

# Strategy for Grassland Management for Pollinators on the Carmarthenshire County Council Estate 2024–29



Place & Infrastructure  
July 2024

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## **Abbreviations**

**CCC** Carmarthenshire County Council (also referred to as the 'Council')

**GBI** Green and Blue Infrastructure

**NRW** Natural Resources Wales

**PPW** Planning Policy Wales

**WG** Welsh Government

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed Strategy for Managing Grassland for Pollinators on the CCC Estate aims to:

- **maximise the area and extent of wildflower-rich grassland habitat managed by the Council on amenity grassland\*.**

We will do this by:

- **adapting our cutting regimes,**
- **cutting grass and removing the arisings to reduce fertility and, over time, reduce the amount of grass to be cut.**

(NB If we reduce the amount grass grows in the first place, we have less to cut which *should*, over time, reduce costs)



The Strategy has been prepared in response to the Council's [Vision Statement](#) for 2022–27, which outlines the starting point of the Council's ambitions over the next 5 years. This includes a vision to:

Increase the biodiversity of all council-owned land, and recognise the strong interrelationship between climate change, the loss of biodiversity and human wellbeing. Consider the use of CCC land for creating havens of wildflowers and pollinators, including roadsides and verges. We cannot solve the threats of human induced climate change and loss of biodiversity in isolation. We either solve both or we solve neither.

\* NB It does not cover grassland management on verges, country parks, or council-tenanted farms, which are managed by other departments, e.g. Highways, Outdoor Recreation, Council tenants.

It also reflects CCC's Corporate Strategy 2022–27 [Well Being Objective 3-9](#)

*“A biodiverse natural environment is good for well-being, with healthy functioning ecosystems, supporting social, economic, and ecological resilience.”*

## Foreword by Cllr. Aled Vaughan Owen, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability

Carmarthenshire County Council plays an important role as we address the threats of a climate and nature emergency. As we embark on this journey, we recognize the vital role that grasslands play in our environment, culture, and well-being. This strategy reflects our commitment to enhancing the amenity grasslands we manage for current and future generations. By fostering sustainable management practices, engaging our communities, and embracing innovation, we aim to create a greener, more resilient future for our county. Together, we can nurture thriving ecosystems – even in our urban areas - celebrate our rich natural heritage and build a legacy of harmony between people and nature.

Sign Off



Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability

## Director's Foreword

In adopting its *Strategy for Grassland Management for Pollinators on the CCC Estate 2024-29*, CCC will be demonstrating both its understanding of the need to respond to the Nature Emergency it and the Welsh Government has declared, and its commitment to delivering its Cabinet Vision Statement:

*Increase the biodiversity of all council owned land, and recognise the strong interrelationship between climate change, the loss of biodiversity and human wellbeing. Consider the use of CCC land for creating havens of wildflowers and pollinators, including roadsides and verges. We cannot solve the threats of human induced climate change and loss of biodiversity in isolation. We either solve both or we solve neither.*

It will also be delivering its Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6 duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience.

Delivery of this Strategy means that we will be making changes in how we manage amenity grassland on council land. Adopting pollinator-friendly cutting techniques where appropriate, in amenity grasslands, such as the 6-weekly nectar cut designed to enable pollinators to make use of the flowering plants, will be a change in approach, which we acknowledge. We will need to interpret and communicate this new approach to those who enjoy these areas.

As Director of Place and Infrastructure I endorse the actions within the Strategy and provide my support for the delivery of these. Delivery of the strategy will result in our amenity grasslands supporting more pollinators, being more biodiverse, and supporting nature recovery.

**Sign Off**



Director, Place and Infrastructure

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1. In recent years, the loss of wildflower grassland habitats and the pollinating insects they support has become an issue of significant concern across the UK. Publicly owned amenity grasslands have significant potential as reservoirs of wildflower-rich habitat that can contribute to reconnecting and restoring grassland biodiversity. As these areas are in public view, they also offer opportunities for awareness raising and engaging the local community in supporting action for biodiversity. These areas, if managed with biodiversity in mind, will also support our well-being and the place-making agenda.
- 1.1.2. Short mown grassland designed for recreational use has been the dominant form of management for grassland on the Council's green estate but is limited benefit to biodiversity. Regularly mown grassland is required for sports pitches and heavily used areas but elsewhere there is the potential for a variety of management to benefit both biodiversity and residents/users. This is one of the drivers of Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature programme and their [It's For Them](#) and [Bee Friendly](#) initiatives.
- 1.1.3. This Strategy sets out a vision, supported by relevant policies, as to how and why CCC will manage its amenity grassland, for which it is responsible. In delivering the Strategy CCC will play its part in mitigating both the Nature and the Climate Change Emergencies that it and Welsh Government have declared. Successful delivery of the proposed Strategy will also deliver the numerous other benefits which good-quality amenity grassland provides.
- 1.1.4. Changing the way we manage areas of our amenity grass is a key contribution that we can make to help tackle the **Nature and Climate Emergencies** declared by both Welsh Government and Carmarthenshire County Council.
- 1.1.5. The delivery of the Strategy will require commitment and involvement of many CCC officers across different departments and service areas. Services area that are responsible for the management of land – including schools, sports grounds, housing, day centres, care homes, property and service areas that have responsibilities for developing land-based plans and projects and securing grants. All service areas have a role to play, such as Development Management, which has a regulatory role. Delivery of the Strategy may challenge established land management practices, but change is essential if we are to address the Nature and Climate emergencies, and if we are to enjoy the many benefits that good-quality amenity grassland can provide. This Strategy, based on a policy for managing our amenity grassland will be integrated into CCC's developing Green and Blue Infrastructure work.



