



FREYSTROP COMMUNITY

BIODIVERSITY REPORT 2025

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Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report



Freystrop is a community in Pembrokeshire 2 miles south east of Haverfordwest. It comprises of the villages and hamlets of Freystrop Cross, Lower Freystrop, Little Milford, Trooper's Inn, Maddox Moor, Middle Hill, Silverstream & Cardmakers Pool.

Freystrop Community Council are trustees and owners on behalf of the community of various assets most important of which, to this report, is Parc Hamdden Freystrop Recreation Park. This park is managed by volunteers from the Community Council, Freystrop Village Hall & Playing Field Management Committee and local residents. It is a requirement that the Community Council consider the impact on biodiversity as it is now and the future in its decision making.

The landscape of Freystrop is varied and includes a stretch of shoreline on the Western Cleddau, managed woodland and a piece of common land. The majority of the land in Freystrop is farmed. A pre-application consultation is currently underway for a large solar farm development in the next few years and this is raising major concerns in relation to potential harm to the healthy biodiversity existing in Freystrop.

Little Milford Woods and River Cleddau Foreshore

Running alongside the foreshore at Little Milford is an area of land owned and maintained by the National Trust. Part of this area also falls within Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. There is an area of woodland along with several properties and 4 bridle paths. The woodland and foreshore have a number of footpaths running through them which are well used.

This is a lovely part of Freystrop as it is owned by the National Trust is kept well maintained. The woods have a varied history, originally a thriving natural Oak landscape with areas of coal mining. Large swathes of this natural woodland was felled in the 1900s to make way for commercial planting. After the gifting of the area to the National Trust the commercial planting is being removed and restored with Oaks. This is an ongoing project. We plan to expand our wildlife recording for 2026 in this area.

Cleddau River Foreshore and Pembrokeshire National Park

Freystrop has a stretch of foreshore of the River Cleddau. The foreshore around the River Cleddau and woodland is part of the Pembrokeshire National Park.

Sadly the River Cleddau is believed to be the most polluted river in Wales.

The Cleddau Project is a band of volunteers who are attempting to change the decline of the river. In March 2025 they held a Training session in Freystrop Village Hall which involved taking samples from the stream at Little Milford looking at invertebrates. This stream feeds into the River Cleddau. While no evidence was received, a conversation with the gentleman running this course, at a further training session in June for the West Wales Rivers Trust, suggested that the stream tested was healthy. This is positive, however this is just one of four that originates in Freystrop.



Freystrop Church and Churchyard

In the churchyard of Freystrop Church is an ancient Yew Tree. This has a preservation order placed on it. It is believed to be in excess of 2,000 years old.

Sightings of Bats, Slow worms, Badgers, Squirrels, Jackdaws and Wrens have been made at the churchyard. This is just a snapshot of the wildlife to be found in this peaceful part of Freystrop. A more in-depth recording of the area is needed which may help to preserve this natural habitat for future generations.

Common Land

There is a [not exceeding] 30 acre parcel of common land situated within Freystrop's boundary. This can be easily accessed from its bridle way. Management of common land falls to our Local Authority, Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC). The officer in charge of Common Land has made a number of visits to try to work out the best way to preserve this amazing biodiverse area of Freystrop.



During 2025 the increasingly rare Marsh Fritillary Butterfly and Devils Bit Scabious Plant has been found on this site along with several Waxcap mushroom-shaped fungi.

This is a very biodiverse area of undisturbed for 50 years moorland and needs to be managed correctly to preserve its importance for future generations. There are grazing rights associated with 3 properties.

There is increasing encroachment of Scrub including Gorse that has to be managed. Contact has been made with the officer in charge of common land to offer support.



This land is situated in close proximity to an existing and a proposed solar farm so there are concerns as to its impact on this important wildlife area.

This common land has free access for all to roam wherever they wish.

The plan is to make a detailed list of biodiversity in this area with regular recording sessions. The last comprehensive survey of this common was in June 2002 carried out by The Countryside Council for Wales.

Parc Hamdden Freystrop Recreation Park

This park is a parcel of land partly donated and partly bought by the village for the use of all.

Members of the public and community council have been recording the biodiversity in Freystrop using the LERC app. On Friday 8th August 2025 West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre held a Wild Watch at the park. This proved to be successful with a number of residents attending. It appears that there has only been a limited amount of recording in the area previously. After the event the gentleman from West Wales Biodiversity spent a number of hours at the site recording and investigating the site.

He noted - "Had a great recording training session at Freystrop Recreation Field last Friday, where the community are doing a great job managing the site for biodiversity and balancing recreational needs. It's a nice marshy grassland mosaic with some more heathy patches, some nice plants including Sneezewort and what is probably the largest patch of Zigzag Clover that I have seen in Pembs, growing in and around Western Gorse over some 10 sq m.

