

Pollinator Action Plan

December 2022

Foreword

Protecting, restoring, and increasing biodiversity is a fundamental priority to safeguard the natural systems on which all life on earth is part of and depends.

With changes to how we produce our food, increasing movement of people and resources, alongside the impacts of climate change and other pressures, there are rising and new threats for nature which require our collective action and response to the Climate and Nature Emergency.

Insects are on the front line of this crisis. Insect numbers are plummeting locally and globally and yet they are key for healthy ecosystems and provide vital pollinating services for plants including 75% of our food. By taking action to protect, improve and increase pollinator habitat through implementing this Pollinator Action Plan, the council is committed to taking action to improve the health and resilience of pollinators and natural ecosystems in South Gloucestershire and beyond.

We all have a part to play to protect and restore nature and improve the health and wellbeing of the environment and I welcome the approach and measures set out in this Pollinator Action Plan. I also hope that this policy will help to raise awareness and inspire action in our communities.

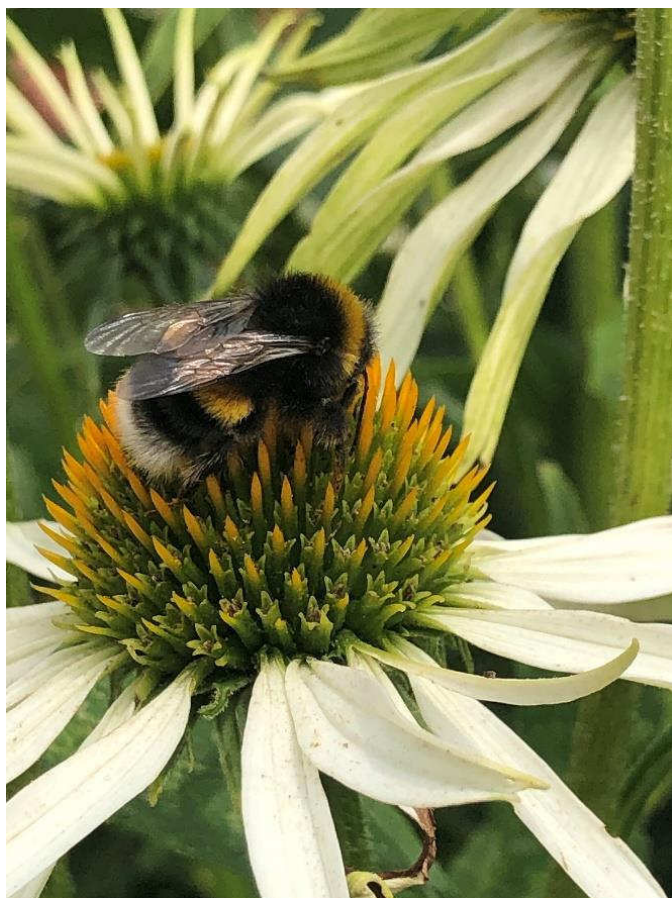


Image: White Tailed Bumble Bee on Echinacea

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Part One – Principles

Foreword

South Gloucestershire Council declared a [Climate Emergency](#) in July 2019, recognising that the global climate is in a state of breakdown. We need to urgently prepare for the local impacts of a changing climate, reduce our carbon emissions and protect and restore nature.

We also know that climate change along with other factors is having a significant impact on the health of nature and ecosystems, and that this is a critical part of the wider environmental crisis. For this reason, the council has taken an approach that tackles the nature crisis together with the climate emergency and recognises that we face a [Climate and Nature Emergency](#).

Changing the way we manage our assets and work with partners and communities will help us tackle this emergency situation.

Pollinating insects are key to life on earth and are fundamental to addressing the ecological emergency.

Pollinating insects (from now on to be referred to a 'pollinators') are any member of the scientific order Insecta which pollinate flowers. This includes many species of –

- Bumble bees
- Solitary bees
- Honeybee
- Wasps
- Flies
- Beetles
- Bugs
- Butterflies and moths
- Hoverflies

South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) is committed to helping to conserve the UK's pollinators by ensuring the council considers the needs of pollinators in the delivery of its duties and work. Pollinators are an essential part of ecosystems, and our food chain. They are under threat and have dramatically declined in recent years locally, nationally and globally. For example Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust, highlights that in the UK half of our 27 bumblebee species are in decline. Three of these bumblebee species have already gone extinct. Two-thirds of our moths and 71% of our butterflies are in long term decline. (

The council will seek to protect, enhance and increase the amount and quality of pollinator habitat and manage its greenspace to provide greater benefits for pollinators.

1.1 Purpose

This plan outlines South Gloucestershire Council's actions to protect and improve pollinator populations.

The plan covers the legislations that need to be adhered to and how pollinator populations can be increased. An action plan has been produced for council staff detailing how to enact this pollinator plan. This Pollinator Action Plan will ensure that the needs of pollinators are embedded across the breadth of council work and increase awareness and understanding of pollinators within the community.

