

# **Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council Joint Pollinator Strategy**



**2019-2024**

# STRONGER together

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Lewes District Council



Working in partnership with **Eastbourne Homes**

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## Contents

### The purpose of this strategy page 1

- What is a pollinator and why are they important?
- Why do we need a pollinator strategy?

### The scope of this strategy page 2

### Land management page 2

- What is pollinator friendly land management?
- Achieving Pollinator Land management
  - Maintain existing pollinator friendly habitat including forage (food) supply
  - increase pollinator friendly habitat

### Land owned or managed by the Councils page 4

- Downland and Nature Reserves
- Eastbourne Downland Farms
- Parks, Cemeteries, Municipal Buildings Gardens, Informal Recreation Grounds
- Council House and Estate Gardens
- Verges and other assets

### Pesticides page 5

### Communications page 5

- Public education and Promotion
- Council housing tenants
- Internal Communications

### Planning and Development Management page 6

#### Annexe

- Action Plan page 7
-

## Purpose of this strategy

### What is a pollinator and why are they important?

A pollinator is an animal, such as an insect, that is responsible for the transfer of pollen from one flower to another, cross-fertilising the plant and allowing seeds and fruit to form.

Recognised as undertaking a vital ecosystem service, our food supply relies on pollinators for crop pollination.

*'One out of every three mouthfuls of our food depends on pollination taking place. It is almost impossible to over-emphasise the importance of the service pollinators perform for us.....It is estimated that 84% of EU crops (valued at £12.6 billion) and 80% of wildflowers rely on insect pollination.'*<sup>1</sup>

There are at least 1500 different species of pollinating insect in the UK (bees, butterflies and moths, flies, beetles) including 250 species of wild bees, with wild bees reportedly of key importance for crop pollination.

Pollinators are termed as biological indicators as insect pollination is crucially important to maintaining the genetic diversity of plants and the spread of rare habitats.

Insect pollination also contributes heavily to wider biodiversity through the provision of insect pollinated plants which in turn provide food, shelter and other resources to animals, with direct correlation of greater diversity of insects reflecting a healthy ecosystem and supporting greater wildlife biodiversity. Healthy natural places have in turn been shown to support better human and community health and wellbeing.

### Why do we need a pollinator strategy?

Public bodies have a legal duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions.

This is reinforced in both Councils local plans for example by LDC Core strategy 4 - *'Enhancements to the biodiversity of the district, including the further creation of a high quality network of habitats, will have been established and the relative tranquillity enjoyed by many parts of the district will have been retained'*

The Government's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment"<sup>2</sup> sets a clear agenda to be *'the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than it was found'* with objectives of reversing biodiversity losses and increasing *'thriving plants and wildlife'* by 2050 with emphasis on *'opportunities for nature recovery through.....establishing wildflower recovery areas.....linked to new and existing green infrastructure to extend wildlife corridors into towns and cities, and provide opportunities for conserving wildflowers and insect pollinators.'*

We are committed to supporting the Environment 25 Year Plan and recognise, through this strategy, the need to maintain and enhance pollinator populations.

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<sup>1</sup> - <https://www.buglife.org.uk/bugs-and-habitats/pollination>

<sup>2</sup>[25-year-environment-plan.pdf](#)

## The scope of this strategy

The councils currently work in a pollinator friendly way in some areas including:

- maintaining our nature areas and down land in ways that are sympathetic to pollinators;
- pollinator friendly species selection for planting, including tree planting;
- reduced use of pesticides, with use of a pesticide-free alternatives;
- the creation and support of increasing planted wildflower areas across the Districts in parks and verges;
- undertaking surveys on the reserves to monitor biodiversity including invertebrates;
- community work and education events on our downland and reserves;
- managing particular verges for existing wildflowers e.g. Willingdon Roundabout, Eastbourne.

The councils will encourage healthy pollinator populations on a number of fronts.

**Managing Green Assets:** pollinator friendly management of council owned and council managed land

**Communications:** encouraging others in the councils areas to be pollinator friendly

**Planning:** encouraging pollinators through biodiversity strategy in the development planning system.

## Land Management

The councils own and manage a number of green assets including downland and nature reserve sites; parks; cemeteries; the gardens of council houses, flats and other council buildings; sports grounds; informal recreation grounds; some road verges and other miscellaneous green areas. Pollinator habitats will be protected and enhanced across our land holdings by pollinator friendly land management.

## What is pollinator friendly land management?

Pollinators need food, shelter and dispersal routes

- Food for adult and larval stages
- Shelter for all stages – egg, larva, pupa and adult.
- Dispersal routes for all stages to spread to find the habitat they need.

Pollinator friendly land management provides or encourages the provision of these including flowering plants with pollen and nectar accessible to insects – many particular bred flower varieties eg begonias, petunias and double flowered varieties of some plants have little nectar and pollen or are structured such that insects, especially bees, cannot access it. Pollinator friendly land also provides or encourages the provision of rough grassland, bushes and other vegetation, living and dead, for cover and shelter; and joined up pollinator friendly habitat for dispersal.

