

**Minutes of Action Plan for Pollinators (APP) Taskforce Meeting – 21 November, MS Teams**


**Attendees:**

Alison Kitchener	Welsh Government
Angharad Owen	Network Rail
Anthony Rogers	Pembrokeshire LA/ Local Nature Partnership
Bob Griffiths	Cefnffyrdd
Carolyn Thomas (MS)	Senedd Member North Wales
Cath Shellswell	Plantlife
Clare Dinham	Buglife
Clare Flynn	Bumblebee Conservation Trust
Dan Rose	Senedd Member Support Staff
Elliot Waters,	Monmouthshire County Council/ Gwent Green Grid Partnership
Emily Shaw	Vale of Glamorgan LA/ Local Nature Partnership
Emma Bonham	(CEFNFFYRDD)
Francis Gellatly	Animal Plant Health Agency
Gemma Barron	National Trust
Hannah Jones	Cefnffyrdd
Iolo Lloyd	Natural Resources Wales
James Darke	Network Rail
Jan Miller	North Wales Wildlife Trust
Jon Walker	Swansea University
Julieanne Quinlan	Conwy LA
Kate Collins	
Kathleen Carroll	Welsh Government
Laura Jones	National Botanic Garden of Wales
Mannon Lewis	Natural Resources Wales
Mark Cleaver	Monmouthshire County Council
Mark Watson-Jones	Cefnffyrdd
Phil Sterling	Butterfly Conservation
Richard Dawson	UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
Sean McHugh	Wales Biodiversity Partnership
Stacey Delbridge	Monmouthshire County Council/ Gwent Green Grid Partnership
Steve Rose	Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders' Association
Tim Birch	Wildlife Trust

1. Kathleen Carroll opened the meeting.

## 2. Philip Sterling (Butterfly Conservation) – System change in verge maintenance for wildlife – Carbon benefits and cost savings

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. In the Taskforce meeting, March 2021, he shared his experiences of large scale habitat creation schemes and managing the authority's highway verge maintenance programme. Phil was asked back to this meeting to explore this further.

Link to download presentation:  [Action Plan for Pollinators Taskforce - cost savings on road verges 22nov21 Phil Sterling.pptx](#)

During the presentation, Phil explained that having minimal amounts of top soil on verges results in low nutrients soils, which provides good substrata for wildflowers.

We discussed the removal of topsoil more widely across the road network. On a large scale this may not be practical but on site, where machinery is available, this could be a possibility.

Jan reminded us that when planting for pollinators it is important to include larval food plants. Jan requested a link to the Taskforce's suggested plant list for pollinators to be posted. Link:

<https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Content/Upload/Bee-friendly-plant-list-ENG.pdf> / <https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Content/Upload/Bee-friendly-plant-list-CY.pdf>

Arising from slide 18 in Phil's presentation, we discussed the contribution that species-rich grassland provides for carbon storage. Cath Shellswell also provided details to the following papers:

- Lange, M., Eisenhauer, N., Sierra, C. et al. Plant diversity increases soil microbial activity and soil carbon storage. Nature Communications 6, 6707 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms7707>
- Prommer, J, Walker, TWN, Wanek, W, et al (2020) Increased microbial growth, biomass, and turnover drive soil organic carbon accumulation at higher plant diversity. Global Change Biology. 2020 ; 26: 669– 681. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.14777>

## 3. Stacey Delbridge (Monmouthshire County Council) - Pollinator Friendly Gwent, Nature isn't neat project

Stacey updated us on the development of Nature Isn't Neat. Initially, WG funded a pilot project, [Nature Isn't Neat](#), to raise awareness and engage with the people of Monmouth Town about the need to help all pollinators. The project was extended across Monmouthshire County in 2020/21 with WG, Local Places for Nature funding from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. Building on the success they have had the project is expanding across the Gwent authorities as part of the Pollinator Friendly

Gwent workstream of the [Gwent Green Grid](#) a WG, Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being (ENRaW) Scheme.

In her presentation, Stacey explained that the project is to stimulate behavioural change resulting in widespread local action to address the decline of pollinators.

One of their goals is to share learning and best practice through a forum. This was a shared goal of the APP roadside verge/amenity grassland sub-group. It was agreed that it would be sensible for both the APP sub-group and Gwent Green Grid to work together to deliver this shared goal. The first meeting of this grassland management group will take place on 10 Dec 2021.

Please find Stacey's presentation attached.

#### **4. Cath Shellswell (Plantlife, Magnificent Meadows Cymru Manager) - Magnificent Meadows**

Plantlife's Magnificent Meadows project, funded through ENRaW (summer 2019-2022), aims to restore species-rich grassland for wildlife and people. Plantlife is working with a number of partners, including the National Trust (NT) and the Centre for Sustainable Health Care, to achieve this goal.

