

Online edition: ISSN 2009-6852  
Print edition: ISSN 2009-6844

National Biodiversity Data Series No. 12

# Councils:

actions to help pollinators

All-Ireland  
Pollinator Plan  
2015-2020

Implementation coordinated by the

National Biodiversity Data Centre

National  
Biodiversity  
Data Centre



[www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)  
Guidelines 4

Actions to provide  
**food, shelter & safety**  
for pollinators on Council  
land

[www.pollinators.ie/councils](http://www.pollinators.ie/councils)

Úna FitzPatrick  
Project Co-ordinator  
All-Ireland Pollinator Plan



## Actions Councils can take to help pollinators - providing food, shelter and safety

Please select some actions you could take and help us work together to protect pollinators

We know that each Council is different and we've suggested a range of pollinator friendly actions to choose from. Step-by-step instructions on each action are provided.

# The time for change is now!

**88%** of the public want the Government to do more to help bees (iReach Insights survey, Sept 2018)

### A Protect what you have

The easiest and most important thing you can do is identify and protect existing areas that are already good for pollinators.

**Action 1** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Manage and restore semi-natural habitats and their native plants

**Action 2** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Identify and protect existing sources of food and shelter for pollinators on general council land

### B Alter the frequency of mowing

Changing the frequency of mowing allows wildflowers (food) to flower among the longer grass. This is the most cost-effective way to provide food for pollinators.

**Action 3** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Identify at least 10 locations that are mown under a pollinator friendly regime (5 cut & lifts per year)

**Action 4** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Aim to create at least 5 meadows (one cut & lift per year)

**Action 5** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Identify at least 10 flagship roadside verges that are managed to be pollinator friendly (one cut & lift per year)

**Action 6** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Introduce a layered mowing approach to other roadside verges

### C Pollinator friendly planting

Take the actions below to ensure you have flowers blooming that can provide food for pollinators from March-October

**Action 7** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Plant a native perennial wildflower meadow

**Action 8** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Plant a native hedgerow

**Action 9** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Replace grass with a dense clover sward

**Action 10** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
For future ornamental tree planting select from pollinator friendly species

### D Provide nesting habitats

In addition to food, wild pollinators need safe places to live.

**Action 15** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Manage hedgerows for pollinators

**Action 16** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Bare earth/sand banks for wild pollinator nesting

### E Reduce use of pesticides

Pesticides include insecticides, fungicides and herbicides, all of which can be harmful to pollinators.

**Action 19** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides (herbicides, insecticides & fungicides)

**Action 20** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Adopt the pollinator friendly pesticide code

### F Raise awareness

**Action 21** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Build actions on pollinators into existing frameworks and initiatives

**Action 22** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Fund pollinator projects on council land to demonstrate best practise to other sectors (reference sites)

**Action 23** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Put up signage to identify pollinator friendly habitats on council land

### G Tracking progress

**Action 29** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Log your 'Actions for Pollinators' on the mapping system to ensure your efforts are recognised

**Action 30** £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £  
Take part in the Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme to help track changes in wild pollinator numbers on council land

# A: Identify and protect existing areas that are good for pollinators

## Action 1:

Promote the management and restoration of semi-natural habitats and their native plants on council land



**ENDANGERED**

## A: Identify and protect existing areas that are good for pollinators

### Action 2:

Identify and protect existing sources of food and shelter for pollinators on general council land

- ✓ Flowering hedgerows (food)
- ✓ Patches of wildflowers on waste ground (food)
- ✓ Small wild areas with bramble/ivy (food)
- ✓ Existing earth banks (shelter)
- ✓ Dry stone walls (shelter)

**DON'T REPLACE  
SOMETHING GOOD  
WITH SOMETHING THAT  
IS ONLY OK...**



## B: Alter the frequency of mowing to allow more native plants to flower

### Short-flowering meadow

#### Action 3:

At least 10 locations mown under a pollinator friendly regime (~5 cut & lifts per year)



#### Info box:

| Mowing Regime                           | Approximate costs per HA (2016)   |
|---|---|
| 22 Cuts per year, grass mulched back in | €2,464.00+vat<br>Cost inclusive of equipment, labour and fuel                 |
| 5 Cuts per year with cuttings lifted    | €2,437.00+vat<br>Cost inclusive of equipment, labour, fuel and waste disposal |

Cost benefit analysis based on prices from a large landscaping company in ROI. Prices are based on flat ground accessible with ride on equipment and within a 40km radius of Dublin, rates would reduce for larger areas.

