

A Commitment from the North Norfolk District Council

North Norfolk District Council 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. North Norfolk District Council will seek to protect and increase the amount and quality of pollinator habitat and manage its greenspace to provide greater benefits for pollinators across the ~300,000m² of open space under its control. We will ensure local people are provided with opportunities to make North Norfolk 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*

Short Term Aims: The Council and its partners will work together too:

- Identify four to five 'pilot' sites designed to measure the feasibility and success of a wider project
- Improve our knowledge and understanding of pollinators in our local area
- Look to build networks with community led gardening groups and gardening volunteers
- Link in with the Councils target of planting over 110,000 trees and or hedging
- Ensure no peat based material is used and that glyphosate usage is optimised and only used when suitable alternatives are not conducive

Long Term Aims: The Council and its partners will work together too:

- Ensure the needs of pollinators are represented in local plans, policy and guidance
- Protect, increase and enhance the number of pollinator habitats in North Norfolk to prevent extinctions and improve the status of any locally threatened species
- Increase awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs across local residents, businesses and other landowners
- Increase the contribution to pollinator conservation of all land under the ownership of, or managed by the Council

Background to the Strategy

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 4,000 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 an estimated value of £400 million annually (post 2010). 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 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

- Pollinators such as beetles, hoverflies and birds are all 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 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.

Pollinators in North Norfolk

Key principles of the Project

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

Working with partners

Where possible the Council will join forces and participate in other local, regional or national pollinator programmes or projects. More joined up collaborative action for pollinators will help ensure a future for these very important species. Key national initiatives include Buglife's B-Lines programme, which aims to create a network of wildflower rich areas across the UK. We also have the Wild East Campaign which has an objective of rewilding 20% of land and can be linked in with as part of this project.

The following internal and external partners will be consulted:

- Conservation, Countryside, Climate Change and Sustainability Teams – North Norfolk District Council
- Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership (NBP)
- Norfolk Wildlife Trust/Norfolk Wildlife Services
- Community Gardening Groups in Cromer, Sheringham and Mundesley
- Town and Parish Councils
- Elected Members

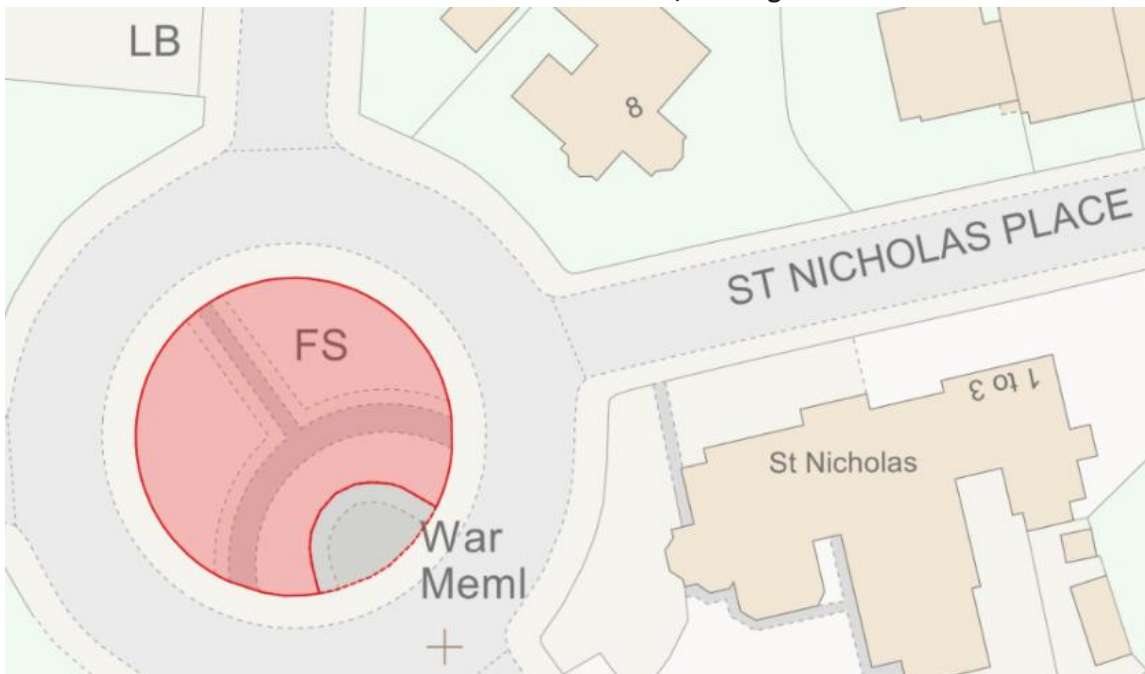
Pilot Sites

In order to assess the feasibility of delivering a project of this nature across the district, a number of pilot sites have been identified to undertake an initial trial to consider delivery, impact and on-going maintenance requirements, as well as wider public perception and feedback. The pilot sites selected are:

Fearns Park, Station Road, Cromer



St Nicholas Place roundabout, Sheringham



Marina Road Public Conveniences, Mundesley



Sea Front Gardens, Beach Road, Mundesley



Christophers Close, Northrepps



Wolterton Road, Itteringham



In recent years these sites have been identified as areas where it is felt improvements are needed to their overall appearance. This gives North Norfolk District Council an opportunity to actively improve the areas and seek improvements to biodiversity and pollinators in areas which are generally lacking. Some of the chosen sites will also be suitable for the planting of trees or hedges as part of the Council’s tree planting targets.

