

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6

HOLT COMMUNITY COUNCIL - 2025 Report.

dated December 2025.

Name of Community Council: Holt Community Council

Introduction and Context:

Holt is a small historic medieval town surrounded by a predominantly rural agricultural community. It is bordered by the River Dee, the City of Wrexham (including the Industrial Estate), and the rural electoral wards of Rossett, Marchweil and Bangor, and lies wholly within the County Borough of Wrexham. It has a population of around 3500 according to the 2011 Census, of which less than 1500 live in Holt itself. Further information on Holt and its community can be found on the Holt Village Facebook site, Wikipedia and via the Holt Local History Society.

Holt and its community are represented by a 10-member Community Council. Councillors are office holders who sign a declaration of acceptance of office upon their election or appointment - they are therefore a part of the local government structure of Wales. Although they carry out many community activities on a voluntary basis, they are not volunteers. At the head of the Council is the chairman, who is elected annually from amongst its serving Councillors. The chairman for 2024/25 was Councillor Dr. John Cubitt and the vice-chair was Councillor Steve Lewis. Your other Community Councillors for the Year 2024/25 were: Cllr Gill Jones, Cllr Arlene Shone, Cllr Jeremy Hughes, Cllr David Powell, Cllr David Munnerley, Cllr David Bithell, Cllr Joe Pridding, and Cllr Andrew Jones.

Holt Community Council (HCC) provides a range of services to our local community which have an impact on biodiversity. These include:

- 1) Responsibility for the maintenance and improvement of several green spaces including a Woodland area (The Copse) at one entrance to the village, Church cemetery, and around the public toilets and Bowls Green. We are also involved in the maintenance and upkeep of the park (owned by the Holt Town Trust) and Castle Grounds (owned by Wrexham Borough Council). In addition, an area surrounding a Multi-use games area on a new estate development came under the HCC remit in 2022/23.
- 2) Maintaining the main paths along roads through the village by weeding and spraying (only when absolutely necessary).
- 3) Encouraging the use of waste bins for villagers and visitors along with the use of poo bins for dog walkers. Litter Picking Group formed in 2021/22.
- 4) Providing grants for projects in the HCC area. This impacts on biodiversity by pursuing sustainability goals and practices wherever possible.
- 5) Awareness and improvement of the environment, biodiversity and geodiversity.

We serve approximately 1300 residents.

The precept for 2025/26 is £38040

Action Report

Embed biodiversity into decision making and procurement:

- 1) Considered biodiversity decisions when considering planning applications and other associated matters, such as footpath diversion orders and neighbourhood services matters.
- 2) Considered adaptation and mitigation responses to the impacts of climate change.
- 3) Considered specific timings for green space, hedge and path maintenance to avoid affecting breeding birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles.

Monitored by:

- 1) Commitments made in HCC documents and minutes.
- 2) Consideration of biodiversity demonstrated in decisions on area maintenance responsibilities and planning applications.

Raise awareness of biodiversity and its importance:

- 1) Within a broader awareness and improvement of the environment such as the replacement of conventional street lighting with more energy efficient and cost-effective LEDs to the installation in 2022 of Electric Charging Points in the village car park.
- 2) Encourage the Community to volunteer in the context of nature/green spaces such as litter picking.
- 3) Encourage the Community to volunteer in the context of nature/green spaces such as supporting the Holt Community Gardening Group (HCG) to organise planters with water systems at our Village Cross and in select other locations to improve the appearance and environment of the Village.
- 4) Encourage the Community to volunteer in the context of nature/green spaces such as financially encouraging and supporting HCG to develop its allotments. The allotment holders are also encouraged to improve the nature and quality of the products grown as part of HCC's maintenance and management of the allotments and increasing its biodiversity. HCC is wherever possible striving to increase the number of allotments by subdividing existing holdings as the quality of the holdings is more consistent with our approach to improving biodiversity and the environment than size of the holdings.
- 5) Encourage the Community to volunteer in the context of nature/green spaces and the environment by supporting HCG and local residents in their very successful application for "Wales in Bloom" and other nationally recognised environmental, gardening and community awards. In 2025, the HCG was honoured with the 2025 RHS Community Award for Outstanding Sustainable Gardening as well as several awards in the RHS "Wales in Bloom 2025" competition. In addition, the Holt Community Primary School participated for the first time in the "Wales in Bloom 2025" Competition and received a commendable Level 3 – Branching certificate. Finally, the coveted "Green Flag" award has been given to Holt's Car Park in recognition of its high environmental standards, cleanliness, safety and community involvement.
- 6) Encourage the Community to volunteer in the context of nature/green spaces and the environment by supporting the Holt Town Trust in their maintenance and development of Commonwood, a series of agricultural strip fields, previously Common Land, on the outskirts of the Village.

Monitored by:

- 1) Feedback from Council Members, residents and visitors to the Village.
- 2) Numbers of people taking part in activities.
- 3) Awards from National Organisations.