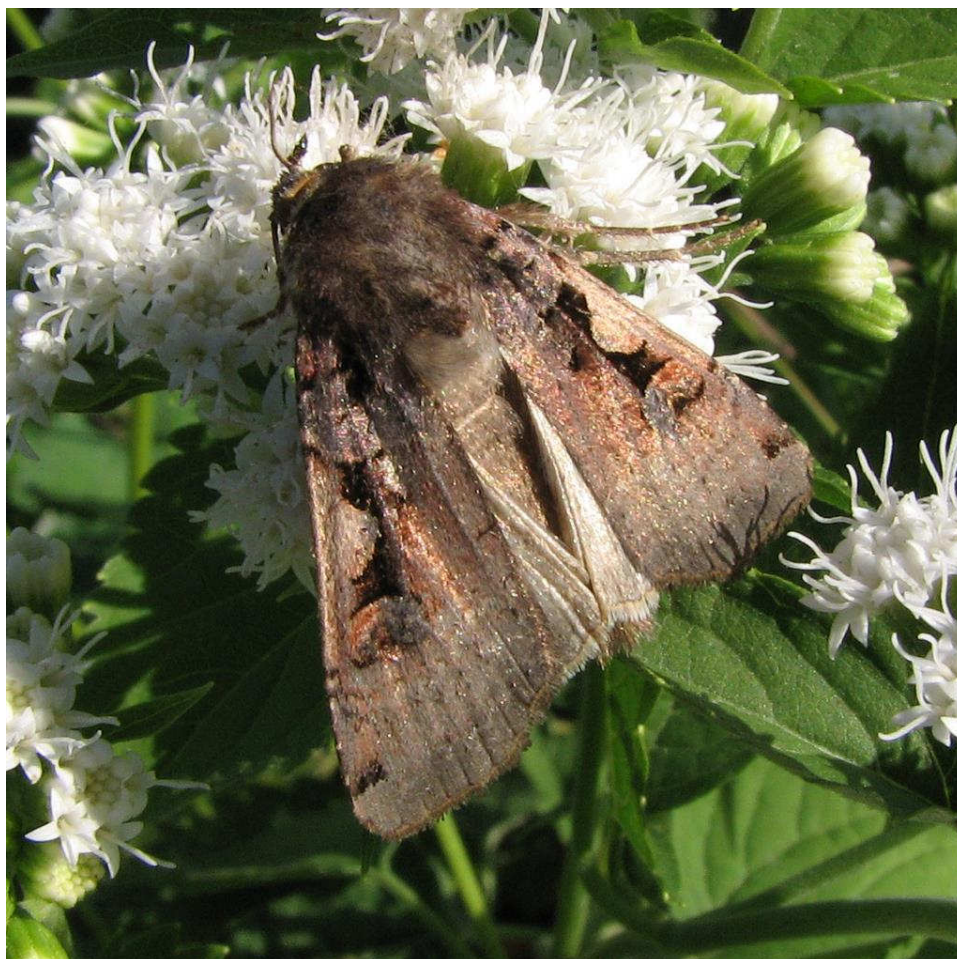


Image: Setaceous Hebrew Character moth

1.2 Legislation & duties

Section 40 of the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#) (NERC) places a duty to conserve biodiversity on public authorities in England. It requires local authorities and government departments to have regard to the purposes of conserving biodiversity in a manner that is consistent with the exercise of their normal functions such as policy and decision-making.

Section 41 This legislation requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of species of flora and fauna and habitats considered to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Please refer to Appendix 3 of the [Biodiversity-Action-Plan-2016-26.pdf \(southglos.gov.uk\)](#) for the list of applicable species in South Gloucestershire.

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) launched the [National pollinator strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England](#) in 2014. The West of England was the first area to create a local version of the strategy which is now the [West of England Pollinator Strategy](#).

Defra advice for local authorities is simple. They have put advice together into 5 simple actions for pollinators:

1. **grow more flowers, shrubs and trees**
2. **let your land grow wild**
3. **cut grass less often**
4. **don't disturb insect nests and hibernation spots**
5. **think carefully about whether to use pesticide**

www.bumblebeeconservation.org/bees-needs/five-simple-actions/

1.3 Responsibilities

The council is responsible for aligning all our work with South Gloucestershire Council's [environmental policy](#): *“Protecting and enhancing the environment for future generations is a cross cutting value within the South Gloucestershire Community Strategy and is one of the core values that underpins all our work.”*

The council declared a Climate Emergency (July 2019) and is taking action to respond to the [Climate and Nature Emergency](#). This includes a [Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Action Plan](#)

This Pollinator Plan delivers action N14 within the [Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Action Plan](#) : ‘to prepare and implement a ‘Pollinator Action Plan’ to restore and improve pollinator habitat to help bees and other pollinating insects thrive’

1.4 Current practice

South Gloucestershire Council and local volunteer groups have a long history of working together to manage sites for wildlife, insects and pollinators. The council is a member of the West of England Pollinator forum, formerly the Greater Bristol Pollinator Forum. South Gloucestershire council has won Bees Needs awards for its pollinator work and has worked extensively with [Buglife](#), [Butterfly Conservation](#) and [Plantlife](#) on practical work, education, best practice and on policy.

