



**LAND AT GIBBONS COACHES,
BEDLINOG,
TREHARRIS**

ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

JULY 2022

Taff Bargoed Development Trust

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Land at Gibbons Coaches, Bedlinog, Treharris

Management Plan

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Documents

Preliminary Ecological Assessment: Land at Gibbons Coaches, Bedlinog (Celtic Ecology and Conservation (June2022)

Drawings

Number	Title
-	-

1 PLAN SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This management plan relates to an area of ground alongside the northern and eastern boundaries of a hardstanding used for the paring of coaches on land owned by the Taff Bargoed Development Trust near Bedlinog in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough in south Wales (**Figures 1 & 2**).

A coach parking area was constructed on land adjacent to a workshop. This involved the clearance of a small area of vegetation. This land had been subject to a number of phases of clearance and regeneration in the previous years, creating an area of scrub in an area characterised as “ffridd” dominated by bracken. There is now a requirement to put in place a management plan on the land to promote nature conservation.

The plan has been written to provide detail on how the land can best be managed to benefit nature conservation to compensate for the adjacent coach parking area development.

The area currently receives no formal or proactive management.

1.2 RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

The relevant documents are listed on the contents page and attached where necessary.

2 LEGISLATION & POLICY

There is no specific legislation in respect of habitat management. However, there are a number of legislative and regulatory elements which directly affect how land is treated and protected in Wales. These include:

- The Forestry Act 1967;
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Environment (Wales) Act 2016;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
- The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015;
- Planning Policy Wales;
- Welsh Government Technical Advice Note 5
- Woodlands for Wales – Action Plan

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council is the Local Planning Authority and has specific policies to reflect the importance of the natural environment, specifically:

- EnW1 Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience;
- EnW2 Internationally and Nationally Protected Sites and Species;
- EnW3 Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species;
- EnW4 Environmental Protection; and
- EnW5 Landscape Protection.

The adjacent coach parking area development is currently being considered under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990)(as amended).

3 CONTEXT

3.1 PURPOSE

This document provides a framework for the long-term management of the land and its component habitats and species.

3.2 LIFESPAN

It is anticipated that this management plan will cover period following the commencement of development for a minimum term of **10 years**.

3.3 REVIEW

The Plan will be subject to overview and possible revision every 5 years; at each review there will be two options:

- 1) To carry on management in accordance with the Plan's principals, objectives, and prescriptions; or
- 2) To renew the Plan (with effect from the following year).

This will allow high quality biological monitoring to provide accurate data on which to determine the future requirements of ecological management.

The land owner and Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council will be consulted during each review period; each review will comprise a report detailing actions undertaken / implemented and the results of all monitoring. All stakeholders will be issued with an amended document as necessary.

3.4 SCOPE

The Plan includes all the actions and measures necessary to ensure the delivery of ecologically beneficial management for the site.

3.5 IMPLEMENTATION

The Plan will be delivered by the Taff Bargoed Development Trust, who will be responsible for the management of the site and establishment of the mitigation / extension planting areas.

3.6 APPROVED CONTRACTOR & ECOLOGIST

The Taff Bargoed Development Trust will appoint suitably experienced and qualified contractors to undertake and oversee the works specified in the Plan.

In addition to any appointed contractor, there may be opportunities for enlisting the help of voluntary organisations and volunteers in the form of a local conservation group to assist with the management of the site.

3.7 DECISION TAKING

The Taff Bargoed Development Trust will be wholly responsible for all decision making taking into account the advice of all appropriate bodies and personnel (as set out in Section 6 below).

4 SITE DESCRIPTION

4.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

4.1.1 LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

The site is approximately 0.12ha in extent and is located on land owned by the Taff Bargoed Development Trust on the site of the former Trelewis Drift Mine between Trelewis and Bedlinog in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough in south Wales (centred on NGR ST 10279955) (**Figures 1 & 2** and **Appendix C**).

Figure 1 – location of the Gibbons Coaches development site (circled red)



(Image courtesy of Google Earth)

Figure 2 – detailed view of the Gibbons Coaches development site (approximate boundary in red)



(Image courtesy of Google Earth)

4.1.2 COMPARTMENTS

There are no compartments; the site is one discrete block.

4.1.3 TENURE

It is owned freehold by Taff Bargoed Development Trust All deeds rest with Taff Bargoed Development Trust.