## B: Alter the frequency of mowing to allow more native plants to flower

### Short-flowering meadow

#### Action 3:

At least 10 locations mown under a pollinator friendly regime (~5 cut & lifts per year)

### Long-flowering meadow

#### Action 4:

At least 5 meadows (one cut and lift per year)

### Long-flowering verges

#### Action 5:

10 flagship roadside verges that are managed to be pollinator friendly (one cut and lift per year)

### Layered verges

#### Action 6:

Introduce a layered mowing approach to other roadside verges



# Don't Mow Let it Grow - not cutting grass so often is the best and cheapest way to provide more food for pollinators

Cut once a year – food and shelter



Cut regularly



Cut less frequently - food



# Pollinator-friendly mowing





Long-flowering meadow management - **cut once in September and remove the grass** – it will gradually become more flower-rich on its own



Year 1-2



Year 4



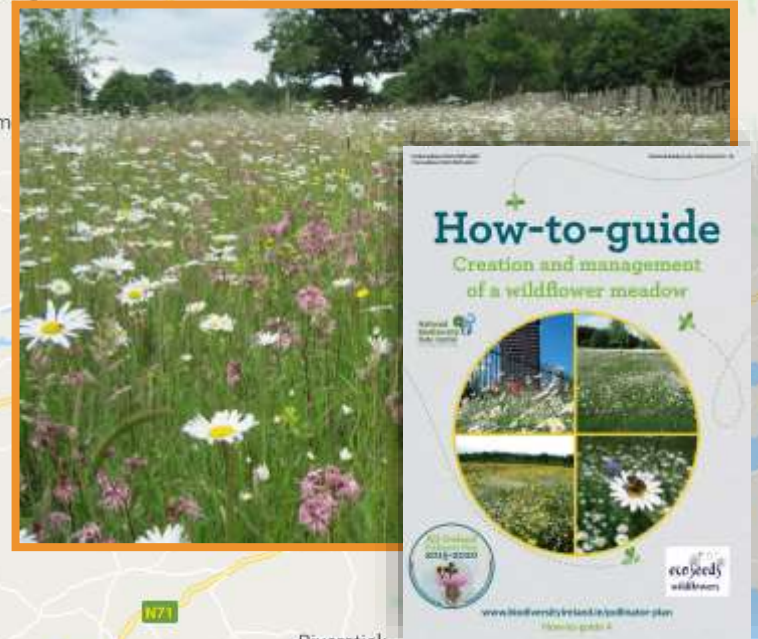
It will never look like this – but  
this is not a natural habitat and  
is not better for pollinators

## C: Pollinator-friendly planting

**Action 7:** Plant a native wildflower meadow.

Source native seed from Ireland and ensure that you plant pollinator-friendly species.

This is difficult and can be costly – requires management



OPW gardener Brian Quinn standing in the middle of the pictorial, pollinator-friendly annual meadow sown in Ashdown walled garden earlier this summer. Photograph: Richard Johnston



View annual mixes as equivalent to horticultural planting – other options are green manures

## C: Pollinator-friendly planting

### Action 8: Plant a native flowering hedgerow



Native flowering  
hedgerow plants  
that are good for  
pollinators:



## C: Pollinator-friendly planting



**Action 9:** Replace grass with a dense clover sward



Tom Cuffe

**Action 10:** For future ornamental tree planting select from pollinator-friendly species

**Big tree planting campaign:**

- ✓ Biodiversity & Pollinator Plan
- ✓ Climate Change Action Plans

## C: Pollinator-friendly planting

**Action 11:** For new works ensure 75% of ornamental planting is pollinator friendly

**Action 12:** In future ornamental maintenance planting select pollinator friendly species



## C: Pollinator-friendly planting

### Info box: Pollinator friendly perennial planting versus annual bedding

| Planting regime                | Approximate costs per m <sup>2</sup> (2016) | Typical replacement  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Pollinator friendly perennials | €10-13 (9 x 9cm pots)                       | Life span of 10-12 years if well planted and well maintained. Small amount of annual replacement may be required depending on the site |
|                                | €17-19 (6 x 2L pots)                        |  |
| Annual bedding                 | €10-29                                      | Twice per year   |

Based on prices from a large Irish perennial plant nursery. Typical annual bedding costs were provided by a Council in ROI. |



## C: Pollinator-friendly planting

**Action 13:** Make some urban planters pollinator friendly



Very gaudy annuals like Geranium, Begonia, Busy Lizzy, Primula, Daffodil, Salvia splendens don't provide food