**1.1.6.** The Strategy has been prepared in response to the Council's [Vision Statement for 2022–27](#), which outlines the starting point of the Council's ambitions over the next 5 years. This includes a vision to:

Increase the biodiversity of all council-owned land, and recognise the strong interrelationship between climate change, the loss of biodiversity and human wellbeing. Consider the use of CCC land for creating havens of wildflowers and pollinators, including roadsides and verges. We cannot solve the threats of human induced climate change and loss of biodiversity in isolation. We either solve both or we solve neither.

**1.1.7.** It also reflects CCC's Corporate Strategy 2022–27 [Well Being Objective 3-9](#)

*“A biodiverse natural environment is good for well-being, with healthy functioning ecosystems, supporting social, economic, and ecological resilience. “*

**1.1.8.** This Strategy is restricted to CCC owned or managed land.

**1.1.9.** Changing the way we manage our amenity grass is a key contribution that we can make to help tackle the **Nature and Climate Emergencies** declared by both Welsh Government and Carmarthenshire County Council.

**1.1.10.** It is important to appreciate that the approach to management of grassland for pollinators is not about abandonment or saving money. Active management is required for native wildflowers and their pollinators to thrive as part of managing our amenity green space.

**1.1.11.** It is also **not** a plan to sow annual wildflower' seed mixes. Annual seed mixes may look colourful, but they have drawbacks. They are sometimes called 'wildflowers' but are often non-native species. They can be expensive to buy, require work to establish and maintain and may need to be sown each year. Herbicides are often used to clear areas before sowing. Sowing these mixes does little to conserve our native wildflowers. They do not support the wide range of invertebrates that feed on native meadow flowers. Our aim is to encourage the native seed bank to flourish through a change in management. This is the most sustainable method of increasing the area and extent of wildflower grasslands in Carmarthenshire.

**1.1.12.** The plan reflects the fact that well-managed grassland provides multiple benefits:

- Improving our green infrastructure for the public
- Reducing our carbon footprint
- Improving the resilience of local environment.

1.1.13. It is advised that the Strategy is reviewed in 2028.

## 1.2. Good-quality green spaces delivery a wealth of benefits

1.2.1. Grasslands managed for pollinators, contribute to good-quality Green Infrastructure and provide us with many benefits. They create a sense of place, contribute to our well-being and are key components of Green Infrastructure initiatives.

1.2.2. **Public perception.** Recent collaboration between Bangor University and the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH) has shown that most people want more nature, like trees and wildflowers, in their towns and cities. The team worked in partnership with Denbighshire County Council to assess the community's perceptions of environmental changes happening in the coastal town of Rhyl in North Wales, and also conducted a survey of 1866 people across the UK to gather their views about tree planting and establishing wildflower meadows. The results showed that 73% of people wanted more trees, and 75% wanted more wildflower meadows. [Most people would welcome more trees and wildflower meadows in their townscapes | Bangor University](#)

A study in Sussex showed twin benefits of reduced mowing in a public park – there was an increased abundance of flowers and flower-visiting insects and 97% of park visitors said they favoured encouraging insects and wildflowers ([Insect Conservation and Diversity](#) 8(2):107-119).

1.2.3. **Supporting invertebrates.** Regularly cut, closely mown grass may be perceived as 'tidy' but has little benefit for wildlife. Grass that is cut with a longer interval will still be quite short but will allow plants to flower provide food for pollinating insects such as butterflies, hoverflies, beetles and bees. Grass that is managed as a meadow provides food and shelter for a range of wildlife. ([PDF](#)) [Small areas of wildflower grassland in urban areas support significant species richness and abundance of pollinating insects \(researchgate.net\)](#)

1.2.4. **Climate Change and flooding.** Plants absorb carbon from the atmosphere. Reducing mowing allows plants to grow bigger root systems, storing more carbon in the soil. Better root systems increase soil aeration, which increases water storage and so helps reduce flooding. [its-for-them-frequently-asked-questions-a-5-leaflet.docx \(live.com\)](#)



Parc Howard – area managed for pollinators using a meadow cut showing the contrast between a twice yearly cut and regularly mow grassland.

