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Bee-Cooperative Project

A project funded by the Rural Development Plan has been seeking to improve habitats for bees in North Wales, bringing together local authorities and beekeepers. In our area, Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire Biodiversity Officers have been involved in creating pollinator-friendly areas on public land, such as local parks and school grounds. As the project draws to an end, here is what has been going on in each of the counties:

Conwy

The Conwy Biodiversity Officer put forward a diverse array of projects to the project team involving planting for pollinators across the rural wards of Conwy. Projects were also initiated by schools, community groups, the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency and Council Wardens.



verges managed by the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency will provide homes for hundreds of native bluebells and other nectar-rich plants. Thanks to the project, the small rural village of Llanfair Talhaiarn will be alive with primroses and snowdrops next year and will be set off by native planting in the small Council woodland nature reserve of Ddol Bach nearby. Gwydir Park in Llanrwst will be bursting with snowdrops come the early spring, providing a welcome early source of nectar to bees.

Denbighshire

The project in Denbighshire has been quite varied, involving various groups and sites. In Corwen, the Countryside Service has concentrated on the areas around the new railway station: visitors will walk through a beautiful wildflower meadow on their way into town thanks to seeds supplied as part of the project. Native bulbs have also been planted, along with rockrose, birds'-foot trefoil and wild strawberry on the railway embankment itself. Nearby in Corwen's main car park, shrub beds have received supplementary planting to improve their value to pollinators. In Llangollen, the historic garden of Plas Newydd has received scented herbs, attractive to both insect and human visitors, whilst in the town centre the calcareous grassland of the Eglwyseg has been recreated in a planter. Community groups have also been involved, with Henllan Conservation Group planting flower beds and land in the village churchyard.

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Fruit trees at Ysgol Trelogan

All the schools that put forward ideas were successful in gaining funds for planting projects, including one in Snowdonia National Park managed by the Ecosystems and Climate Change Officer. The school projects comprised funding for planting new native hedges, fruit trees and native bulbs. In some cases the funding included support from Wildlife Gardening North Wales to work with the pupils, in others the schools managed the projects themselves. A community road verge project benefitted from funds for plug plants, and two road

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www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q99NJEL.

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A local school has also been involved, receiving plants to improve their wildlife garden. Finally, a number of public sites owned by the Council are due to receive pollinator-friendly planting shortly.

Flintshire

The Bee Cooperative project has been really beneficial in Flintshire, due to the amount of pollinator-friendly planting and increasing public awareness of this topical issue. Approximately 3kg of wildflower seed has been sown; numerous fruit and other trees beneficial to pollinators have been planted either as standalone specimens or as part of a hedgerow. Also shrubs and herbaceous plants, along with native bulbs and plug plants, have featured at many sites. In total 13 public access sites have been improved. The project has had the added benefit of supporting other groups' plans by way of supplying plants and seed, for example in Treuddyn it will have assisted Pennaf and Clwyd Alyn with three community planting sessions by the end of 2014, local families have so far helped plant a hedgerow and also some native cowslips and ox-eye daisies in an area which had been slightly degraded by a recent development. In Mold the project funding helped the Town Council and interested parties to seed an area and plant some beneficial trees/shrubs as part of a new initiative they hope to roll out around Mold over the next few years, to promote the green areas the town has. Six primary schools in the county were also chosen due to existing interest in eco schools and wildlife planting and all have been extremely

grateful; the children have enjoyed helping to plant and look after the new trees and plants. It has been heartening to see the trees we planted in February still there and healthy with leaves and in some cases blossom on them during more recent visits in April/May.



Hedge planting in Treuddyn

Around £10,000 has been spent in each county. The choice of pollinator plants was influenced by a Habitat and Ecology Report which was written by a consultant as part of the project. The planting strand of the Bee Cooperative project is part of a larger beekeeping project and is funded by the Rural Development Plan and led by the Conwy Axis 4 Local Action Group. Menter a Busnes were appointed to manage the project by the Local Action Group.

Wales Biodiversity Week

Wales Biodiversity Week is running between Saturday 7th June and Sunday the 15th June. There is lots going on in North East Wales this year, we have a week packed full of wildlife activities for people to get involved in!



