



Town and Parish Councils

22nd July 2020

Advice and resources available for communities to take action for insects

Insects are a critical part of our ecosystems but today 41% of insect species face extinction in England. Populations have been decimated by habitat loss, the impacts of pesticides and other pollutants and the effects of climate change.

The good news is that swift but simple actions can help many insects recover relatively quickly so you can have significant and measurable success.

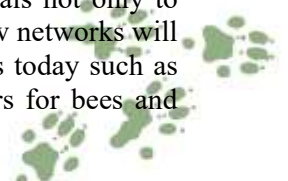
In order for this to happen everyone needs to do their bit to help create more insect-friendly spaces, including in our parks, greens, allotments, burial grounds, and leisure spaces. Insects need more areas in which they can feed, rest and breed, and fewer harmful chemicals such as pesticides. Our report demonstrates how people across the country are doing this and taking inspiring community action. Strong community leadership is needed to make this happen and help reverse insect declines in local areas.

More and better-quality wild spaces for insects will also benefit people. Ensuring access to high quality greenspace has **proven positive social and economic** impacts including food security, physical and mental health, and quality of life. These benefits will be especially important as communities begin to recover from the impacts of Covid-19.

Many parish and town councils are already acting and managing open spaces in a way that helps to bring back insects - but not all are sure what they can do. The Wildlife Trusts are here to help. We're developing a range of tools and resources, and have identified 3 simple, cost-free steps your Council can do to start taking action for insects.

1. **Learn more!** Our report "Reversing the Decline of Insects" is attached. You'll find a range of inspiring stories of how communities are taking action in different ways.
2. **Tell your residents you care.** Spread the word amongst your area and encourage your residents to take individual and community actions to help insects. See our community guide [here](#) and some text provided you can include in your newsletters. [appendices 1&2]
3. **Nature Recovery Networks.** The idea of Nature Recovery Networks is to create a national network of environmentally rich habitat corridors that allow plants and animals not only to thrive and spread but also making species more adaptable to change. These new networks will also be instrumental in helping tackle some of the big challenges from issues today such as climate change. Imagine new areas of flower rich meadow creating corridors for bees and

Protecting the species you love
in the county where you live



butterflies, or new areas of hedgerow, woodland and wetland not just providing a home to wildlife but capturing carbon, improving water quality and helping protect landscapes from flooding; and importantly all of this providing huge benefits to local communities where most people live their daily lives. Within Somerset the Wildlife Trust is planning to produce an online toolkit, so that every parish community has the knowledge it needs to make these networks happen. This will enable communities to have ownership and really connect with their local nature.

Thousands of people are already involved in our Action for Insects campaign and we're seeing public pressure for action grow, as more people understand the issues. We expect to see this build over the coming months as we continue to raise awareness. Somerset already has a Pollinator Action Plan which is a fantastic start.

Yours sincerely,



Georgia Stokes
CEO, Somerset Wildlife Trust

APPENDIX 1.

Webpage link here to Access Community Guide:

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/your-guide-taking-action-insects-your-community>

Webpage link here to Somerset's Pollinator Action Plan:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/biodiversity/#Somerset-Pollinator-Action-Plan>

APPENDIX 2.

Text for Parish Newsletters

Why the Wildlife Trusts need us to take action

Few things conjure up a perfect image of the countryside quite like a bee buzzing from flower to flower. A butterfly fluttering across a meadow. A beetle making its way through tall grass. They paint a wonderful picture, don't they? The reality, however, is less than idyllic. Modern living has seen insect numbers drop at an alarming rate. We risk losing many of them forever.

Life systems depend on insects.

Insects make up the majority of our wildlife and are truly remarkable in the roles they play. Pollinators such as wild bees, hoverflies and moths are vital for passing on pollen to help our

flowers reproduce and approximately **three quarters of the crop types grown by humans rely on pollination by insects.**

Insects break down and decompose organic materials. They turn dead matter and waste into usable forms, like fertile soil for healthy crops. And let's not forget that insects are food for many other animals including birds, bats, reptiles, amphibians and fish that we love so much as well as being essential to help feed our growing human population.

Can you help?

The Wildlife Trusts need communities and individuals to help them stop insects from dying out. **Two new action guides** for communities and individuals are packed full of information to help us all take practical action in our local neighbourhood and at home. Just taking a few simple actions can have a big impact if we all act. Together we can reverse insect loss and help the wildlife that depends on insects to thrive once more. Sign up for your free guide here <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/take-action-insects>.

Want to know more?

Read Reversing the Decline of Insects <https://www.somersetwildlife.org/what-we-do/restore-somersets-nature/campaign-nature/action-insects> highlighting case studies of individuals, farmers, communities, landowners and councils that have taken positive action to help insects.