



DRAFT Yate Local Nature Action Plan (for public consultation 12.01.22-28.02.22)

Yate Town Council made a declaration in 2020 recognising the climate and ecological emergency we are facing. A Local Action Plan has been drawn up to help us to work together as a community with South Gloucestershire Council to tackle the decline in biodiversity. This is a six year plan.

Yate is an urban area, with green spaces within the urban area covering 850 hectares of which 150 are rural.

Please note: all maps referenced, excluding those in the appendices can be found on googlemaps at: https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1N-1bFAh9Md3ifZkN5s_i-hR_LL0n4r6a&usp=sharing

The full document sets out the details of land ownerships, existing designations, constraints and opportunities. This summary sets out the key actions that result.

Partnership

Nobody can tackle the ecological crisis alone, we must act together. This draft action plan is led by Yate Town Council, as a first step towards a town wide nature action plan owned and drafted by the community using its insights into our environment. To make a difference we need residents and groups to get involved, to come up with their own ideas and we will help make your ideas a reality if we possibly can. In the full document we have looked at some of the partners and their role, but the key message is that there is a role for everyone and anyone, of all ages.

We really want to hear from you about the draft plan. But also about any ideas you have for helping biodiversity locally. You may already be working with a local environmental group or this may be the first time you have got involved. You may be interested in a particular species, or a particular site or may want to comment on the whole concept. Whatever your concern, there is a role for you in making a real difference across our town. Every single decision we take on what we plant or what we do can make a difference.

Nothing in this plan will undermine the amazing projects and actions local volunteers are already doing. Our aim is to work as a community to help plug the gaps.

Land Ownership

In the full document, we have mapped the land that either Yate Town Council or South Gloucestershire Council controls; land controlled by key other landowners (eg the Shopping Centre) and crucially, the 9,000 gardens in Yate. If everyone who owned land in Yate thought of nature when making decisions about their own green spaces, we could make a real difference.

Resources

For each zone an action plan will be developed to identify community resources at a local level and proposals for funding. The Town Council will provide core resource to support the development of the plans, and general project costs, and will seek funding from MAF funds, CIL money, s.106 monies, business, external grants and local friends group fundraising.

Our Proposed 6 Year Programme

Our focus is upon the urban area, extending beyond it to Yate Rocks.

Our strategy is to:

Address the effects on the natural environment from Climate Change and the pressures of human-driven activity;

Enhance the ecological value of core areas within the town by promoting the extent and diversity of wildlife species and habitats;

Develop habitat webs for example, for plants, ferns, lichens, trees, insects, birds, mammals and amphibians;

Connect environmentally valuable areas by developing, creating and enhancing connecting corridors;

Make nature relevant to residents by encouraging participation in the proposed LNAP actions and carrying out educational initiatives for all age groups.

Our Matrix Approach

Our approach will adopt a mix of **zonal and town wide projects**.

Zonal

As wildlife does not know about land ownership, we have adopted a zonal rather than ownership-based approach, splitting the town into 6 zones for the purposes of providing a focus for activity over a 6-year basis. The zones are based on natural human communities to maximise the opportunities for geographical community engagement, but will be cross-cut by the communities of interest and expertise in particular species and habitats e.g. a hedgehog group will be asked to give advice on the species in all zones.

We recognize that species do not have the same perception of space, and that there are potentially significant habitats at the borders of these zones e.g. Newman's Mound.

But we have opted for human geographical communities for two reasons:

- The importance of interpretation / engagement in the local context
- The importance of building community engagement to deliver the proposed connecting corridors part of the program.

Within each zone the core group will work with residents and interest groups to develop action plans for each zone. The work in implementing the action plan may be spread over a period of years depending upon the proposals.

What are our Plans for the Zones?

1. Brimsham Park was chosen as phase 1 because it is the most unstable of local ecosystems because of new housing developments (such as Ladden Garden Village) cutting off corridors and displacing wildlife, and the significant hydrological changes in the existing open spaces resulting from the new surface water drainage systems. The Town Council have secured s,106 funding for work at Millside with a strong wildlife / nature interpretation emphasis and that work is well under way, and has a phased plan for Brinsham Fields, so the Action Plan builds upon that work.
2. South Yate
3. Old Yate & The Common
4. Frome Wellington Rd / Goose Green
5. The Ridge and the Counties

Beyond the five phases of the project there are two additional areas of importance that will be tackled where opportunities arise e.g. during redevelopment of the town centre:

6. Yate Town Centre Island: timing and content of this phase will depend on the Masterplan although the river, pond and orchard are crucial north / south wildlife connecting corridors and would normally need to be in an early phase.
7. The rural area which is in private ownership.