Wythnos Bioamrywiaeth Cymru
Wales Biodiversity Week
7 - 15 Mehefin / June 2014



Date	Event	Further Info
6 th -8 th June	Loggfest, Loggerheads, Denbighshire/Flintshire border	See the website/facebook for details.
9 th June	After school bug hunt, Loggerheads Country Park, Denbighshire	Further info or to book 01352 810586
10 th June	Coed Nantyr night time safari 8-10:30 ish, Denbighshire	Meet at the market street car park Llangollen. Further info or to book 01352 810586
11 th June	Wildflower walk, Minera 10am-12am, Wrexham	Meet in the Minera Country Park car park SJ272511
12 th June	Nightlife at Nercwys, 8:30-11pm, Denbighshire/Flintshire Border	Further info or to book 01352 810586
14 th June	Family Welly Fun Day, 10am-3pm, Plas Newydd, Llangollen, Denbighshire	Drop in
15 th June	Pollinator Fun Day and wildlife walks at Wepre park, Flintshire,	Further Info 01352 703263 Drop in between 10am-3pm

New Amphibian and Reptile Ranger for Flintshire

National charity Amphibian and Reptile Conservation and Flintshire Countryside Service have appointed a new Ranger to develop amphibian and reptile conservation awareness in North East Wales. The post will support Flintshire's Countryside Rangers in coastal and rural habitats to create and maintain favourable sites for the benefit of our amphibians and reptiles.



Mick Bluntnage

Flintshire, and North East Wales more generally, is a really important area for amphibians and reptiles, supporting some rare and protected species like sand lizard, natterjack toad and great crested newt.

Mandy Cartwright, who in her previous role will be familiar to many, is the new ranger. To find out more about her work contact Mandy:

mandy.cartwright@arc-trust.org, 07979 718 676

Biosecurity Workshops Raise Awareness of Invasive Non-Native Species

In January and March this year we held Invasive Species and Biosecurity Workshops in Treuddyn Village Hall. Both workshops proved very popular with ... people attending overall, including university students, staff and volunteers from conservation organisations, local authority staff, interested members of the public, ecological consultants and contractors.

The workshops covered some of the main problem species in North East Wales and the Dee Invasive Non-Native Species Project, as well as other threats such as chytrid fungal disease of amphibians and tree pests and diseases, as well as practical biosecurity measures that can be undertaken to reduce the spread of these. Each attendee received a Biosecurity Kit containing basic equipment to enable them to put into practice what they learned in the workshop.

It is hoped that workshops like this, along with other awareness-raising activities, will increase the profile of biosecurity issues and contribute to an overall improvement in the situation in North East Wales.

The workshops were organised by Denbighshire and Flintshire County Councils with additional speakers from

Natural Resources Wales and North Wales Wildlife Trust. They were funded through the Welsh Government's Local Environmental Quality grant scheme as part of the Alyn Valley Himalayan Balsam Control Project.



A few spare biosecurity kits are available so get in touch if you would like one.



Big Dee Day—The Invasion

Get ready for the Big Dee Day—The Invasion 2014!

A month of balsam bashing kicks off on Friday 27 June, followed by volunteer events across the River Dee Catchment throughout July.

This is the second Big Dee Day - The Invasion, building upon the success of last year's event, which saw around 700 volunteer hours dedicated to ridding the river of invasive non-native species over just one weekend. This year, the event will be bigger and better, with more opportunities to get involved.



An events programme is available from Lyn Byrne (lynbyrne@wildlifetrustswales.org / 01352 755472). Information will also be posted on the Facebook page www.facebook.com/BigDeeDayTheInvasion.

Life on the Verge

How our road verges are managed is one of the most emotive issues in wildlife conservation. The start of the cutting season this year has generated a huge amount of discussion, complaints and concern.

Since the launch of the Welsh Government Action Plan for Pollinators last summer, Bionet has been involved in the Pollinators Taskforce set up to implement the plan, particularly the work on verges.

In each of our counties we are working towards more wildlife-friendly management of verges. With events like the recent Welsh Government verges seminar, the issue is gaining higher profile within local and regional government. Find out more: www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/Wales-Action-Plan-for-Pollinators



Continue the Conversation

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Follow Us!

Like our North East Wales Biodiversity Network page on Facebook to be updated on biodiversity action in Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham. Regular posts are uploaded to the site informing you of exciting news, events, photos and projects in the area. It is a quick, simple and free way to discover what biodiversity activities are taking place and what you could be involved with in your county.

We also have a Twitter account which similarly to Facebook, updates you with regular tweets on interesting Bionet news, successes and events. So follow us now at :

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Twitter: @newbionet