



Pollinator Action Plan Report 2020/21

Our vision: Our local environment will be rich in flower-rich habitats, helping support sustainable pollinator populations and making places more attractive for people to live and work in.

Progress was made on implementing the [Pollinator Action Plan](#) during 2020/21, although overall activity was limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Nevertheless, teams across the council were able to introduce pollinator-friendly planting opportunities at some council sites and began working on partnership and community projects aimed at enhancing pollinator habitats.



Actions in 2020/21



In 2020/21, we continued to provide annual funding for the [Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre](#) to hold and manage biodiversity data. As a Steering Group member, we participated in shaping the centre's direction and plans. [Adastra 2020](#) is the centre's latest annual review of wildlife recording in Sussex.

We continued our support for the [Local Wildlife Sites Initiative](#) through 2020/21. Local Wildlife Sites (formerly Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs)) on council land include Buchan Country Park, Fairmile Bottom, Chichester Canal, Worth Way and two Downs Link sites, and our management plans for these sites aim to protect and enhance pollinator habitats.

In February 2021, over 200 people tuned in to the “[Who Loves A Pollinator](#)” virtual event hosted by our



Highways, Transport & Planning - Stakeholder & Partnerships Team to learn about the importance of pollinators. The event included talks by bee expert Professor Dave Goulson, the Sussex Wildlife Trust, guitarist Richard Durrant and West Sussex County Council's Youth Cabinet. Creating ‘insect hotels,’ cutting out pesticides and letting weeds take root were just some of the suggestions for making pollinator-friendly habitats in our gardens.

“This was one of the most uplifting Zooms I've watched during the whole lockdown - brilliant music, information, and great vision” - Liz

Highways, Transport & Planning, began a “[Community Road Verge](#)” pilot with 19 local community groups and parishes, whereby particular roadside verges are

managed for pollinator benefit, with one end of season cut after flowers have set seed. We provided wildflower seeds to participating groups and set up regular “Nature Verge Network” meetings to enable the groups involved in the pilot to share ideas and experiences. The pilot will inform the process for broader roll-out in 2021/22.



The team also established a new “[Pollinator Highway](#)” linked habitat project in partnership with Adur and Worthing Councils and Lancing Parish Council, to provide a route for pollinators to travel from the coast to the downs and beyond.

A survey of one of our typical rural verges demonstrated the benefits for pollinators that can be gained from a reduced grass-cutting regime:

“The results are spectacular, as is the flora. My count of 424 individuals included 20 species of butterfly, the highlights being 107 Small Blue (the largest second brood I've ever seen anywhere), 222 Common Blue and 21 Brown Argus. Mating pairs of these three species were seen and lots of egg-laying observed, on plants which would of course be removed if cut too early. Road verges don't come better.”- Surveyor



We began work on a 3-year partnership project with the South Downs National Park Authority to evaluate the impact of a **“cut and collect”** management approach on grass growth and biodiversity. The project aims to enhance road verges, provide more areas of species-rich grassland and improve habitats for insects and pollinators. 14 parishes across the National Park area within West Sussex are participating in the project.



Our grounds maintenance team have worked with their contractors to leave areas uncut where possible to benefit pollinators. Rough areas not needing active management had sight lines cut, and the remaining areas were left to grow with one end of season cut. Bee orchids were spotted at Steyning Library by a site user - these were not planted but grew from the existing seed bank. The Council Records Office rear car park verge was left to grow following broadcast wildflower seeding.



Wildflower plugs were planted in several areas on the Durban House site in 2020, and these have flowered in 2021.

236 trees were planted through our **“Donate a Tree”** scheme during 2020/21. The scheme offers residents, parishes, and other local groups the opportunity to have a tree planted on the verge outside their property for a fee which contributes to some of the planting costs. Pollinator-friendly trees planted during the year included Crab Apple, Field Maple, and Whitebeam.