An action plan will be developed for each Zone in turn - with residents, users, land owners and wildlife groups, with actions that continue into future years. Each "Zonal Action Plan" will set out the actions, timelines and funding, and will identify the role of stakeholders. Implementation of the zonal plan may spread over more than one year per zone, as identified in the Zonal Plan.

There will be project updates and reviews undertaken for each zone after 3 years, to monitor impact, identify future needs and learn from previous phases.

Each phase will consider species, wildlife, habitat, interpretation and engagement opportunities, food supplies, pollution, water course vulnerability and the

sustainability of proposals.

Town Wide Approaches

Whilst the zonal approach forms the warp of our Plan, the weft is the town wide initiatives. These include:

1. existing local initiatives: focusing on species, or specific actions, such as the Bees Needs initiative. The Town Council will support and promote existing initiatives and encourage new ones.
2. Town wide commitments: for example, the Town Council has a longstanding commitment to not using chemicals, pesticides, or other harmful materials; composting and reusing materials; responding to suggestions for tree planting, wildflower planting, bird and bat boxes, hedgehog and bug hotels and working with those suggesting ideas to deliver them. These will continue, on a responsive basis outside of the zonal approach.

Five new key town wide initiatives relate to connected corridors and will run throughout the approve approaches:

1. **Connecting Corridors in South Gloucestershire owned smaller green spaces:** this initiative will establish a clear, simple, quick process by which groups of residents can take over and enhance South Gloucestershires open spaces close to them for community gardens, community allotments or biodiversity areas, by providing the advice and support people need as well as a simple process. Some residents have open spaces licences already and are improving stretches for nature. We have identified other key stretches of open space land that will be ideal to improve.

SGC are in the process of investigating how they will better manage all their road verges for wildlife. Whilst we have already raised individual additional highways planting opportunities requested by residents with South Gloucestershire, Yate hopes to be a pilot area for that project. In relation to the vital Frome corridor, we hope the Frome Reconnect project will act as a focus for that corridor

2. **Connecting Corridors, The Back Gardens Project:** This initiative will encourage people to think about how their back gardens can contribute to connecting corridors. It will work with South Gloucestershire Council to build upon experience such as the Bedminster Back Gardens project, and then work through local schools to encourage residents to think about how groups of back (and front) gardens can provide crucial wildlife corridors. We have lots of individual residents who are taking action in the way they manage their gardens. The aim of this initiative is to encourage more to take part, and to think about the connections between gardens. Initiatives such as hedgehog highways, pollinator planting, tree

and shrub support, pesticide free promotions, no mow and no tidying for winter projects will be part of this.

3. **The Green Ring:** an initiative with neighbouring parishes to designate and enhance a green ring around built up areas to improve biodiversity and allow wildlife to move around and into the town at key points. Once mapped, the aspiration is to enhance accessibility and interpretation opportunities.
4. **Buildings for nature:** As most of the parish is urban, making buildings more nature friendly is vital. We will promote nature friendly building design and adaptation for example, we will build on our 10 years of experience of the sedum (living) roof at the Armadillo to add sedum roofs where possible to flat roofs on town council property, and encourage their use by other public bodies and employers in the town, and in planning comments.
5. **Trying to influence the planning process:** the Town Council regularly submits planning objections designed to try to preserve and give priority to habitats, working with AWT members and others. The LNAP gives an opportunity for increasing that pressure.

The aims of these town wide initiatives are:

- improve how we manage and connect public open spaces and strengthen green corridors;
- support and enhance local initiatives for biodiversity in green and urban spaces;
- provide vital green space for nature to thrive in our communities;
- create more attractive and healthier places to live for residents of the present and future;
- plan to respond the effects of climate change, taking actions to counter environmental harm on a local, national, and global level.