



Pollinator Policy. A Case Study.

Monmouthshire County Council



Compiled by Nigel Leaworthy
Operations Manager

Introduction

In 2014 at Monmouthshire County Council, a development group came together made up of Council officers, members, biodiversity & ecology officers, town and community councils. Bee Friendly steering group and grounds maintenance staff.

The objective of the group was to support the Welsh Governments Action Plan for Pollinators, which is a legal duty under the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006. The intention was to make a commitment to this policy and to recognise the role the Council had in making a positive impact.

The Policy that was agreed had the following objectives:

- ✿ To introduce a safety cut only to the 1st grass cut of the year on A & B road routes only, of which were previously cut in their entirety.
- ✿ To reduce the number of cuts to selected public open spaces and larger verge areas.
- ✿ The introduction of pollinator friendly plantings on entrances into towns and villages.
- ✿ To Identify opportunities for development of meadow areas within amenity and open spaces.
- ✿ To utilise the 'Bee Friendly' Monmouthshire logo to raise awareness of the changes and underlying reasons.
- ✿ To monitor effectiveness of changing practice

The Consultation

It was essential that all those parties involved and affected needed to be consulted and concerns addressed before any changes were made.

In particular it was important to address concerns the Town and Communities councils had in respect of plans to reduce the 1st cut, and other authorities that had carried out similar work.

Consultation was also undertaken with those partners and agencies with specific areas of interest such as Monmouthshire Meadows and Gwent Wildlife Trust.

Result of Consultation

Following the consultation it was considered that a better understanding of each other's remit was achieved resulting in an improved relationship with partners.

There were two petitions submitted, one numbering 163 names disagreeing with the safety cut and the other fully in support with just under 1,000 names.

The Resources

Savings

By not purchasing flowering bulbs or planting and maintaining annual bedding areas on the highways and car parks:

SAVINGS of £40,000 per annum were made.

By not purchasing and maintaining bulbs for Linda Vista gardens and cemeteries:

SAVINGS of £6,123.00 were achieved.

TOTAL SAVINGS on purchases and maintenance:

£46,523.00

Expenditure

Purchasing of seeds, ground preparation and sowing on highways and car parks

£3,339.29

Cost of maintenance and treatment of the pollinator areas in open spaces

£6,100.50

Purchasing of seeds and preparation work for cemeteries and Linda Vista garden

£835.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE on purchases, sowing and maintenance

£10,274.29

Income

For the purchase of seed £7,307.50 was received from the South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA).

Savings plus income

Savings:	£46,523.00
Income:	£7,307.50
	<hr/>
	£53,830.50
Less expenditure	£10,274.29
TOTAL SAVINGS	£43,555.21 per annum
Net benefit of project to Monmouthshire	

Response to Policy

An overwhelming support from residents was received with many often asking us to do more to help the pollinators.

Many e-mails, phone calls and letters to the papers were received, all in support of the policy and visitors to Monmouthshire wrote, and provided congratulations.

The Council has received requests from neighbouring authorities wanting to know how it was done and what the costs were.

What Now?

To ensure all the population is kept informed, the Council is planning to produce a web-based storyline to let people know what they are doing and why.

The Council are monitoring and evaluating two large areas where reduced cuts have proved positive, with more species being seen and is working with groups to evaluate areas before sowing is undertaken.

The Council is also responding to requests from Town and Community Councils to fund additional plantings in their areas and advertising is being done along highway verges to be complemented with pollinator planting.

The Council has now initiated the sowing of additional areas. These include Bailey Park; Swan Meadows; Bulwark Park and at additional roundabouts at Dixton, Monmouth, Raglan and Hardwick, Abergavenny.

What else is being done?

A County Hall project is being started to see that our Pollinator Policy and Community Food Growing Policy happen in our grounds, complete with an apiary.

Nigel Leaworthy, Operations Manager for Landscape & Ground Maintenance stated, "The displays of Euroflor urban flower seed mixes *Tenor* and *Classic* (perennial and annual) on roundabouts and roadsides have attracted hundreds of letters of praise from the public and positive comments from other councils and the media.

We identified strategic locations where urban flower mixes would look best, such as roundabouts, housing estates, trunk roads and motorways, and determined that Euroflor urban flower mixes would replace 85% of our annual bedding."

The following Council members contributed to compiling this Case Study: Nigel Leaworthy, *Operations Manager*, Kate Stinchcombe, *Biodiversity and Ecology Officer*, Alison Howard, *Community Sustainability Officer*