## Achieving pollinator friendly land management

### Maintain existing pollinator friendly habitat including forage (food) supply

- Pollinator friendly areas, including 'rough; areas will not be destroyed unless strictly necessary
- Old flowering Ivy, rough areas, overgrown hedges and lawn flowers such as selfheal, dandelions, clover and buttercups will be recognised as pollinator friendly.
- Identified flower rich verges, under the management of our councils, will be managed appropriately for their wildflowers wherever possible.

### Increase pollinator friendly habitat

- Planting schemes will give consideration to native species first, followed by non-native nectar and pollen-rich species before species with little or no accessible nectar and pollen are considered. Native species are more likely to also provide a food source for pollinator larvae.
- Permanent planting including tree planting schemes will take into consideration flowering times to allow for nectar and pollen through the seasons, especially early and late flowering plants like cherry, apple, hawthorn and willow. A list of pollinator friendly trees and shrubs to be made available to contractors, staff and others involved with planting.
- Where feasible, rough areas will be established, left uncut or cut less often. Some rough areas will be left uncut over winter in rotation to allow overwintering areas for insects. Hedges to be cut less frequently to allow for flowering.
- Large, old ivy will be encouraged where possible.
- Wildflower areas will be established where feasible in amenity grassland or edge areas through planting (only where it is established that different management of the existing vegetation would not be at least as, or more beneficial to pollinators).

## Land owned or managed by the Councils

### ➤ Downland and Nature Reserves

These are currently managed for wildlife including pollinators. This management will continue. The chalk grassland, wildflower rich habitats of the Eastbourne Downland and Landport Bottom will continue to be managed for their value as pollinator habitats. Castle Hill, Bollens Bush and Markstakes Common have seen Council management increasing invertebrates including pollinators under the current management regimes. Further funding will be sought to continue this management after the end of the current Higher Level Stewardship programme where sites are still under LDC or EBC control.

### ➤ Eastbourne Downland Farms

Farm tenants will be encouraged to manage their land in a way that is beneficial to downland ecology including pollinators and other wildlife, and to enter into environmental stewardship or similar schemes. This will be included as a consideration in the selection of farm tenants.

### ➤ Parks, cemeteries, municipal council buildings gardens and informal recreation grounds

We will continue to manage pollinator friendly wildflower areas established over the last 5 years in parks across Lewes District and roll out the programme to parks in Eastbourne.

We will establish a wildflower meadow area.

We will develop pollinator friendly plans for some council managed sites each year where pollinator friendly principles have not been previously used, applying general pollinator-friendly land management principles above.

### ➤ Council house and estate gardens.

We will apply general principles for achieving pollinator friendly land management as above, including addressing void specification to ensure existing pollinator friendly habitat is retained where suitable.

### ➤ Verges and other assets

We will identify verges within LDC/EBC landholdings where existing vegetation has potential to be wildflower rich (eg chalk grassland) and manage appropriately including with reduced summer mowing and cut and collect<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> For detailed guidance see

[https://www.plantlife.org.uk/application/files/4614/8232/2916/Road\\_verge\\_guide\\_17\\_6.pdf](https://www.plantlife.org.uk/application/files/4614/8232/2916/Road_verge_guide_17_6.pdf)



We will continue wildflower management of planted wildflower verge sites around LDC/EBC management areas.

#### Yellow rattle:

We will monitor the Lewes Town Council experiment with yellow rattle on verges and, if successful, roll it out across other verges and green areas in both council areas. Some verges and other land owned by the councils are grassland on chalk soil. Some of these areas if managed correctly and left unfertilised have potential to be more wildflower rich with rare chalk grassland plants such as orchids. If these areas are cut infrequently to allow the plants to flower, it is often found that tough rank grasses overgrow and dominate the flowers. Yellow rattle is a flower that selectively parasitizes some rough grasses and can allow the smaller chalk grassland flowers to thrive.

## Pesticides

Reduce risk to pollinators from pesticides - see dedicated pesticide policy

## Communications

### Public engagement

- Run or support public engagement events with pollinator focus or pollinator aspect on our nature reserves or elsewhere in the councils' areas.
- Work with and support other groups that engage and educate the public about wildlife including pollinators e.g. South Downs National Park Authority, Sussex Wildlife Trust, the Railway Land Wildlife Trust, the Friends of Old Town Recreation Ground and Motcombe Park, the Castle Hill Group, Greenhavens, and Wildflower Lewes.
- Maintain on-site interpretation at featured wildflower areas and include pollinator information in new information produced about wildlife/nature areas.
- Pursue avenues to obtain a community ranger/nature community liaison post to carry out community engagement and promotion of the importance of insect pollinators.