The main threat to the open habitat appears to be Scrub encroachment."



One of the biggest issues for maintaining the site for healthy biodiversity is the management of the area. We have received advice from Places for Nature and West Wales Biodiversity. We know that everything needs to be cut back and removed during the winter months. Cattle would not work on the site and we do not have the manpower to do this manually – we have tried on a small section preciously. We need some kind of mechanical help! Grant applications have been made for machinery to help and we are awaiting the outcome.

Hedges & Verges

Freystrop is a rural community with many farms. There are miles of hedgerows. Hedges surrounding fields are generally either left unmaintained or cut back regularly. This can depend on the use of the field or landowner. There is a wide selection of native trees and other plants.

Unfortunately, like so many other places, Freystrop suffers from thoughtless people dropping litter and, on times, our roadside hedges and verges are covered with fast food wrappers, used vapes, alcohol cans and bottles along with deliberate fly tipping. We are lucky to have a number of residents who regularly go out clearing the roads. This a thankless task. It is thanks to Keep Wales Tidy we have the equipment and bags to help with this.



During Springtime there are a number of roadside hedges and verges that are covered with snowdrops along with other spring flowers. In late summer and early autumn the hedges are a mass of berries; Blackberries, Sloes, Hawthorn, Rosehips, Elderberries and others providing food for our local wildlife.

PCC have a policy to cut verges and hedges just once annually after the majority of plants have finished flowering and have shed their seeds. There are exceptions on areas where greater visibility for safety is needed. In general this seems to work well for nature.

Large Scale Solar Park of National Importance

There are significant biodiversity concerns relating to solar panel projects, primarily due to habitat loss and fragmentation from large scale installations. Wildlife mortality from collisions with infrastructure or attraction to reflective surfaces is also a concern. While there can be some mitigation with careful planning this cannot completely reduce the risks. Biodiversity can be enhanced in other areas by setting aside land for nature.

Currently there is a solar park on the border of Freystrop. A resident who has a barn just a few fields away from this has seen real decline in the Owl population, signs indicate that this is due to lack of food. The owls have nested and bred healthily over many years. This decline has become apparent over the last three years, the solar park was completed four years ago. This has not been verified but if correct is of real concern.

Plans are currently being drawn up for a large Solar and Storage Facility based on two sites in the community with a connecting power cable. There are fears from local residents about the impact on biodiversity of this development.

Northmoor Common is situated in close proximity to the existing solar park and the proposed solar park which will be flank it on two sides.

NATURE RECOVERY ACTIONS

Steps have been made to record the existing wildlife in Freystrop. Hedgehog and insect boxes have been introduced and native trees have been planted to create a new hedge along one boundary at Parc Hamdden to encourage a corridor for wildlife.

Recording of biodiversity needs to be continued in all areas perhaps with a more focused approach designating areas to be visited regularly for recording. It is essential to have good records of what we have in the area so that plans can be made for best management to preserve what we have and encourage more.

Focused areas:

Freystrop Community Council

- Members have taken part in awareness training, West Wales Biodiversity courses and a visit to local wildflower supplier
- Members work towards applying biodiversity principles in all decision making
- It is planned to add a local nature page to the community website

Parc Hamdden Freystrop Recreation Park

- Planting and maintaining native trees along boundary to restore a former hedge
- Planting and maintaining native fruit trees
- Planting native bulbs
- Putting up insect boxes
- Managing wild areas properly to inhibit the growth of scrub and maintain the wildlife already on site
- Creating and maintaining paths around the field to help minimise damage to flora and fauna whilst still allowing visitors to experience nature
- Regular recording of wildlife

Hedgerows

- Continue regular litter picks, encouraging more volunteers

Northmoor Common

- Comprehensive recording of wildlife in this area is needed
- Encourage PCC to ensure the common is managed effectively to maintain this important biodiverse area of the community
- Ensure consideration of impact on biodiversity has been considered before decisions are made relating to the solar development

Cleddau Foreshore & Little Milford Area

- Focused regular recording of nature

FUTURE HOPES AND PLANS

- Encouraging more volunteers to contribute to recording. There may be residents already carrying out recording perhaps of birds or insects. It would be great to encourage sharing of this to ensure we have a more complete record of our wildlife
- To continue to develop the natural places in Freystrop
- To maintain the diverse wildlife we already have
- To tackle the issues with invasive species
- To encourage residents to apply organic principles to their horticultural and agricultural pursuits

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

There are many positive things relating to biodiversity with many areas of diverse, and some increasingly rare, species found in Freystrop.

There is always more that can be done and we need to encourage all to help maintain this amazing biodiverse area.