#### Nature Isn't Neat Mowing Regime Rationale

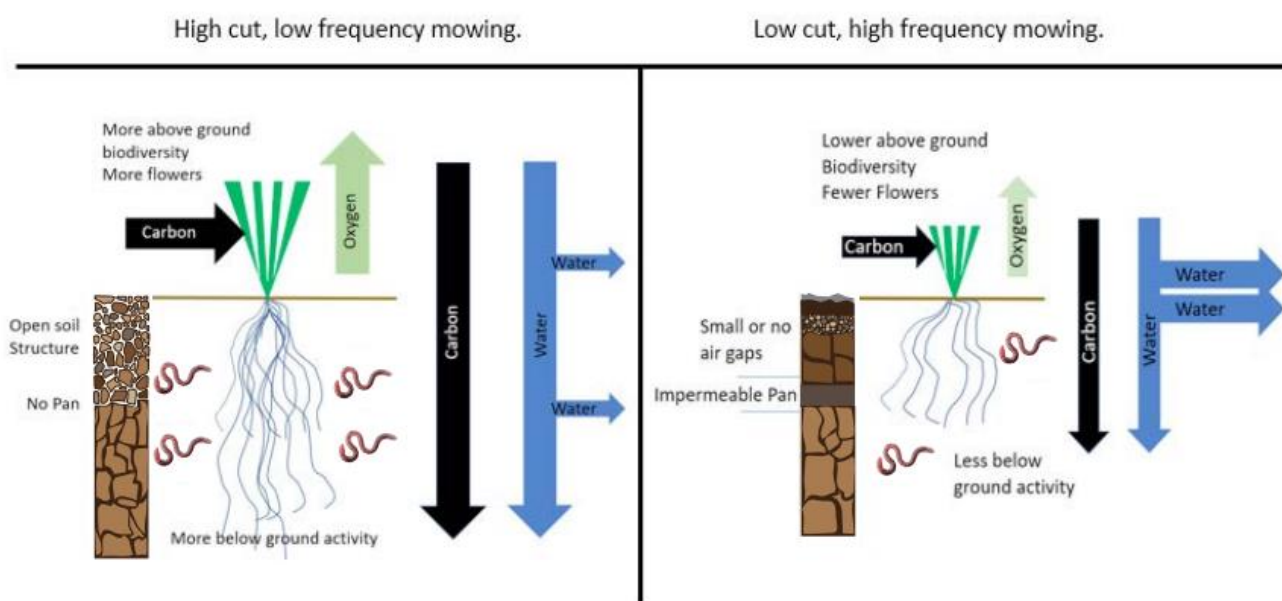


Diagram showing soil structure between regularly mown areas and areas less intensively managed. (From Monmouthshire's [Nature Isn't Neat](#) website)

**1.2.5.** Pollinators pollinate many farmed crops that we eat. They pollinate wild plants to produce seeds, fruits and nuts which birds and mammals eat. They are essential for the maintenance of food production. Many wild pollinators are in decline, mainly due to loss of habitat.

Pollinators need flowers to feed from, places to live and lay eggs, and shelter for their young to develop. Honeybees are also pollinators. In Wales, they are largely a managed species and are not in decline.

**1.2.6. People and Places.** Connecting with wildlife can benefit our health and mental wellbeing making us feel calmer, happier and more focused. Creating more meadow-like areas allows us to experience nature day by day.

**1.2.7.** Flower-rich habitats, make great places to live, work and visit – tourism in Carmarthenshire is dependent on a rich and diverse natural environment. In built up areas resilient ‘Green Infrastructure’ with colourful flowering plants add to the experience of living and working there. There is numerous research evidencing the health and mental wellbeing benefits of well-managed natural spaces. e.g. [\*Urban Ecosystems\* volume 21](#), pages 875–886 (2018). [The role of managed natural spaces in connecting people with urban nature: a comparison of local user, researcher, and provider views | SpringerLink](#)

## 2. Background Policy & Strategic Framework

**2.1.1.** Delivery of the action will address different responsibilities and agendas.

### **2.1.2. Wales policy and Legislation**

- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Environment Act (Wales) 2016 - to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the proper exercise of our functions and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems.
- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 11, and the updated version of this to be published in 2023, PPW12 – with reference to both Chapter 6 and to Green and Blue Infrastructure.
- Welsh Government’s [It’s for Them - Changing mowing to save wildlife campaign](#). to engage with local residents and community groups about changes to mowing practices.
- [WG Local Places for Nature programme](#) which is in WG’s Programme for Government and WG’s [Bee Friendly](#) initiative.
- Sympathetic mowing of amenity grasslands also helps us comply with the section 6 biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty, which was introduced under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (letter to leaders from Julie James AS/MS, Minister for Climate Change 15 June 2023).



### 2.1.3. Carmarthenshire

- Carmarthenshire's Well-being Plan (PSB) and Carmarthenshire County Council's Well-being Objectives Well-being Objective 3 - Enabling our communities and environment to be healthy, safe, and prosperous (Prosperous Communities) and the thematic priority: Decarbonisation & Nature Emergency (including 'addressing the issues that are driving a decline in our biodiversity and support nature recovery'). It would also contribute to the Public Service Board's Well-being Plan for Carmarthenshire.

