habitat protection
- Continue to develop and work with NRW to provide guidance and training
- Share approaches and understanding of the FRS role in relation to biodiversity with other FRS's in Wales

OPERATIONAL RESPONSE AT DESIGNATED SITES

- Encourage the development of incident response plans for SSSI's which consider the value of the site appropriately and sensitively, formally reviewing the process on a regular basis;
- Integrate information on designated SSSI's into technical resources including mobile data terminals and Operational Risk Databases;
- Utilise the MDT's to raise awareness of protected or important habitats.

ESTATES MANAGEMENT

- Work with partner organisations to establish the existing conservation value and to assess the potential of our sites to contribute to biodiversity targets;
- Highlight the location and extent of any key habitats or species within our Estate with designated partners and to compile habitats / species action plans to protect and where possible, enhance key habitats / species found on our specific sites;
- To responsibly manage and maintain our grounds in a way that protects and enhance existing ecological value.

NEW BUILDS AND MAJOR REFURBISHMENTS

- Strive to achieve BREEAM, a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methods, of 'Excellent' status for all new builds and major refurbishments, including:
 - To ensure, where possible, any construction zones only occur in sites defined as land of low ecological value;
 - To ensure, where possible, that any new builds or major refurbishment work protects existing ecological features on the site from substantial damage during site preparation and completion of construction work;
 - To recognise and, where possible, encourage actions to be taken to enhance the ecological value of the site as a result of the development.

SECTION 2 BIODIVERSITY WITHIN OUR COMMAND AREA



Operational Response and Biodiversity Protection

MAWWFRS recognise the wider impact on the environment the incidents that we attend may have on biodiversity value for that area. As a Service we cover a vast area of Wales which includes a number of SSSIs, AONBs and National Parks which some of our Stations are located within (Annex 1). As a result, we work very closely with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) both at incidents and during preparation and training to ensure expert guidance is adhered to, so as not to have an adverse impact on the environment without compromising Operational activities.

We have 3 Environmental Protection Units (EPUs) located at strategic locations across the Service area which are stocked by NRW. These are located at Newtown, Llanelli and Pembroke Dock Fire Stations and are used for the storage and carriage of equipment specifically for the prevention of environmental pollution. The collaboration with NRW in relation to the EPU's aims to minimise the hazards to the environment as far as practically possible from operational incidents, flooding and fire service activities.

All of our fire appliances hold environmental 'Grab Packs' which are used in the prevention of pollution into the environment. These packs contain absorbent pads, clay sealing putty and drain sealing mats. They are used to contain the pollution at the source prior to the removal by specialist contractors.



SECTION 3 OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Projects from the following objectives will be reported on annually in the Annual Environmental Report and in more detail, as well as under the Environment (Wales) Act 2015, in the Section 6 Report to be published at the end of 2019/20 Financial year. This Report will be published every 3 years based on the objectives outlined in the BAP.



SECTION 4

MONITORING AND REVIEW

MAWWFRS are committed to achieving the aims and objectives outlined within this Action Plan over the next 3 years.

The Objectives will be monitored regularly and reported on within the Annual Environmental Report and within the Section 6 Duty Report under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and every 3 years thereafter.

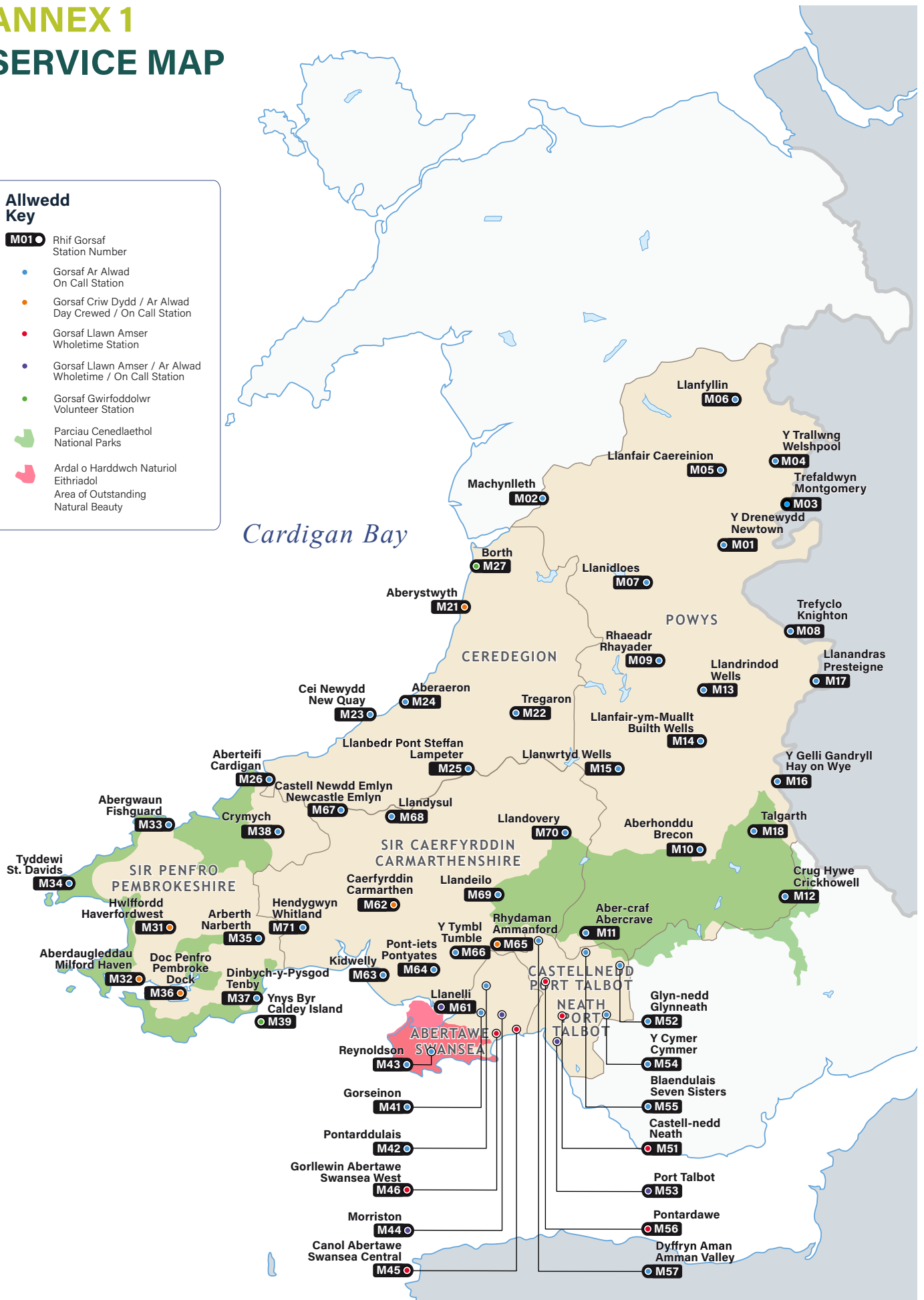


ANNEX 1

SERVICE MAP

Allwedd Key

- M01** Rhif Gorsaf Station Number
- Gorsaf Ar Alwad On Call Station
- Gorsaf Criw Dydd / Ar Alwad Day Crewed / On Call Station
- Gorsaf Llawn Amser Wholtime Station
- Gorsaf Llawn Amser / Ar Alwad Wholtime / On Call Station
- Gorsaf Gwirfoddolwr Volunteer Station
- Parciau Cenedlaethol National Parks
- Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty





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