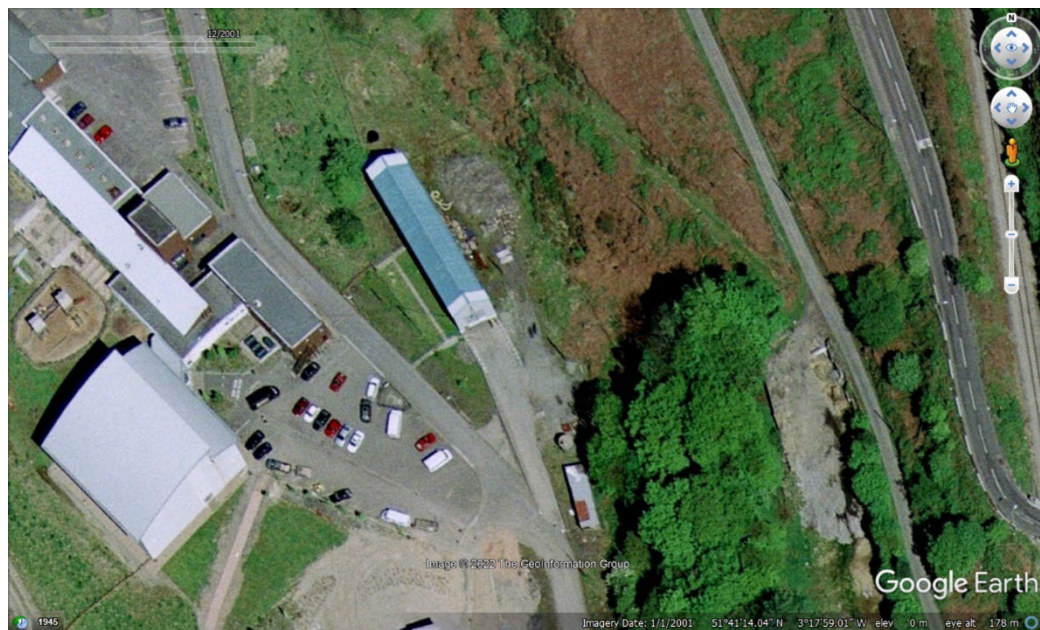
The existence of any other rights holders (e.g. grazing, wood cutting, charcoal making etc) on / for the site has not been advised.

4.1.4 SITE STATUS

The site is not subject of any statutory or non statutory protections.

It has been subject to several phases of clearance and vegetative regeneration in the past. (Figures 3 & 4).

Figure 3 – aerial photo of the Gibbons Coaches development site from 2001



(Image courtesy of Google Earth)

Figure 4 – location of the Gibbons Coaches development site from 2013



(Image courtesy of Google Earth)

Figure 5 – location of the Gibbons Coaches development site from 2018



(Image courtesy of Google Earth)

4.1.5 RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PLANS & STRATEGIES

Other than:

- 1) The recommendations outlined in the Preliminary Ecological Assessment (Celtic Ecology and Conservation Ltd., June 2022)

there are no links.

4.1.6 MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Taff Bargoed Development Trust will appoint suitably experienced and qualified contractors to undertake the management outlined in this plan.

4.1.7 MAP COVERAGE

The site is shown as woodland on current Ordnance Survey mapping.

4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

4.2.1 PHYSICAL

4.2.1.1 Climate

The site is located in South Wales and has a temperate climate with a higher than UK average rainfall due to its location towards the west coast.

4.2.1.2 Geology, soils and hydrology

The site is low lying (≈170m AOD) and has a humus rich soil over a base rich underlying geology. It is located on level ground in close proximity to the Afon Bargod Taf.

There is no drainage on the site.

There is a man-made flood defence bund on the site's western and eastern boundaries alongside the Rhymney. There are no other geological or geomorphological features within the woodland.

4.2.2 BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION

4.2.2.1 Habitats & flora

The site (Plates 1 - 3) is dominated by bare ground (tarmac and concrete), bounded by scrub and scattered trees to the north west and north east (Plates 4 & 5) and a large metal shed to the south west. The scrub and scattered trees takes the form of "ffridd" a habitat of bramble scrub and dense bracken under widely scattered trees.

There are areas of woodland and semi-improved grassland outwith the development site boundary but which have been included for completeness and clarity.

The boundaries of the site are open.

The whole site is located in a valley running north to south with the access coming via a private road off the B4255 linking Trelewis to Bedlinog. The valley vegetation is dominated by bracken, gorse stands, scrub and small woodlands. The Afon Bargoed Taff river flows north to south down the centre of the valley.