The project is divided into three main areas, Meadow Makers, Meadow Skills and Meadows for Wellbeing. Cath's presentation (attached) outlined some of the project achievements. This included the creation of several new sites with the National Trust and community groups. They are developing a [meadow hub](#). A test site is currently live. Following testing, a bilingual meadow hub is expected to be launched in Spring 2022. With information reported through their [Waxcap App](#) a number of new species-rich grassland sites have been identified. Their workshops have been successful and well attended. More workshops on meadow making, plant ID, monitoring/surveying will be run next year. You can receive updates from this project through their newsletter: [Magnificent Meadows Wales newsletter sign up \(mailchi.mp\)](#)

Jan was particularly interested in the wellbeing aspect of the project and working with hospitals. The National Botanic Garden's Biophilic Wales project has also been working with Health Care Trusts. A request was made for a future presentation on Biophilic Wales for the next Taskforce meeting.

Alison stated that Local Places for Nature supports work to increase pollinators, change mowing practices and create places for nature healthcare settings. Alison was also asked if she could give a presentation at the next meeting.

Local Places for Nature grant funding is distributed through partners including Keep Wales Tidy and National Lottery Heritage Fund.

For more information on Local Places for Nature funding, please see:

[Local Places for Nature - Keep Wales Tidy](#)  
[Local Places for Nature – Heritage Fund](#)

## **5. Carolyn Thomas (MS) - Champion for biodiversity on grass verges and amenity grassland**

Carolyn Thomas (MS) introduced herself to the Taskforce. Carolyn is a newly elected Senedd Member for North Wales and has been asked by the Deputy Minister for Climate Change to champion managing grass verges and amenity areas for biodiversity. Carolyn's past experience includes working with Local Government's biodiversity, Street Scene and transport teams.

She has met with Local Nature Partnerships representatives, Local Authority Environmental Directors and plans to meet with Local Authority Chief Executives.

## **6. Iolo Lloyd (Natural Resources Wales) Pollinators – A Case Study on the Welsh Gov. Woodland Estate**

Iolo presented findings of invertebrate pollinator survey work undertaken in 2020 at Hafren Forest, Montgomeryshire. Please find attached Iolo's presentation and a copy of the report associated with this study.

Clare Dinham and Jon said that they were interested to hear how this work develops and how it informs (wood)land management decisions. Clare said that at a future point she would welcome working with Iolo and that Bumblebee Conservation Trust would probably also be interested.

Richard had not seen the report, as he had joined the Taskforce after it had initially been shared in the Spring. He requested that it be re-shared.

## **7. Updates**

### **Steve Rose (Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders' Association, BIBBA)**

Steve informed us that the Republic of Ireland have introduced for debate the ['Protection of the Native Irish Honey Bee Bill 2021'](#) to the Seanad (the Upper House of the Irish Legislature). This Irish Bill entitled an Act to prevent the importation into the Irish Rep. of honey bees other than the 'native Irish honey bee' defined in the Bill as European Dark Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera mellifera*).

### **Kathleen Carroll (WG – Landscape Nature Forestry)**

- **Education and Citizen Science sub-group**

The first meeting of the Education and Citizen Science sub-group was held in May 2021. One of the sub-group members was to compile a draft list of citizen science projects that would suit pollinators and could be used in a simple diagram or a flow chart. Another member was exploring the possibility of having [X-Polli:Nation](#) resources available in Welsh.

- **Pesticide sub-group**

A summary of responses to the consultation to the revised draft of the National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (NAP) has been published. Please see link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/sustainable-use-of-pesticides-draft-national-action-plan/outcome/summary-of-responses>

During the sub-group meeting, April 21, Sarah Jones (Welsh Water) gave an introduction to the development of [PestSmart](#). Sarah explained that the starting point of the programme was to get people to understand that there are alternatives to pesticides. Although Welsh Water do not think it is their place to tell people not to use pesticides, they are happy to signpost to other organisations and education material that do and give alternatives to pesticides. Members of the sub-group were asked to consider the PestSmart material when it is launched and see if it is possible for them to feed in.

- **The releasing of doves and butterflies at funeral ceremonies and other celebratory events**

In June, an e-mail was sent to Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to request if their members could prevent butterflies being used at funerals or other ceremonies.

- **Healthy Bees Plan 2030 – Implementation Plan**

The joint Wales and England [Healthy Bees Plan 2030](#) was published in November 2020. Over the past year, WG has been working with Defra, APHA and stakeholders (including the Welsh Beekeepers Association), to develop the associated Implementation Plan. The [Implementation Plan for the Healthy Bees Plan 2030](#) was published in October 2021. It sets out actions that beekeepers, bee farmers, bee associations and government will undertake to protect and enhance populations of honey bees.

## **8. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is due to be held virtually in Spring 2022. A Doodle poll for date options will be circulated by Kathleen Carroll.