



Pollinator Action Plan

2019-2022

A Commitment from
West Sussex County Council





POLLINATOR ACTION PLAN 2019 - 2022

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West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) is committed to helping to conserve the UK's pollinators by ensuring the council will consider the needs of pollinators in the delivery of its duties and work. WSSCC will seek to protect and enhance the amount and quality of pollinator habitat and manage its greenspace to provide greater benefits for pollinators. We will ensure local people are provided with opportunities to make West Sussex more pollinator friendly.

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.

Aims: The County Council will work to:

- encourage local plans, policy and guidance to represent the needs of pollinators
- protect and enhance the amount of pollinator habitat in West Sussex to prevent extinctions and improve the status of any locally threatened species
- improve our knowledge and understanding of pollinators in our local area
- increase awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs across local residents, businesses and other landowners
- increase the contribution to pollinator conservation of land under the ownership of, or managed by, the County Council.

Background to the Plan

The importance of pollinators, pollinators under threat, factors leading to a decline in pollinator numbers, and the national pollinator strategy is included as detail in Appendix A.

Pollinators in West Sussex

This plan has been developed to raise awareness of the plight of pollinators and to ensure the County Council and its residents, businesses and landowners are provided with information to help us all protect and increase our pollinator populations. This plan is designed to ensure the needs of pollinators are enshrined across the breadth of County Council work and to increase awareness and understanding of pollinators across our local community.

Contributing to our West Sussex Plan

One of our West Sussex Plan priorities is our county being a 'Strong, Safe and Sustainable Place'. Our commitment to pollinators contributes to us looking after the environment and our beautiful outdoors and strengthening our communities. Breathing Better (a partnership approach to improving air quality in West Sussex) highlights the co-benefits of improving pollinator friendly habitat and air quality. It states '*..... in addition to improving air quality (they) are also shown to improve water quality, reduce flooding, improve health and wellbeing, increase property values, increase biodiversity and create a resilient environment*'.

Strategy Objectives and Actions

Aim 1: To ensure the needs of pollinators are represented in local plans, policy and guidance where relevant:

	Objective	Specific Actions for West Sussex County Council
1.1	Increase the protection afforded to pollinator habitats and the species they support by ensuring appropriate reference in local plans and policies where relevant	Carry out a review of existing surveys and biodiversity mapping to identify key pollinator habitats present in West Sussex. Review and revise current management plans / policies as timetabled to take account of the needs of pollinators
1.2	Increase the profile of habitats of value to pollinators in biodiversity asset, green infrastructure and other maps, plans and projects	Contribute funding to the Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative to review status and identify new sites. Identify funding for Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre to undertake a condition assessment of West Sussex Notable Road Verges.
1.3	Recognise and capitalise on opportunities to create pollinator friendly habitats as part of new development	Work with District and Borough Planning Services to encourage developers to bring forward-pollinator friendly environments/landscaping as part of their requirements through Green Infrastructure and other policies in adopted plans. Work with Local Planning Authorities to incorporate the requirement through reviews of the policies and evidence base.

Aim 2: To protect, increase and enhance the amount of pollinator habitat in West Sussex and prevent any extinction and improve the status of any locally threatened species:

	Objective	Specific Actions
2.1	Increase the value of Local Wildlife Sites for pollinators	Ensure the needs of pollinators are taken into account in the management of all Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) which are owned or managed by the Council. Provide information on the needs of pollinators to other owners /managers of Local Wildlife Sites, via the Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative.
2.2	Increase the value of parks and other greenspace for pollinators	Highways to identify areas of verges which may benefit from a reduced cutting regime. Research best practice and practicalities. Work with District and Borough Parks and Green Space teams and other green space owners to support a balanced approach to park management to support a range of uses and wildlife benefits.
2.3	Reduce the impact of pesticides on pollinators and other wildlife	Review use of pesticides by the County Council as evidence or legislation changes. NB: No evidence to suggest use of neonicotinoids in WSCC estate.

Aim 3: To increase awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs to residents, businesses, and other landowners:

	Objective	Specific Actions
3.1	Increase awareness of pollinators in the local community and within local businesses	Work with District and Borough teams, and community teams, to provide information on pollinator-friendly gardening activities to residents and local allotment holders. Encourage District and Borough teams to create pollinator-friendly flower beds in parks.
3.2	Increase the number of young people who understand the value of their local pollinators	Encourage local schools to develop wildflower areas in school grounds. Encourage schools to participate in local or national pollinator award schemes.