Consider mixing in perennials or annuals like Bidens or Bacopa that do provide food

## C: Pollinator-friendly planting

**Action 14:** Some roundabouts planted in a pollinator friendly way with bulbs or pollinator-friendly perennials



### Designing a pollinator-friendly herbaceous scheme for roundabouts

- By Peter Culbert, Horticultural Services

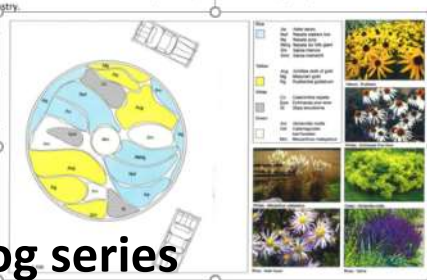
Roundabouts can provide the opportunity for very attractive herbaceous planting schemes and excellent resources for pollinators. Successful long-lasting herbaceous schemes need considerable plant knowledge, both in terms of selecting and sourcing the right materials. Roundabouts can be a difficult growing environment, so attention to detail is essential. In my experience, they can easily go well, but they can also go wrong without the correct design and technical input.

Given that the primary purpose of a roundabout is a traffic control device, there are health and safety issues which need careful consideration. Due to high traffic volumes of traffic circulating, care needs to be taken when carrying out works, be it initial planting or subsequent maintenance.

I've tried to summarise the key things I've learned through my years of experience in this area:

- A successful roundabout planting scheme requires good plant knowledge in terms of things like longevity (you want plants that will last at least 10 years), which plants will spread and how competitive they will be with other plants in the scheme, how quickly they will establish and if self-seeding may occur. I believe it's very important to use only good quality plants from a reliable source. Where possible, I think we should buy Irish plants rather than importing from Europe so that we are supporting local industry.
- Often the soil in roundabouts may be poor. It can sustain grass if the case, you will need to improve the soil before planting.
- Good initial ground preparation is also key to minimise future maintenance and the need for weeding later.
- Roundabout planting needs to take place in autumn or spring at a time when the soil is moist and the weather is mild. Irrigate which is unrealistic on a roundabout.
- I believe it's best to use pot size plants at a high planting density of 10 plants per square metre.

All Ireland Pollinator Plan: Technical blog series



**Technical blog series**

## D: Provide wild pollinator nesting habitat: hedgerows, earth banks and hotels



**Action 15:** Manage hedgerows for pollinators



**Action 16:** Bare earth banks for wild pollinator nesting



**Action 17:** Holes in wood or concrete for wild pollinator nesting



**Action 18:** Bee hotels for wild pollinators



**BIG ISN'T BETTER!**

## Ideal size for a solitary bee nest box

They should be placed 1.5-2m off  
the ground in a south or east facing  
location.



## New nesting ideas

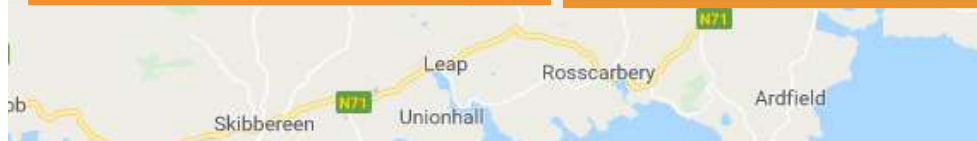
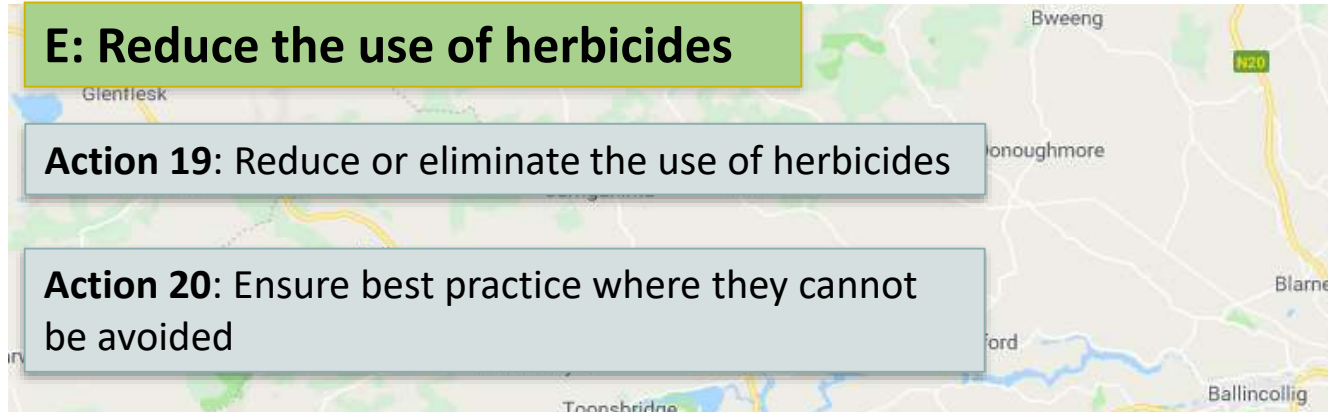


