

Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan monitoring 2023

The table below summarises the 2023 monitoring of the Aberdeenshire Council Pollinator Action Plan 2022 to 2027. Monitoring indicates a very positive report with all but one action identified as 'green'. Action is required to address the 'amber' action under 1.2 on exploration of the production of perennial and wildflower plants in Council facilities. This will be furthered in 2024.

Key priority	Action	Lead	Other contributors	Due date	2022 update	2023 update	Status
Objective 1 Create Habitat for Pollinators							
1.1 Implement habitat enhancement for pollinators on Council owned/managed land	At least 10% of Council managed public greenspace to be enhanced and managed for pollinators & biodiversity	Landscape Services		Mar-27	Metrics currently being developed to measure this.	Current data indicates 2% of public greenspace managed for pollinators and biodiversity. There are plans to improve monitoring of this figure. However, extensive work by communities and by Landscape Services to modify and improve greenspace management for pollinators and biodiversity is on-going.	
	Maximise opportunities for pollinator habitat at Corporate Offices as part of maintenance review	Property and Facilities		Mar-23	Ongoing changes to maintenance at Woodhill House providing much increased area of grassland managed for pollinators.	Additional areas added during 2023 to increase area of grassland managed for pollinators. Link with NHS Grampian sustainability staff made to ensure management of adjacent 'Blackbird walk' is also promoting wildflowers for pollinators.	

	Measures for pollinators introduced in at least 80 school grounds	Education	Landscape Services	Mar-27	Single apple trees planted in 115 school grounds. A number of larger scale projects progressed with 25 schools. Over 80 school interested in further engagement and project work with Landscape Service.	Wide range of school projects ongoing to enhance biodiversity in their grounds with extensive support from Ranger Service, Greenspace Officers and the Nature Restoration Fund grant.	
	Modify road verge management policy and process to further benefit pollinator populations	Landscape Services	Natural Environment Team	Mar-25	Roads Service will create a holistic road verge management policy. Natural Environment Team will engage during drafting to ensure action benefits to pollinator maximised.	Road Service review or verge management still to take place - due 2025. Natural Environment Team will engage during drafting to ensure action benefits to pollinator maximised.	
	Explore habitat creation at Council owned woodland sites – shrub planting in open rides or woodland edge	Natural Environment Team		Mar-24	Post-winter storms 2021_22, focus has been on the clearance of windblow and making woodlands safe. However, replanting to begin in 2023 which will include implementation of greater woodland diversity to benefit pollinators	Continued work to clear storm damage in Council owned woodlands continues in 2023. However, replanting has also begun with a strong focus on native trees to create resilient diverse woodlands which benefit biodiversity.	

	Share information and experience from works to date/demonstration sites both within Aberdeenshire and from other areas	NESBiP		Mar-23	Planned spring seminar currently on hold pending securing NESBiP funding.	Seminar (NESBiP/NESCAN joint event) planned for 15th March 2024. Suggested that this is followed up by programme of site visit opportunities to continue sharing experience.	
1.2 Use and supply pollinator friendly plants	Supply community groups with native wildflower seed to trial on 100 to 200m2 areas	NESBiP		Mar-22	Seed supplied to 10 small local projects during funding period.	Funding period ended in 2022. 10 groups were supported.	
	Explore opportunities for Council plant nursery facilities to produce alternatives to annual bedding – perennial plants, wildflowers or native trees for example	Landscape Services		Mar-24	Yet to be fully explored - Landscape Services do wish to identify opportunities	Yet to be fully explored - Landscape Services do wish to identify opportunities	

	Develop guidance on native plant seed collection and propagation	NESBiP		Apr-22	Completed and available on NESBiP web site. Here - https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022-Growing-local-wildflowers-in-NE-Scotland-seed-collecting-and-sowing.pdf	Completed April 2022	
1.3 Use Buglife identified 'B-lines' as a catalyst for habitat creation in Aberdeenshire	Run River Don B-lines delivery mechanism project with Buglife. Use findings/outputs to shape further work.	Natural Environment Team		Apr-22	Project feasibility report completed. Many identified actions are picked up by Landscape Services Greenspace Officers work. Discussions ongoing with Buglife and Aberdeenshire City on joint pollinator projects in 2023.	B-Lines project has inspired excellent engagement with schools in the north of Aberdeenshire in creating habitat in their grounds. With strong similarities to B-Lines, the 'Nature Networks' concept is now being widely promoted by Scottish Government with a requirement for Local Authorities to map and support enhancement to networks.	
Objective 2 Help raise awareness of pollinators							
2.1 Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service to raise awareness of pollinators	150 Ranger Service sessions per year with schools, groups and communities to raise awareness of pollinators	Ranger Service		Annual monitoring	Ranger Service promoted the action plan & pollinators at 173 sessions during 2022	Awareness of pollinators and the Pollinator Action Plan promoted at 255 Ranger Service Sessions	
Objective 3 contribute to the monitoring of pollinator populations							

3.1 Increase pollinator monitoring and identification skills in the community and encourage participation in monitoring	Run at least one Nesbrec training course per year which focusses on volunteer recording of certain pollinating insects.	Nesbrec		At least one training course per year	Two Nesbrec training courses run on bumblebee identification and survey methods. One online in May with 34 participants and an in-person event at Dinnet in July with 19 participants.	Two Nesbrec training courses run on bumblebee identification and survey. 12 participants at online event and 13 at in person training at Forvie NNR. Species on the Edge target species northern brown argus and bordered brown lacewing training at Stonehaven for 10 participants with Species on Edge officer.	
	Highlight pollinators at annual Recorders Forum	NESBReC		Every year at annual recorders forum	Talks on bumblebee recording and butterflies at annual Recorders Forum in March 2022.	Talk on the impact of ash dieback on forest insects and more general talks promoting recording to NESBReC or iRecord highlighting the importance of insect recording.	