### Council housing tenants

- Review garden clearance specification on change of tenancy to encourage more wildlife friendly practices;
- Encourage council tenants to achieve more pollinator friendly gardens for example through articles in tenant newsletters and through tenants meetings, or through including a Gardening for Wildlife leaflet in council house welcome pack based around the simple principles of:
  1. grow more flowers, shrubs and trees



2. let your garden grow wild
3. cut grass less often
4. don't disturb insect nests and hibernation spots
5. think carefully about whether to use pesticides

### **Internal communications**

- Council contracts will recognise the importance of pollinator friendly habitat, and encourage work in ways to maintain and enhance them. Council officers to ensure contractors understand this.
- Specialist Advisors involved with biodiversity will communicate key information to relevant departments.

## **Planning and development management**

In discharging its functions as a planning authority, and in giving development planning advice, we will seek to actively encourage:

- That there is a no net loss of biodiversity including pollinator habitats, in new developments
- That new developments achieve a net gain for biodiversity including pollinators, in line with national and locally adopted planning policies.
- The use of the LDC/EBC Sustainability Checklist including recommendations for native landscape planting schemes in-keeping with local ecology;
- The use of the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric <sup>4</sup> as a tool for calculating biodiversity losses and gains, including in pollinator habitat;
- The importance of brownfield sites as pollinator habitat, as well as more traditionally recognised greenfield sites.

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<sup>4</sup> For detailed guidance see  
<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5850908674228224>

## Action Plan

Overarching aim is to maintain and increase pollinators and pollinator friendly habitats across the two council areas;

| Area   | Action  | Timeframe            | Responsible officers    | Additional Resources required?                     | Measure of success                   |
|--|---|----------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Parks/gardens/cemeteries/recreation grounds              | Create a wildlife meadow area   | 2022                 | SA (Parks)              | TBA  | Meadow area created                  |
| Parks/gardens/cemeteries/recreation grounds              | Increase areas of pollinator friendly habitats at Saxby Rec and Old Town Rec, Eastbourne                        | 2020                 | SA (Parks)              | TBA  | Increase habitat area                |
| Parks/gardens/cemeteries/recreation grounds              | Identify suitable sites and plan to increase areas of pollinator friendly habitats                              | 2 sites each year    | SA (Parks) and SA (D&R) | No   | Increase habitat area                |
| Parks/gardens/cemeteries/recreation grounds/street trees | Pollinator-friendly tree planting list available and distributed to relevant staff and contractors              | Winter 2019          | All SA Open spaces      | No   | List drawn up and distributed        |
| Parks/gardens/cemeteries/recreation grounds              | Pollinator-friendly shrub/hedge gapping up/new planting list available and distributed                          | Winter 2019          | All SA Open spaces      | No   | List drawn up and distributed        |
| Downland and Reserves                                    | Apply for new Countryside Stewardship Grants for EBC Downland Management and LDC controlled reserves management | 2020 LDC<br>2021 EBC | SA (D&R)                | Yes. External advisor or additional staff resource | New grant applied for                |
| Downland Farms   | Review Eastbourne Downland Farm tenancy selection process to ensure pollinators taken into account.             | 2019                 | SA (D&R)                | TBA  | Tenancy selection procedure reviewed |

|                         |   |                           |  |     |  |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|--|-----|--|
| External Communication  | Community/education events involving pollinators  | 4 in 2019<br>Review after | SA (D&R)                                 | TBA | Events delivered                                       |
| External Communication  | Piece in District news about pollinators  | Spring 2019               | SA (D&R)                                 | No  | Article in DN  |
| External Communication  | Apply for Changing Chalk NLHF funding for 4 year Community ranger post  | Summer 2019               | SA(D&R)                                  | TBA | Application successful                                 |
| Internal Communication  | Publicise & communicate Strategy internally including through hub.  | 2019/2020                 |  | No  | Strategy disseminated internally                       |
| Internal Communications | Publicise and explain strategy to contractors including through contractor meetings   | 2019/2020                 | All SA Open spaces                       | TBA | All relevant contractors contacted                     |
| Internal Communication  | Gardening for wildlife articles in housing tenant newsletters   | Spring 2020               | SA (D&R)                                 | No  | 10 newsletters have pollinator articles                |
| Internal Communication  | Gardening for wildlife leaflet introduced to new council house information pack   | End 2020                  | SA (D&R)/SA (Parks) and LDC/EBC Designer | TBA | Produced if considered most appropriate direction      |
| Internal Communication  | Biodiversity inc pollinators training council wide  | Winter 2020               |  | Yes | Training identified and offered.                       |
| Other                   | Encourage studies of our pollinators by eg Sussex University – work with Biosphere  | End 2020                  |  | No  | Education project put forward to Uni via Biosphere     |
| Other                   | Work with partners e.g. SWT / SxBRC to identify areas to increase pollinator habitat and connectivity through the Local Wildlife Site designation system. | Ongoing                   | SA(D&R)                                  | TBA | New LWS designated and existing have better management |

This action plan will be reviewed annually or as required.