The site was cleared sometime prior to 2001 to create a hardstanding area (**Figure 3**) with work undertaken afterwards just prior to or in 2013 to create a formal hard standing (**Figure 4**). A photo of the site taken sometime between 2008 and 2010 is at Plate 6. The site was then allowed to revegetate before being cleared again and surfaced in 2018 (**Figure 5**). Following this, the areas outwith the tarmac were allowed to revegetate and have since recovered the scrub and bramble mosaic they had before the clearance.

4.2.2.2 Fauna

There is currently no information available on fauna, although it is assumed that reptiles and breeding birds will use the land around the coach parking area.

4.2.2.3 Cultural

There are no known cultural or archaeological remains or associations e.g. charcoal platforms, sawpits etc.

4.2.2.4 Access

There is no public access to the site.

4.2.2.5 Past management

There are no details available on past management with the exception of the clearance described above.

There is no current management applied to the site. For the purposes of this plan, it is assumed that there has been no management prior to the clearance in 2001.

5 STAKEHOLDERS

5.1 INFORMATION

The stakeholders for this management plan are as follows:

Name	Role	Contact
Taff Bargoed Development Trust	Owner & manager	Howard Jackson
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	Local Planning Authority	Matt Davies
Gibbons Coaches	Tenant	TBC
Celtic Ecology and Conservation Ltd	Ecologist	Hugh Dixon
TBC	Landscape contractor	TBC

All stakeholders will be provided with copies of this management plan and all relevant supporting documents. Any changes to the management plan will require approval of the landowner and manager.

This management plan is required by Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council as part of the planning permission.

5.2 PLANNING PERMISSION

Planning permission is being sought retrospectively from Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council on (P/22/0095).

This management plan is one of the requirements of that permission.

6 NATURE CONSERVATION FEATURES

6.1 EVALUATION

Overall the red line development boundary site is of a negligible ecological value at a local level due to its small size, the history of clearance and use and its being dominated by tarmac.

The only ecological interest is that provided by the proximity of adjacent woodland, trees and scrub areas.

The bare ground habitats present on and adjacent to the site have no ecological interest at all and do not provide any protected (or other) species with suitable habitat.

It is recommended that to prevent harm to the Afon Bargod Taff, measures should be put in place to prevent any pollution incidents associated with the operation of the site, principally fuels, oils, lubricants and sediment.

None of the vegetated habitats present adjacent to the site will be removed or otherwise adversely affected. Indeed, they will be protected and allowed to develop naturally.

While these areas have been subject to clearance on repeated occasions in the past, they have largely regenerated into ffridd habitat since the last clearance in or around 2018. These areas will continue to regenerate naturally with the current habitats succeeding to broadleaved woodland. This ensures the continuation and maintenance of a locally valuable ecological resource.

The retention of all vegetated areas in their current form will also ensure that there is no disturbance to the soil that could otherwise potentially release buried pollutants.

There will be no lighting of the site, and therefore there will be no adverse impacts on nocturnal species.

It is therefore anticipated that positive conservation management will deliver a better quality habitat for a wide range of species.

As well as this, positive management will promote other wildlife within the woodland, attract more species to it, encourage biodiversity, promote a healthier woodland habitat extending its durability and make it a better landscape feature for the future.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this management plan is to ensure that the land cleared to facilitate the coach parking area is managed in a positive way to benefit nature conservation.

6.2.1 OBJECTIVE 1 ECOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT

6.2.1.1 Vision

Objective 1 will be to develop a woodland edge flora with a defined canopy structure over a defined understorey and ground layer which will provide a biologically rich border to the coach parking area.

6.2.1.2 Performance indicators

The vegetation will have a distinct vertical and horizontal structure of:

1. main canopy
2. understorey
3. shrub layer; and
4. ground layer.

The main canopy will comprise well-spaced trees with generally interlocking individual canopies but retaining open areas allowing light to the ground.

The understorey will be developed enough to allow for the replacement of mature canopy trees and provide a link between the shrub layer and main canopy. The shrub layer will be dense enough so that it cannot be walked through.

The ground layer will provide a varied botanical interest, comprising species typical of woodland and ffridd habitats.

Baseline information will be established through the use of permanent and moveable quadrats for which arboricultural details and botanical diversity will be recorded.