## E: Reduce the use of herbicides

**Action 19:** Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides

**Action 20:** Ensure best practice where they cannot be avoided

- ✓ Aim to eliminate in some locations
- ✓ Turf - spray only sports pitches, bowling greens, cricket squares
- ✓ Adopt a policy of not spraying paths until the 15th April
- ✓ Have spraying buffer zones around important pollinator habitat
- ✓ Adopt the pesticide best practice code



# Herbicides should be used to treat invasive species



## F: Raise public awareness of pollinators within the local area

**Action 21:** Build actions on pollinators into existing frameworks and initiatives

- City, County or Local Development Plans
- Green Infrastructure strategies
- Climate adaptation plans

**Action 22:** Fund pollinator projects on council land to demonstrate **best practice** to other sectors



**Action 23:** Put up signage to identify pollinator-friendly habitats on council land



## F: Raise public awareness of pollinators within the local area

**Action 24:** Print & distribute pollinator-friendly guidelines to other sectors



**Action 25:** Promote & distribute the Junior Pollinator Plan to local schools



**Action 26:** Facilitate or deliver training on pollinators and how to take action to protect them



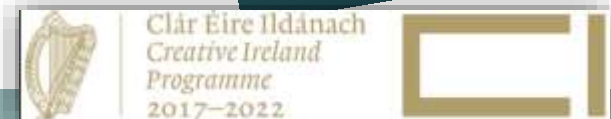
## F: Raise public awareness of pollinators within the local area

**Action 27:** Fund pollinator award in the Tidy Towns or Ulster in Bloom competition



**Action 28:** Promote and get involved in other pollinator related initiatives

Kildare County Council & Wicklow County Council supported animation



# G: Tracking progress and recognition for efforts

**Action 29:** Log your 'Actions for Pollinators' on the mapping system to ensure your efforts are recognised

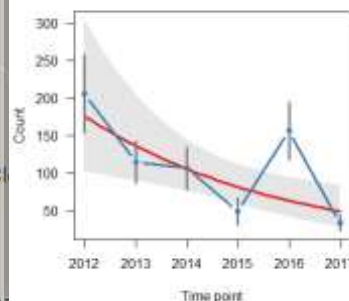
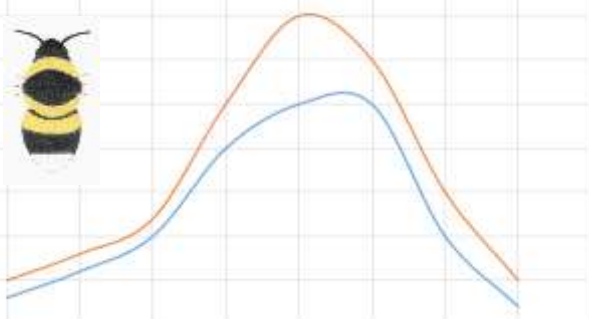
**Action 30:** Take part in the Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme

## Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme

National  
Biodiversity  
Data Centre  
*Documenting Ireland's Wildlife*



Record bumblebees along a 1–2km fixed route walk once a month from March until October



