

Minutes of Action Plan for Pollinators Taskforce Meeting - 22 March, MS Teams

Attendees:

Alison Heal	Ceredigion LA
Andrea Rowe	Butterfly Conservation
Angus Garbutt	UK Centre Ecology Hydrology
Anthony Rogers	Pembrokeshire LA/ Local Nature Partnership
Bleddyn Lake	Friends of the Earth
Bob Griffiths	Cefnffyrdd
Clare Dinham	Buglife
Francis Gellatly	Animal Plant Health Agency
Gary Mitchell	Tyfu Fyny /Social Farms & Gardens
Gemma Barron	National Trust
Geoff Robinson	Welsh Government
Huw Bramhall	Welsh Government/WSP
James Drake	Network Rail
Jamie Alison	UK Centre Ecology Hydrology
Jean Hurell	Women's Institutes
Joel Walley	Denbighshire LA
Kathleen Carroll	Welsh Government
Keith Davies	Welsh Beekeeping Association
Lynda Christie	Welsh Beekeeping Association
Mark Cleaver	Monmouthshire LA
Michaela Scrivin	NRW / Wales Biodiversity Partnership
Natasha De Vere	National Botanic Garden of Wales
Phil Sterling	Butterfly Conservation
Richard Comont	Bumblebee Conservation Trust
Richard Dawson	UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
Rose Revera	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Samantha Harris	Welsh Government

Sarah Thomas

Women's Institutes

Sinead Lynch

Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Trevor Theobald

Pembrokeshire LA

1. Welcome and Introductions

Kathleen Carroll opened the meeting by welcoming the members. Introductions were made. Minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

2. Geoff Robinson (Welsh Gov.) – Nature Recovery Action Plan, Section 6 reporting and plans

Geoff gave an overview of the Section 6 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, a duty which requires biodiversity to be maintained and enhanced. Public Bodies have a responsibility to embed biodiversity into their actions and have a reporting requirement.

Many Public Bodies including Local Authorities have carried out actions for pollinators. However, it is not so easy to extract this information, as there is no standard template for reporting and reporting styles vary.

25% of Public Bodies have provided reports. Welsh Government has recently contacted all Public Bodies to make them aware of the evaluation of the section 6 duty that has just been instigated.

Anthony Rogers stressed that it was vital for this information to be gathered. He recommended that when WG send out letters to CEOs they also copy in the responsible biodiversity officers. In this way, people working on the ground would be aware and be able to stress to their managers the importance of reporting.

3. Consultation responses

Revised National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (Plant Protection Products)

This consultation response was provided with the agenda. James Byrne (Wildlife Trust), who was responsible for co-ordinating the drafting of the response to the consultation, was thanked for his efforts. The Taskforce pesticide sub-group was also thanked for their work with James in considering the consultation document and its questions and for their subsequent feedback on drafts.

Gemma Barron (National Trust) provided an update on the work carried out by the agriculture subgroup in drafting a response to the Agriculture (Wales) Bill. A draft for comment had been provided prior to the Taskforce meeting. Gemma

said that people still had time to provide comments if they wanted to before the deadline date of Friday 26 March. The consultation response broadly supports the high level proposals contained in the white paper. The Taskforce is keen for greater scheme details to be published. Gary Mitchell (Tyfu Fyny /Social Farms & Gardens) had information that the next consultation on scheme details would be launched in the Autumn.

Kathleen Carroll (WG) said that the white paper consultation responses were to be independently reviewed and would be published in July.

Gemma and the agriculture sub-group were thanked for drafting the response.

4. Philip Sterling (Butterfly Conservation) – Changing our approach to design & maintenance of grass verges to encourage wildlife

Dr Phil Sterling currently works at the UK charity Butterfly Conservation as the lead for [Building Sites for Butterflies](#). He was the principal ecological adviser to local government in Dorset UK for 25 years. He shared his experience in large scale habitat creation schemes and managing the authority's highway verge maintenance programme. He found that by working with the grain of nature and by reducing soil fertility (through cut and collect in urban areas or using shallow topsoil covering of less than 15mm deep in developments) he achieved substantial environmental gains along with cost savings.

Link to presentation: https://butterflyconservation-my.sharepoint.com/:p:g/personal/psterling_butterfly-conservation_org/EU_9FQf41jtFlqdYFCYoch4BinZXxcIPRUBe9rjoy6SlgQ?e=WSVH PG

5. Jamie Alison (UK CEH) – Pollinator monitoring across ecosystems in Wales

The overall aim of the project was to understand different trends in specific areas and in the wider countryside. Jamie's presentation provided detailed information that woodland, cropland, hedgerows and flower cover underpin pollinator abundance in improved grassland landscapes. He asked if we have underestimated the value of woodland for pollinators. It is important to understand its value, especially as Wales is developing a National Forest. Some of the data presented by Jamie has been published in [Analysis of National Monitoring Data in Wales for the State of Natural Resources Report 2020](#).