Safeguard principal species and habitats:

- 1) Contributed to the management of protected and environmentally important sites and species including Local Wildlife Sites such as the Woodland seen on entering the Village from the A534 and the River Terraces on parkland near our Castle where rare Common Club-tailed dragonflies have been noted. A giant model of this rare species has been placed on the 2nd Terrace in collaboration with the Northeast Wales Wildlife Trust (NEWWT) to raise awareness of this endangered species.
- 2) In addition, HCC has supported the NEWWT's planting of Black Poplars on the Castle parkland.
- 3) Contributed to the management of protected and environmentally important sites such as the SSSI of the River Dee in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales.
- 4) Contributed to the management of protected and environmentally important sites such the Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS) of the 2nd Terrace of the River Dee and the faulted bedrock at Holt Castle in conjunction with NE Wales RIGS. As we all know, Geodiversity underpins Biodiversity.
- 5) Manage land around the Castle and adjoining parkland to buffer and join them as part of a resilient ecological network.
- 6) Try and prevent any negative impacts on protected species.
- 7) Increase the Meadowland sites by adding a wildflower meadow at the Bridge entrance to the Village (Coronation Meadow) in association with the landowner.

Monitored by:

- 1) Records of any sites or species safeguarded as noted in the minutes of the HCC.
- 2) Feedback from Council Members, residents and visitors to the Village, as well as Ne Wales RIGS members.

Restore and create habitats and resilient ecological networks:

- 1) Encourage and financially support the creation by the HGC of planters with native pollinator friendly flowers. These will be located on the Cross and Public Toilets.
- 2) Support, at one entrance to the Village, an HCC copse in which trees, shrubs and bluebells have been planted and a community bench, Bug hotel, nesting boxes etc have been installed. This area is now a haven for Wildlife.
- 3) Changed mowing regimes by reducing the frequency and area of cuts to encourage wildflowers and other pollinator-friendly plants, also providing cover for mammals, amphibians and reptiles.
- 4) Changed hedge trimming regimes such as not cutting hedges during the Spring and early Summer to avoid disturbing nesting birds.

- 5) As previously stated, HCC has supported the NEWWT planting of Black Poplars on the Castle parkland.

Monitored by:

- 1) Area of habitat increased.
- 2) Feedback from Council Members, residents and visitors to the Village.

Tackle negative factors for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature-based solutions, address invasive species:

- 1) Support the work of Wrexham Borough Council to control the Himalayan Balsam invasive species along the River Dee through monitoring and encouragement.
- 2) Encourage the HGC to use environmentally friendly tools and limit the use of pesticides.
- 3) Use less pesticides on the HCC street cleaning and weed suppression.

Monitored by:

- 1) Areas of invasive species tackled.
- 2) Amount of pesticide applied.

Use improve and share evidence:

- 1) Taken advice and support from the NEWWT on improving the environment and biodiversity of the Village.
- 2) Taken advice and support from the NE Wales RIGS on improving the environment and geodiversity (as it underpins biodiversity) of the Village.

Monitored by:

- 1) Use of expert advice.

Support capacity and/or other organisations:

- 1) Working in partnership with the NEWWT to improve local wildlife areas and to provide extra volunteers. Also to provide alternate use for some little used agricultural areas such as food production.
- 2) Working in partnership with Wrexham Borough Council and with support from Breedon Group to improve access from the Village Centre to the Castle Grounds for the improvement of the Village connection with nature.
- 3) Working with NEWRIGS and Wrexham Borough Council to maintain and improve RIGS sites within the Holt area.

Monitored by:

- 1) Partnerships formed to deliver biodiversity (and geodiversity) benefit.
- 2) Amount of money spent which will provide positive biodiversity benefits.

Review of s6 duty

What has worked well:

- 1) The creation of wildflower and plant areas has been a success.
- 2) The installation of LEDS to replace traditional cost-ineffective lighting.
- 3) Partnership with NEWWT in delivering improvements to the Village environment and biodiversity. Also, the relationship has been beneficial in raising awareness of biodiversity issues in the area.
- 4) Providing encouragement and support for local organisations in the delivery of biodiversity improvements.

What have been the barriers:

- 1) Lack of expertise to identify best practice.

What will you change:

- 1) Establish contact with the Local Environmental Records Office and the Local Biodiversity Officer to seek advice.

How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed:

- 1) The duty will be monitored through feedback from the public and individual officers reporting back to HCC, on an as and when needed basis, the success or otherwise of the actions taken by HCC.
- 2) The S6 plan will be reviewed in the light of these reports and any other evidence or information that is made available to HCC. This plan will be reviewed bi-annually and an s6 report issued.

Attachments:

HGC press release RHS "Wales in Bloom Awards 2025"

HGC press release RHS Community Garden Award for Holt Community Gardeners