Aim 4: To increase the contribution to pollinator conservation of land under the ownership of, or managed by the County Council:

	Objective	Specific Actions
4.1	Make council owned land and buildings more pollinator friendly	Identify areas on our estate where pollinator-friendly planting can be trialed and monitor success and feedback. Specific areas include closed landfill sites, solar farms, and more publicly accessible areas. Ensure management for pollinators is included in contract renewal. Follow guidance on Green Infrastructure (GI) on capital projects, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Green Infrastructure Audit • A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the site • Follow any local GI policies set out by the Local Planning Authority. • Production of a Site Construction Environment Management • Plan, GI Management and Maintenance Plan.
4.3	Increase the area of pollinator habitats on local greenspace managed by local groups	Research whether our Highways Green Offer could be extended to verge management.

Aim 5: To improve our knowledge and understanding of pollinators in our local area:

	Objective	Specific Actions
5.1	Establish effective monitoring of work being carried out in our area	Carry out a brief review of achievements annually and publicise success to residents. Encourage staff and contractors to feedback on actions they take for pollinators.
5.2	Increase information on the status of pollinators	Encourage local people to support national pollinator monitoring schemes

APPENDIX A

The Importance of Pollinators

Our native pollinators include bumblebees and other bees (250 species), butterflies and moths, flies, beetles and wasps. In all there are over 4000 species of insect in the UK that carry out pollination of our native wild plants and our food crops. Insect pollination is extremely important to the UK economy, with estimated values of £691 million annually. Without pollinators we would struggle to grow many vegetables and fruits including apples, pears, strawberries, beans and peas.

Pollinators under threat

Our pollinators are in trouble

- Half of our 27 bumblebee species are in decline
- Three of these bumblebee species have already gone extinct
- Two-thirds of our moths are in long term decline.
- Across Europe 38% of bee and hoverfly species are in decline
- 71% of our butterflies are in decline.

The most significant factors leading to these declines in pollinator numbers include:

1. Habitat loss - The most significant cause of decline is the loss and degradation of habitats which provide food, shelter and nesting sites for pollinators. The loss of wildflower-rich grasslands is one of the most important issues. Over 3 million hectares of these habitats have been lost in England alone since the 1930s, the loss being attributed to more intensive farming and urban/industrial development.

2. Pesticides - There is growing evidence that the use of pesticides is having harmful effects on pollinators including honeybees, wild bees and butterflies. Wider effects throughout ecosystems are also of concern and pesticides have been implicated in other declines such as farmland birds and soil organisms. The use of 26 neonicotinoids is of particular concern. These are systemic pesticides which can be applied as a seed dressing (the preferred delivery mechanism) or spray and have a high toxicity to insects.

3. Climate Change - long term changes can deprive pollinators of food supplies at times when they need them, increase their exposure to parasites and diseases, or change habitats so that they are no longer suitable. There may be gains as well as losses but a resilient network of good pollinator habitat across the area is needed for them to be able to adapt and take advantage of changes.

What pollinators need

Pollinators need many of the things we need – food, shelter and nesting areas.

Food – Pollinators need food (nectar and pollen) throughout the season from March through until September. Many plants and trees can provide these food resources, including many so called ‘weeds’ such as dandelions and thistles.

In addition to flowers, many pollinators need other food resources to support their different life stages. For example, butterfly and moth caterpillars need particular plants to feed on.

Shelter and nesting - Dense vegetation such as tussocky grassland, scrub, mature trees, and piles of wood and stone can provide essential habitat for hibernating pollinators. Many species overwinter as adults including queen bumblebees, and some butterflies and hoverflies, others as eggs, larvae or pupae. Old burrows and dense vegetation are used by bumblebees, with sunny slopes and dry ground used by ground-nesting bees such as mining bees.

National Pollinator Strategy

The Government’s National Pollinator Strategy for England (2014) sets out a 10-year plan to help pollinating insects survive and thrive across England. The Strategy outlines actions to support and protect the many pollinating insects which contribute to our food production and the diversity of our environment. It is a shared plan of action which looks to everyone to work together and ensure pollinators’ needs are addressed as an integral part of land and habitat management.

In particular the Strategy asks local authorities to take a lead across many of their work areas and duties, including their role in local planning and also as managers of public and amenity spaces, brownfield sites, schools, car parks, roadside verges and roundabouts.