<p><b>A prosperous Wales</b></p>	<p><b>Pollinators are good for our economy.</b> The value of pollination to agriculture in the UK is estimated at £690 million. If we were to pollinate crops by hand it would cost £1.8 billion - making our food bills a lot higher than they are now. Worldwide the honeybee population alone is worth £30 billion.</p> <p><a href="#">Natural Resources Wales / Love pollinators</a></p> <p>The European Honeybee is the major managed pollinator available for field and outdoor crops. In 2021 in Carmarthenshire there were approximately 700 apiaries (a place where bee hives are kept) made up of an estimated 3000 hives. Based on average honey production per hive in Carmarthenshire in 2021 of 19 kg/hive this would equal honey production of approximately 57 tonnes, with an estimated value of £456K (pers. comm. Regional Bee Inspector).</p>
<p><b>A resilient Wales</b></p>	<p>Diverse natural habitats with healthy populations of pollinating insects will help our natural environment be more resilient to change and continue to provide vital pollinator services for us.</p>
<p><b>A healthier Wales</b></p>	<p>Natural resources make a significant contribution to the physical health and mental well-being of people in Wales. Access to nature and greenspace has positive impacts on physical and mental health.</p>
<p><b>A more equal Wales</b></p>	<p>Equal access to ecosystems providing cultural services contribute to equality in Wales. Local access to good-quality green space will benefit all our citizens.</p>

<b><i>A Wales of cohesive communities</i></b>	Involving communities in the management of their local parks and woodlands has been shown to improve community cohesion and reduce anti-social behaviour.
<b><i>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language</i></b>	Our diverse habitats and the range of species within them have contributed to a landscape in Carmarthenshire that has played a significant role in the development of a distinct culture such as locally specific art and literature and distinctive Welsh place names
<b><i>A globally responsible Wales</i></b>	The environment supplies all our material resources, but we must ensure that we use only our fair share.

- Carmarthenshire County Council's Environment Act Forward Plan 2023–2025
- Carmarthenshire County Council Cabinet Vision Statement 2022–27
- The declaration by the Welsh Government and CCC of both a Climate and Nature Emergency, and the role our habitats in mitigating climate change and delivering opportunities for Nature Recovery.
- It will contribute to the [Council's Transformation Strategy 2022-27](#) and be a mechanism to implement a programme to deliver the transition to Net Zero by 2030 and address the Nature Emergency. Key objectives include:
  - Support the identification and delivery of carbon savings and nature enhancement at both a corporate and service level.
  - To act as champions for decarbonisation and the enhancement of biodiversity within plans programmes, projects and other interventions designed in service areas.
  - Identify opportunities for carbon savings through service design, development and delivery.

**2.1.4.** Although this Strategy is for the Council, it could easily be adopted by the Public Service Board, Community Councils and strategic partnership developments being taken forward by the Council. The council is committed to leadership in this area and will work collaboratively to share its learning and best practice to support other public sector organisations to adopt a similar approach.

## 2.2. Current management

**2.2.1.** Most of the Council's grass cutting arrangements are based on historic maintenance levels but are not defined by a specific policy or legislative requirement. Amenity grass has a scheduled cut every 14 days between March and November. The majority of grass in urban areas is cut to this frequency for aesthetic reasons.

**2.2.2.** The Grounds Maintenance team undertakes maintenance of land within their own portfolio as well as in the capacity of a 'Contractor' and have Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with 'clients', e.g. Housing, Property, and Education where currently the following prescription is offered:

**Fly Cutting** – Cut grass 15 – 30mm to all amenity areas leaving the cuttings lay. Prior to mowing the site is to be cleared of all litter, glass, tins, stones, animal faeces and other debris which will be disposed of to an approved disposal site.

And

**Cut and collect** - Cut grass 15 – 30mm to all amenity areas removing arising from site to be disposed of at local Landfill sites. Prior to mowing the site is to be cleared of all litter, glass, tins, stones, animal faeces and other debris which will be disposed of to an approved disposal site. This service is currently limited to Old Age Complexes only.

**2.2.3.** In total Grounds Maintenance cut approximately 280Ha\* of grass within the county, including:

- all the housing areas across the county,
- 63 schools (half of all schools in the county),
- all county run car parks (approx. 50) and industrial estates (approx. 20), most public buildings (approx. 12, e.g. Beacon Centre, etc.)
- parks (NB some community councils now have responsibility for parks but may use CCC for management if they do not have their own teams/contactors), and
- some works for Highways.

\* **NB.** This area is approximate and under review and will likely have to be adjusted upwards.

**2.2.4.** Grounds have a range of machinery to undertake grass cutting. In 2021 the Conservation Section applied to WG for grant funding under the Local Places for Nature grant for the purchase of ride on and tractor-led cut and collect machines to add versatility to the grass cutting service that Grounds delivery and to help deliver a project to manage a small number of sites across the CCC estate for pollinators to try to demonstrate the potential for managing sites differently and the logistics of doing so.