Short Term Objectives and Actions

Aim 1: Identify, plan and implement pilot project

| | Objective | Specific Actions | Target | Start and End Date |
|-----|--|--|----------------|--------------------|
| 1.1 | Identify the sites for ‘pilot’ projects. | Work with colleagues to identify the most suitable sites which fit the brief of the project. | September 2021 | Completed |
| 1.2 | Increase and improve the pollinator habitat and protect those habitats | Carry out an audit of the four sites to identify key pollinator habitats and proposed improvements | October 2021 | Completed |

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| | which are already supporting our native species | | | |
| 1.3 | Discuss the phasing out of peat and optimisation of glyphosate based herbicide during all grounds maintenance contract activities. | Raise as a Corporate matter with Serco senior management and look to ensure no peat is used by end of 2022. Glyphosate usage to be minimised and to only be used when there are no suitable alternatives. Produce guidance document suggesting best practice on the use of Glyphosate (and recommendations when not to use it) and create a 'live' Glyphosate Register to record when and where Glyphosate has been used. | April 2022 | In dialogue |
| 1.4 | Design changes to the chosen pilot sites | Work with Conservation, Countryside and Climate Change Teams along with other external bodies to determine the best planting species. | January 2022 | |
| | | Produce design layouts and planting requirements. | January 2022 | Produced |
| | | Liaise with Councils Grounds Maintenance Contractor to discuss viability of the changes | January 2022 | In dialogue |
| 1.5 | Implement site plans | Devise a schedule of works for each site taking into account preferred seasonal planting times | March 2022 | |
| 1.6 | Review success of pilot project | Work with Norfolk Wildlife Services/Cromer Green Spaces to carry out a before and after Pollinator Audit so a detailed comparison can be drawn. | September 2022 | |

Medium – Long Term Objectives and Actions

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

| | Objective | Specific Actions | Target | Start and End Date |
|-----|--|--|--------|--------------------|
| 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 which are owned or managed by the Council | | |
| | | Provide information on the needs of pollinators to other owners /managers of Local Wildlife Sites | | |

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| 2.2 | Increase the value of parks and other greenspace for pollinators | Identify areas of Public Open Spaces (POS) which will benefit from a reduced cutting regime | | |
| | | Work with local communities to develop a balanced approach to POS management to support a range of uses and wildlife benefits | | |
| | | Reduce grass cutting on 25% of public green space | | |
| 2.3 | Reduce the impact of pesticides on pollinators and other wildlife | Review use of pesticides by the Council and aim to be a pesticide/herbicide free council. | | |
| | | Cease use of neonicotinoids including seed dressings, plants and turf. | | |

Aim 3: To ensure the needs of pollinators are represented in local plans, policy and guidance

| | Objective | Specific Actions | Target | Start and End Date |
|-----|--|---|--------|--------------------|
| 3.1 | Increase the protection afforded to pollinator habitats and the species they support by ensuring appropriate recognition in local plans and policies | Carry out a review of existing surveys and biodiversity mapping to identify key pollinator habitats present in the area | | |
| | | Take forward a review, and where required revise current policies to take account of the needs of pollinators | | |
| 3.2 | Increase the profile of habitats of value to pollinators in biodiversity asset, green infrastructure and other maps | Survey habitats, including brownfield, parks, public spaces etc. to assess their importance for pollinators. Make use of biodiversity calculators for council land assessments. | | |
| | | Review and revise biodiversity asset maps to recognise importance of pollinator habitats | | |
| 3.3 | Recognise and capitalise on opportunities to create pollinator friendly habitats as part of new development | Raise awareness of and promote the creation of pollinator friendly features with developers | | |
| | | Use Section 106 agreements to ensure greenspaces in new developments are made pollinator friendly | | |

Aim 4: To increase awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs across local residents, businesses and other landowners

| | Objective | Specific Actions | Target | Start and End Date |
|--|-----------|------------------|--------|--------------------|
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| 4.1 | Increase awareness of pollinators in the local community and within local businesses | Provide information on pollinator friendly gardening activities to local residents and local allotment holders | | |
| | | Create pollinator friendly flower beds in parks and link these to interpretation about pollinators | | |
| | | Promote pollinators to local business forums and individual businesses as a way to help biodiversity and improve the local environment | | |
| 4.2 | Increase the number of young people who understand the value of their local pollinators | Encourage local schools to develop wildflower areas in school grounds | | |
| | | Develop a pollinator award for schools which could link in with the Eco-Schools Award. | | |

Aim 5: To increase the contribution to pollinator conservation of all land under the ownership of, or managed by the Council

| | Objective | Specific Actions | Target | Start and End Date |
|-----|--|---|--------|--------------------|
| 5.1 | Make council owned land and buildings more pollinator friendly | Establish and maintain a network of "Bee Hotels" across the parks and public open spaces. | | |
| | | Ensure plants in flowerbeds around Council offices, etc., are pollinator friendly | | |
| | | Ensure green roofs and or pollinator nesting features are installed on new Council buildings and publicise this work as good practice | | |
| 5.2 | Reduce use of neonicotinoids across the local authority estate | Provide all tenants with advice on pollinator-friendly farming including information on the harmful effects of neonicotinoid pesticides. Prohibit the use of neonicotinoid pesticides which have been linked to the decline in pollinators on Council land where the power to do this exists. | | |
| 5.3 | Increase the area of pollinator habitats on local greenspace managed by local groups | Work with and support 'friends of groups' to manage and create pollinator habitats | | |

Aim 6: To improve our knowledge and understanding of pollinators in our local area

| | Objective | Specific Actions | Target | Start and End Date |
|--|-----------|------------------|--------|--------------------|
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| 6.1 | Establish effective monitoring of work being carried out in our area | Carry out a brief review of achievements annually and publicise success to local communities | | |
| | | Encourage staff and contractors to feedback on actions they take for pollinators and provide an award for best practice | | |
| 6.2 | Increase information on the status of pollinators | Encourage local people to support national pollinator monitoring schemes | | |

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