6.2.1.3 Status & Rationale

Ffridd and woodland habitats are under threat from grazing, loss to development and other anthropomorphic factors (e.g. off road driving). This management plan will ensure the long term protection of the land by providing ongoing positive management.

6.2.2 OBJECTIVE 2 – REMOVAL OF INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES

6.2.2.1 Vision

Objective 2 will be to initially reduce the density of, and eventually remove, butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*) from the site.

6.2.2.2 Performance indicators

Baseline information will be established through the use of permanent and moveable botanical quadrats.

The density of butterfly bush on the site as a whole will be reduced by 100% by Year 10.

Management will be dynamic and responsive to the regeneration of butterfly bush and site conditions.

6.2.2.3 Status & Rationale

Butterfly bush is a non-native species which can become invasive if left to its own devices. While it is of great benefit to invertebrates, it can reduce native tree and shrub diversity due to its rapid spread and dominance of habitats. Therefore, its removal will have a positive impact on botanical diversity.

7 PRESCRIPTIONS

7.1 OBJECTIVE 1 – ECOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT

The ecological management of the land will be based on low intervention techniques i.e. the land will be left to develop on its own, but with limited positive management include (but not necessarily be limited to) the following:

1. removal of butterfly bush (October - March);
2. thinning against sycamore (25% between October – February only); and
3. all cut stem material to be left *in situ* and all brash material will be left as lying deadwood on the boundary of the tarmac surfaces to act as a dead hedge.

NOTE: it is currently envisaged that there will be no use of pesticides; however, the requirement for the cut stumps of butterfly bush and sycamore to be treated with an appropriate stump treatment to prevent regrowth, will be re-evaluated in **Year 5** so that the ability to ensure eradication by Year 10 can be maintained. If used, stump treatments must be applied immediately after cutting to ensure maximum effectiveness; a triclopyr based herbicide such as Grazon Pro is recommended, to be applied by painting NOT spraying.

7.2 OBJECTIVE 2 – REMOVAL OF INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES

7.2.1.1 Butterfly bush

Butterfly bush will be removed on an annual basis with the aim of its eradication from the site.

Eradication will be achieved by repeated cutting between October and February inclusive. There will be no cutting during the bird nesting season (generally between March and August inclusive).

NOTE: it is currently envisaged that there will be no use of pesticides; however, the requirement for the cut stumps of butterfly bush and sycamore to be treated with an

appropriate stump treatment to prevent regrowth, will be re-evaluated in **Year 5** so that the ability to ensure eradication by Year 10 can be maintained. If used, stump treatments must be applied immediately after cutting to ensure maximum effectiveness; a triclopyr based herbicide such as Grazon Pro is recommended, to be applied by painting NOT spraying.

This process will be repeated and continued until such time as eradication is complete.

7.2.1.2 Other species

The site will be monitored for the presence of other invasive non-native species with treatments being implemented as soon as practicably possible after discovery. This management plan will be updated appropriately.

APPENDIX A

MANAGEMENT PLAN (Year 1 = 2022)

Objective	Management Unit	Management Activity	Management Prescription	Timing	Year / Frequency	Time allocation	Who	Additional items / notes
1	All	Thinning against sycamore	Thin 25% sycamore	October – February	1; Annually as necessary	Up to five days	Contractor	See notes in Sections 7.1 & 7.2 above on stump treatment
2	All	Removal of invasive non-native species	Removal (cutting) of butterfly bush	October - February	1; Annual	Up to four days per year	Ecologist / contractor / volunteers	See notes in Sections 7.1 & 7.2 above on stump treatment
	All	Monitoring	Visual assessment of regrowth / spread of butterfly bush	August / September	Annual	Half day	Ecologist / contractor	Implement appropriate changes to management as necessary
	All	Monitoring	Visual assessment of site for other invasive non-native species e.g. Japanese knotweed	All year	Ongoing	Half day	Ecologist / contractor	Implement appropriate management immediately on discovery
Legislation	All	Implementation	Undertake all work in accordance with all relevant legislation, regulation, guidelines and consents	At all times	1; ongoing	-	All	-
Management Plan Review	All	Review	Review plan against objectives and results	In Year 5	5; every five years thereafter	As necessary	Ecologist	All stakeholders to be consulted
Reporting	All	Reporting	Submit all necessary reports of implemented and undertaken activities as necessary	As necessary	Ongoing	As necessary	Ecologist / site manager as necessary	As detailed above