**2.2.5.** In 2023 WG, under the same grant, approved the purchase of two additional ride on cut and collect machines so that all the Grounds depots have one, plus trailers for facilitate transport across the estate.

**2.2.6.** In 2024 approx. 37 sites are now being managed by Grounds Maintenance under the Nectar or Meadow management, with the aim to increase these to a minimum of 74 by the end of the year. This does not include sites managed by Outdoor Recreation, e.g. areas within the Millennium Coastal Park

## 3. The new policy approach

### 3.1. Strategic Objectives

**3.1.1.** It is recognised that regularly mown grassland is required for sports pitches and heavily used areas but elsewhere there is the potential for a variety of management to benefit both biodiversity and residents/users. In managing our grassland areas for biodiversity and, in particular, for pollinators for we will consider an appropriate approach to grassland management based around two schedules to optimise the benefits of grassland management.

#### 3.1.2. Nectar cut



Nectar Cut areas where slightly higher grass height is desired, allowing short flowering plants to flower and set seed.

- Designated sites will be cut on a **6-week** cycle, allowing short-flowering plants to complete their full flowering cycle and increasing the nectar available to insects.
- Cut height: blade set to a height allow which allows low-growing plants in flower to pass under blades – 25-50 mm.



- Maintain a ‘managed’ look next to paths by mowing a **1-m swathe** of short grass alongside any path edge.
- The management means that some flowering species will still be cut but, over the season, it will still be a net gain for pollinators.
- **Arisings** will be collected to reduce the nutrient content of the soil. This will encourage flowering plants and discourage lush grass.
- Arisings **either** removed from site to a green waste site, left as habitat piles *if* suitable locations can be found on site, or in composting sites created on site suitable to the scale and location of the site.



Potential composting facilities that could be introduced on site



Arisings from A Grillo cut and collect being left as a habitat pile on site (from Dorset CC)

### **3.1.3. Meadow Cut**

- Agreed sites/areas to be managed as a meadow – and cut twice a year in March/April and August/September.

- Maintain a 'managed' look next to paths by mowing a **1-m swathe** of short grass alongside any path edge.
- If necessary/appropriate paths cut through the site.
- The collection of the cuttings is an essential part of the process. It removes nutrients, lowers the soil fertility and prevents a 'thatch' of dead grass inhibiting wildflower seed growth. Over time, the percentage of grass decreases and the percentage of wildflowers will increase.



Meadow management - Llandybie

- Visibility splays and swathes alongside paths and roads will continue to be cut more regularly.
- Even grassland that initially has few wildflowers can diversify over time with biodiversity management when the grass is cut and collected.
- In some cases not all the wildflower grass needs to be cut and collected each year. Staggered biennial cutting can ensure even better pollinating insect habitat and that some wildflower seeds are available to seed eating birds as winter food.
- Sites will be managed as normal between September and March.
- Signs will be erected at sites:





From WG Planting for Pollinators Guide (2024)

**3.1.4.** We will continue to cut the following areas more regularly as Amenity cuts:

- all sports fields,
- edges to our paths and cycles ways and desire lines,
- paths within nectar and meadow areas, ensuring these areas remain accessible to people, and enabling them to enjoy these areas and the nature they support,
- areas that are technically unsuitable for a nectar or meadow cut due to issues such as slope, and drainage,
- land for development; land that is being specifically managed for development pending the start of development.

**3.1.5.** In making these changes we will also:

- stop cutting grass beneath the canopy of trees, unless paths cross these areas (as above)



## 3.2. Implementation

**3.2.1.** In order to support the implementation of the amenity grassland management for pollinators, an assessment of the grassland estate across the county under the various council portfolios is needed. This will help identify the appropriate grassland management regime for each site to allow the development of costing reports, quantitative reporting, and alignment with the landscape management digital transformation programme.

**3.2.2.** It is the expectation that the Council will manage 100% of its land by one of these methods – Amenity, Nectar or |Meadow management.

Evidence will need to be provided why the options for pollinators will not be taken up, e.g. safety, human, technical, economic.

Officers within Grounds will advise on the options for each area of grassland. Decisions will be site based as each site and its function is different.

**3.2.3.** To successfully implement the Strategy, individual departments within the Council that have amenity grassland will need to work with Grounds Maintenance to:

- identify sites where there are no over-riding health and safety constraints to changed grassland management.
- for housing sites, ensure changes in grass and grass-verge management are communicated to and broadly supported by council tenants.
- choose sites that grounds maintenance agree can be managed in the suggested way.
- ensure sites have necessary area for habitat piles, composting capacity or that arisings can be taken to a local green waste site.



## Case Study

The large area of green space at Heol Gwili Field, Llanelli was suggested by the CCC housing officer 'Large site - opportunity to use parts with footpaths through. Tenants and the local Councillor were contacted. A 'Nectar Cut' was introduced (cut and collect every 6 weeks). Arisings were taken to Nant-y-caws waste site as there was nowhere to leave them on site.