South Gloucestershire Council has worked with Buglife to create a [B-Lines map](#) of key pollinator routes within the region.

However in order to respond to the Climate and Nature Emergency and protect, support and increase pollinator habitat and populations we need to accelerate and scale up our action.

Part Two – Scope

2.1 In scope

Action for pollinators on land owned or managed by South Gloucestershire Council is included within this plan. Land which is not owned or managed by the council (third party land) is not included in this plan. However, it is anticipated that this plan can be adapted and used by third parties such as town and parish councils and schools.

Part Three – Vision and objectives

3.1 Vision

The council's vision for pollinators comes from action N14 in the adopted Green Infrastructure Strategy;

“Help bees and other pollinating insects thrive and increase areas of pollinator habitat by 2030.”

3.2 Objectives

The council will adopt the 5 main objectives taken from Defra's 5 simple actions for pollinators within the UK pollinator strategy 'Bee's Needs' to:

1. Grow more nectar and pollen-rich flowers, shrubs and trees (appendix 1)
2. Leave patches of land to grow wild
3. Cut grass less often and ideally remove the cuttings
4. Avoid disturbing or destroying nesting or hibernating insects in places like grass margins, bare soil, hedgerows, trees, dead wood and walls (appendix 2)
5. Think carefully about whether to use pesticides

These five simple actions were drawn up with experts from Natural England, the Food and Environment Research Agency, conservation charities and the research community.

The council is delivering these objectives through preparing a suite of new policies and taking action to change management to improve habitat for pollinators and other wildlife as set out in the councils [Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Action Plan](#) aligned with the objectives of this Pollinator Action Plan including:

- Verge Management Programme and Grassland Management Programme
- Pesticide Policy
- Plant Biosecurity Policy
- Ragwort Policy
- Updating management of council allotments
- South Gloucestershire Action Plan for Nature

2.2 Policy actions

The council has prepared an operational action plan to implement this policy across our land and work to achieve the vision to grow more flowers, shrubs and trees, let land grow wild, cut grass less often, create insect hibernation spots and think carefully about pesticide use.

The action plan also highlights the proactive approach required by staff and the training needed to enable this policy to be effectively enacted.

Part Four – Risk and reporting

4.1 Assessment of risk

Changing the way SGC manages land to include more space for pollinators, a reclassification of ‘weeds’ and less use of weedkiller will require further work to raise awareness and understanding among staff, contractors and the public. This will include training, communications, engagement and information.

It is anticipated that some elements of these changes will be unpopular with some stakeholders. Clear information and a communications plan will play a key role in building support to raise awareness and build support to make the changes needed. This includes publishing a one-page summary of this policy and working closely with stakeholders including operational staff and allotment holders.

4.2 Monitoring and reporting

An update on progress will be included annually in the reporting on progress on the council’s Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Action Plan and the West of England pollinator group.

Part Five - References:

South Gloucestershire [Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Action Plan](#)

South Gloucestershire [Climate and Nature Emergency](#).

DEFRA [Bees' Needs: Food and a home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[West of England Pollinator Strategy](#)

[National pollinator strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[B-Lines - Buglife](#)

[Butterfly Conservation](#)

[Plantlife](#)

[Plants for Pollinators advice and downloadable lists / RHS Gardening](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Plants for Pollinators list

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) have compiled lists of plants recommended for pollinators. These 'Plants for Pollinators' lists include plants that are nectar rich, easily accessible to a range of pollinators and have a long flowering period. Look out for the logo when purchasing plants.



[Plants for Pollinators advice and downloadable lists / RHS Gardening](#)

Appendix 2: Nesting and hibernating sites for pollinators

Pollinator Plan: nesting and hibernation sites for pollinators			
Potential council land for pollinator habitat creation from 2022			
Allotments, cemeteries and parks	Kingswood area	Thornbury area	Yate area
Mayshill cemetery	Longbeach Road carpark	Filnore playing field, Thornbury	Wickwar by gate

Kingswood remembrance Park	Warmley Forest park	Three Brooks, Bradley Stoke	Randoph Av/ Millside entrance, Yate
Mangotsfield cemetery (bug hotel)	Cock Rd field of Aspects	Harry Stoke rd	Frampton Cotterell orchard / Glebeland
Kingswood Park	Siston Common (N)	Alveston Rd verge	Shireway, Dodington
Page Park	Siston Common (S)	Thornbury car park	Yate common
Emersons Green village park	Bridge Yate Common	Thornbury verge corner	St Johns Way, Chipping Sodbury
SGC allotments	Toghill carpark	Bradley Stoke, wide rd verge	Goose Green nature reserve, Yate
	Dramway	Filton	nr Goldfinch playarea, Dodington
	Shortwood cycle track	Hollywood lane	off Smarts Green, Chipping Sodbury
	Leap Valley nature reserve	Patchway nature reserve	Kennedy way, Yate
	Bromley Heath nature area		Templar way, Yate
	Conham river park		Iron Acton bypass
	Gover rd		