Please find Jamie's presentation attached.

6. Richard Comont (Bumblebee Conservation Trust) – BBCT's citizen-science work, particularly BeeWalk

Richard provided details of why and how a Bee Walk is carried out. He explain that training and support is available to give people the skills to carry out the survey. There are a number of gaps around Wales, particularly in upland and mid Wales, where BeeWalks are not being carried out. To develop people's confidence to carry out a survey, a new bumblebee ID training & surveying project, [Skills for Bees](#), will run from Feb 2021-Jan 2024.

Please find Richard's presentation attached.

7. Angus Garbutt (UK CEH) - Pollinator Monitoring Scheme update

Angus provide an update on the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS). For Flower Insect Timed counts (FIT Counts) a new app will be launched in April. UKCEH are also developing visualisation and feedback tools. Angus also gave details of the 1km survey and that several squares in Wales require volunteers. PoMS methodology is being adopted internationally, EU and South American countries are taking on the scheme.

Please find Angus's presentation attached.

8. Discussion on Citizen Science

A discussion was held on how we can get more people in Wales interested in Citizen Science.

The Taskforce members understood that people have many pressures drawing on their time and although they may be wanting to engage more with their environment they may have limited time to do so.

We recognised that there are a number of opportunities that people could explore that have differing time commitments. It was suggested that if surveys were clearly set out with summaries, it could help people decide if there was a project that suited them. It was suggested that the Local Nature Partnership might be able to help to set up a framework.

We also recognised that it was important for volunteers to see that there is a positive reward for giving their time. This could either be in receiving initial training and later to getting feedback on the information they have provided and how it fits into the wider picture.

There was support for a Citizen Science and Education Sub-group to be established. It was recommended that a representative from the Local Record Centre be invited to these meetings.

There was a question about how to access resources and expertise. The following links were provided in the chat bar:

- webinars are on Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPhsa9yg1KN97bLqq8-8Tca151iTBfp-->
- BeeWalk web page – <https://www.beewalk.org.uk/>
- PoMS web page – <https://www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/pollinator-monitoring>
- Polling the Pollinators: Taking part in the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (Natural History Live - on Thu 22, April 2021 15:00 - 16:00) <https://www.field-studies-council.org/shop/courses/poms-nhl/>

9. Action Plan for Pollinators Taskforce updates and any other business

• **Natasha De Vere - Transforming Food Systems**

The National Botanic Garden of Wales and Aberystwyth University are interested in looking at honey, honeybees and pollination within Wales.

Taking a multi-disciplinary approach, they would like to develop a project that covers the following areas, using Wales as a case study for approaches that can be adopted throughout the world.

- Healthy Humans: the health and well-being benefits of honey as a food and how honey production can be optimised.
- Healthy Bees: ensuring that honeybees are able to thrive (linking in with the [Healthy Bees Plan 2030](#)).
- Healthy Environment: optimising the pollination services provided by honeybees and wild pollinators for current and future crops.

• **Samantha Harris (WG – Department for Economy and Transport)**

Samantha informed us that the new Transport Strategy is now published: <https://gov.wales/llwybr-newydd-wales-transport-strategy-2021>.

• **Kathleen Carroll (WG – Land Nature Forestry) - The releasing of doves and butterflies at funeral ceremonies and other celebratory events**

A discussion was held on the Apse paper on this issue that was circulated prior to the meeting. Butterfly Conservation has been aware of this issue for a number of years and object to this practice. There was a feeling that animals were being used for just their for human entertainment. There were worries about animal welfare and monitoring issues. The general consensus was that this practice should be discouraged.

On behalf of the Taskforce Kathleen Carroll was to draft text, for clearance by the Taskforce, asking the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to request if their members could prevent butterflies being used in this way.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting is due to be held virtually in October/ November. A Doodle poll for date options will be circulated by Kathleen Carroll.

For our next meeting, Gary Mitchel requested an update on Allotments, a key pollinator site in urban areas. From the 1 April, Social Farms & Gardens will be working with LAs and WG to deliver more allotment sites across Wales.

There was general agreement to request that Dr. Phil Sterling returns to our next Taskforce meeting and give a further presentation with a particular focus on achieving substantial cost savings through using ecological principles.