Heol Gwili Field, Llanelli SA14 9HF

Green area - Nectar cut. Cut 3m swathe alongside path edges.  
Cut paths through grass - following existing 'desire lines'.  
Arisings removed - if no place to safely leave on site.



0 10 20 30m

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Scale 1:750

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Date 21/03/2023

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Management taking place at Heol Gwili fields

### 3.3. Engagement

#### 3.3.1. The Council should:

- ensure that the Council's web site includes relevant information on how the Council is managing land for pollinators (including a section with FAQ) and links providing information for others who would like to.
- explain what we are doing and why to communities. Ask communities to identify areas for management for pollinators in their area.
- champion the future for pollinators to encourage community and partnership working on pollinator projects.
- seek to work with other local authorities who are already taking action for pollinators in Wales and learn from their experience.
- undertake or work in partnership on community engagement and outreach.
- undertake or work in partnership to liaise with schools.
- ensure other strategic projects, e.g. the Pentre Awel in Llanelli adopt the principle of the plan.

**3.3.2.** For the successful implementation of the Strategy and the delivery of actions that will support pollinators the Council has produced an action plan (**Appendix 1**) to embed this management across our estate with the expectation that 'clients' will seek to incorporate management of land under their control for pollinators via a Nectar or Meadow cut of areas under their control.

### **3.4. Training**

Relevant training for Grounds officers will be developed looking at Green Space land management for the council's estate including the grassland management methods in this Strategy. In addition session can be held with officers from other relevant divisions (e.g. Housing) so that they understand the different methods of management and the benefits of them.

Relevant training will be required for officers that use the Grillo cut and collect machines.



## 4. Implementation and Monitoring

### 4.1. Resources

- 4.1.1. It is important to appreciate that the approach to management of grassland for pollinators is not about abandonment or saving money. Active management is required for native wildflowers and their pollinators to thrive.
- 4.1.2. There can be a cost to cut *and* collection and disposal of the cut grass if it cannot be left as habitat piles on site. This is particularly relevant to housing sites.
- 4.1.3. Disposal of waste – if it *has* to be taken to a green waste site there will be a cost.
- 4.1.4. Composting facilities – creation of new composting facilities at CCC-owned sites should be considered to take green waste (grass cutting and hedge clippings, pruning's, etc.) as this might reduce the cost of taking arisings to green waste sites and provide a local source of peat-free compost/soil improver.
- 4.1.5. To enable the delivery of this Strategy, we must ensure that we have the right equipment in the right places to offer this service to all those responsible for CCC land.
- 4.1.6. Funding has been applied for in 2021/22 and 2023/24, and obtained, under the WG Local Places for Nature grant for three ride-on cut and collect machinery and one cut and collect machine that is pulled behind a tractor.
- 4.1.7. A draft cost comparison has been provided in **Appendix 2**

### 4.2. Monitoring and reporting

- 4.2.1. The service areas that can deliver the Strategy for Grassland Management for Pollinators on the CCC Estate' should include these actions in their Divisional/ Departmental Business Plans and report on them.
- 4.2.2. Elements of the Plan will be included in CCC's Environment Act Forward Plans – these plans run for 3 years, e.g. Jan 2023 to Dec 2025. The actions in this plan are formally reported to Welsh Government at the end of the 3-year period.
- 4.2.3. The Strategy falls within the cabinet member portfolio for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability. It will also impact on the Cabinet members with responsibility for Housing, Education, Property (any department with responsibility for amenity grassland) etc and Grounds Maintenance.  
  
As machinery has been grant funded by WG's Local Places for Nature funding then regular reporting will be required by WG.



**APPENDIX 1. DRAFT ACTION PLAN FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF CCC'S AMENITY GRASSLAND**

	<b>Actions</b>	<b>MEASURES and MILESTONES</b>	<b>By Whom? Responsible Officer</b>	<b>By When</b>
	<b>Purpose: to increase the area and extent of wildflower-rich grassland habitat managed by the Council on amenity grassland.</b>			
	<b>ACTIONS FOR THE</b> Managing Grassland for Pollinators on the CCC Estate			
<b>1</b>	<b>SURVEY.</b> Assessment of the grassland estate across the county under the various council portfolios is needed. This will help identify the appropriate grassland management regime for each site to allow the development of costing reports, quantitative reporting, and alignment with the landscape management digital transformation programme.	Implementation of Alloy computer system	Gary Baxter Grounds Maintenance	2025
<b>2</b>	<b>SURVEY.</b> Develop a simple tool to assess the species richness of the grasslands the Council manages to inform/prioritize future management and monitor change	Tool developed and piloted with colleagues.	Isabel Macho Rural Conservation	June 2025
<b>3</b>	<b>RAISING AWARENESS:</b> Ensure that the Council's web site includes relevant information on best for practice managing areas for pollinators with links to providing information for others who would like to do the same.	Updates web pages incl. links to FAQs	Isabel Macho Rural Conservation	March 2025
<b>4</b>	<b>RAISING AWARENESS:</b> Produce FAQ on for the public on the policy for amenity grassland management to be given to customer care officers and to put on the CCC website.	Updates web pages incl. links to FAQs	Isabel Macho Rural Conservation/D Gary Baxter Ground Maintenance	March 2025

5	<b>RAISING AWARENESS</b> Ask the public/councillors to suggest sites where cutting could be reasonably reduced	Engage with Cabinet members for Housing and Education, Grounds Maintenance etc. and work with Comms	Isabel Macho/Matthew Collinson Rural Conservation  Housing Officers  CCC comms	June 2025
6	<b>RAISING AWARENESS/ MANAGEMENT:</b> Take part in Plantlife's <a href="#">No Mow May</a> campaign at selected CCC sites and promote to PSB/T&CCs/Schools.	Engage with key groups	Isabel Macho/Matthew Collinson Rural Conservation  Housing Officers  CCC comms	Annually
7	<b>SLA</b> – Grounds Maintenance to update SLA to reflect new management options – with costings	Revised SLAs	D Gary Baxter/ Ground Maintenance	2025
8	<b>MANAGEMENT: Grounds maintenance</b> to identify sites/areas within larger sites under their control that will be managed for pollinators with using a NECTAR and/or MEADOW CUT These will have prepared simple cutting plans and signs.	74 by end of 2024	Property /Grounds Maintenance	2025
9	<b>MANAGEMENT:</b> Identify land around <b>Council buildings</b> which (considering other constraints) that will be managed for pollinators with using a NECTAR and/or MEADOW CUT These will have prepared simple cutting plans and signs.	Number of sites	Property/Grounds Maintenance	2025
9	<b>MANAGEMENT:</b> Identify land in Council <b>Property</b> portfolio which (considering other constraints) that will be managed for pollinators with using a NECTAR and/or MEADOW CUT	Number of sites	Property/Grounds Maintenance	2025

	These will have prepared simple cutting plans and signs.			
<b>10</b>	<p><b>MANAGEMENT: Housing</b> (in consultation with residents) to identify suitable sites that have areas that could be managed for pollinators using a NECTAR and/or MEADOW CUT</p> <p>These will have prepared simple cutting plans and signs.</p>	Number of sites	Housing/ Grounds Maintenance/Rural Conservation	2025
<b>11</b>	<p><b>MANAGEMENT: Sheltered Complexes</b> (in consultation with residents) to identify suitable sites that have areas that could be managed for pollinators using a NECTAR and/or MEADOW CUT</p> <p>These will have prepared simple cutting plans and signs.</p>	Number of sites	Housing/ Grounds Maintenance/Rural Conservation	2025
<b>12</b>	<p><b>MANAGEMENT: Day Care</b> (in consultation with residents) to identify suitable sites that have areas that could be managed for pollinators using a NECTAR and/or MEADOW CUT</p> <p>These will have prepared simple cutting plans/signs.</p>	Number of sites	Housing/ Grounds Maintenance/Rural Conservation	2025
<b>13</b>	<p><b>MANAGEMENT</b> Composting sites – assess feasibility of increasing the number of composting sites in the county to reduce need to take green waste to Nantycaws and use compost internally.</p>	Prepare a composting Strategy	Grounds Maintenance/Waste	2025

## **Appendix 2. Cost comparison**

To help provide an understanding of the financial implications of the change of management practices here are examples a small number of sites with comparison of cutting a site to the following options:

**Amenity cut** (every 2 weeks and grass left on the ground)

**Nectar cut** (every 6 weeks) – cut and collected:

(a) Left on site as habitat piles

(b) Taken to a green waste site

**Meadow cut** (twice a year – spring and late summer) – cut and collected

(a) Left on site as habitat piles

(b) Taken to a green waste site

*This is based on the cost of taking arisings to Cwm Environmental of £35.*

A selection of four sites have been utilised in order to obtain a draft cost comparison, sites have been chosen to reflect the diverse geography of the county of Carmarthenshire taking account of the Urban-Rural split to ensure connectivity comparison to disposal sites as well as travelling times to site, diverse land usage and site-specific restrictions are all accounted for.

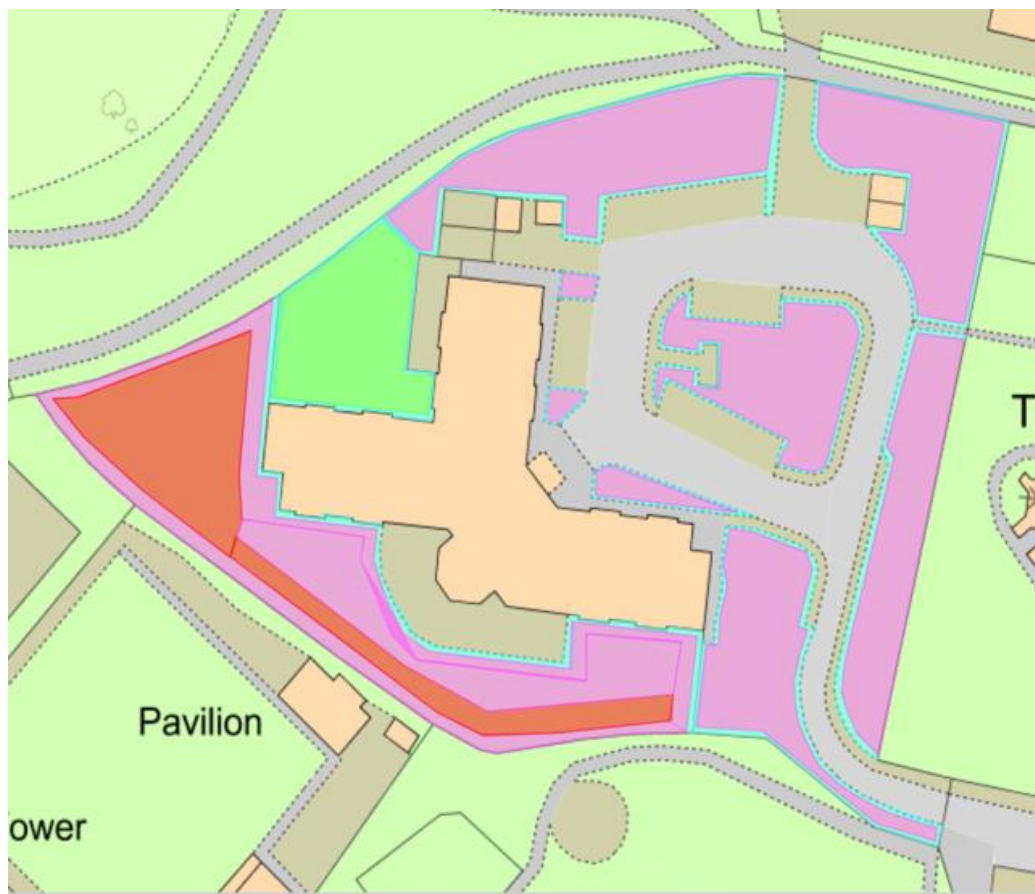
Each site has been individually appraised and an optimum Land management proposal has been developed and priced accordingly, the proposal has taken account of site usages such as social areas for the elderly, sports pitches for schools as well as walkway swathes on open fields, the appraisal has also taken account for operational requirements and site restrictions.

*The preference would be to work on sites where arisings can be left in discrete areas or designated composting areas. For some sites the client may wish for the arisings to be removed so the cost of taking these to the Green Waste Site become applicable then.*



**Maes Llewelyn, New Castle Emlyn (**

**Care Home – 22 miles to Green Waste Site**



<u>Key</u>	<u>Cut Type</u>	<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
	Nectar	Grillo	4 Cuts
	Amenity	Ride On	12 Cuts
	Amenity	Strimming	12 Cuts
	Amenity	Push Mower	12 Cuts

***Bryngwyn School, Llanelli.***

***2.5 miles to Green Waste Site***



<u>Key</u>	<u>Cut Type</u>	<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
	Meadow	Wiedermann	2 Cuts
	Amenity	Ride On	12 Cuts
	Amenity	Strimming	12 Cuts
	Amenity	Tractor	12 Cuts

*Ty Plas Isaf, Llangennech, Llanelli (Care home)*

*4.3 miles to Green Waste Site*



Key	Cut Type	Equipment	Frequency
	Nectar	Grillo	4 Cuts
	Amenity	Ride On	12 Cuts
	Amenity	Strimming	12 Cuts





## ANNUAL COSTS BASED ON MANAGEMENT TYPE @ £35/t

	Biodiversity		Current Cost	% change from current cost (rounded up/down)	
Location	Tip on Site	Take to Tip	Amenity Cut	Tip on Site	Take to Tip
Maes Llewelyn	£3,995.32	£5,055.84	£4,276.08	-7	+15%
	4 Nectar 12 Amenity	4 Nectar 12 Amenity	12 Amenity		
Bryngwyn School	£9,771.02	£11,216.92	£10,250.04	-4.9	+8.6
	2 Meadow 12 Amenity	2 Meadow 12 Amenity	12 Amenity		
Ty Plas Isaf	£3,236.12	£4,306.96	£3,883.20	-20	+9.8
	4 Nectar 12 Amenity	4 Nectar 12 Amenity	12 Amenity		
Llanerch Field	£1,780.68	£3,022.68	£2911.08	-63	+3.7
	2 Meadow 12 Amenity	2 Meadow 12 Amenity	12 Amenity		

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the 4 pilot areas the costings indicate that a biodiversity cut (nectar/meadow cut) may be 5-60% cheaper than current costs if the arisings can be left on site. However, where arisings need to be taken to the Green Waste site can be 5-15% more expensive.

There are variable for each site, including the travel to the site from the depot. If the amenity cuts at the nectar and meadow cut sites where edges and paths have to be maintained were reduced, then costs would likely be lowered further. This may be possible at some sites.

We are therefore proposing to maximise the potential for waste arisings to be kept on site where practical and which will reduce the carbon intensity of the approach due to a reduction in transportation.