**Irish Examiner**



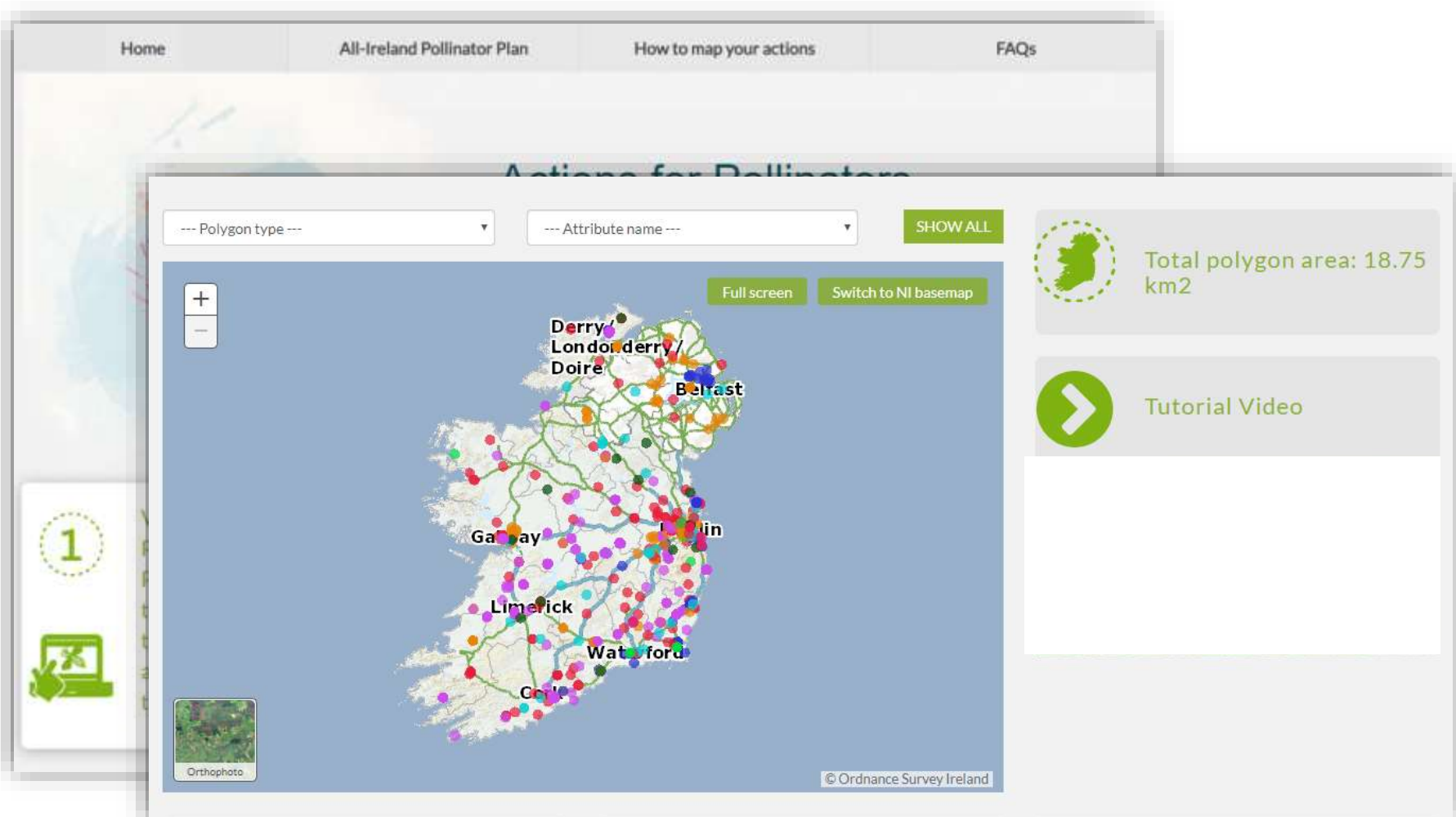
**Irish butterfly and bumblebee numbers slump**

Butterfly populations are down 12% since the past decade

# 'Actions for Pollinators'

Provides recognition and also facilitates local coordination

[pollinators.biodiversityireland.ie](http://pollinators.biodiversityireland.ie)



--- Polygon type ---

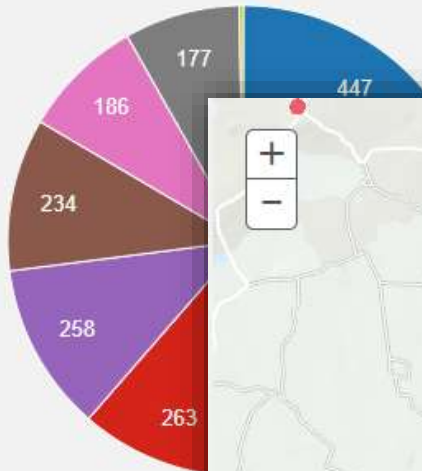
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SHOW ALL

--- Polygon type ---

Businesses  
Central Govt  
Councils-A  
Councils-F  
Environment  
Faith Com  
Gardens  
Headquar  
Local Com  
OPW  
Schools

## Actions taken per sector



- C. Pollinator friendly planting
- F. Raising awareness of pollinators
- A. Protect existing habitats
- E. Reduce pesticide use
- D. Provide nesting habitats
- I. Other actions taken

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--- Attribute name ---

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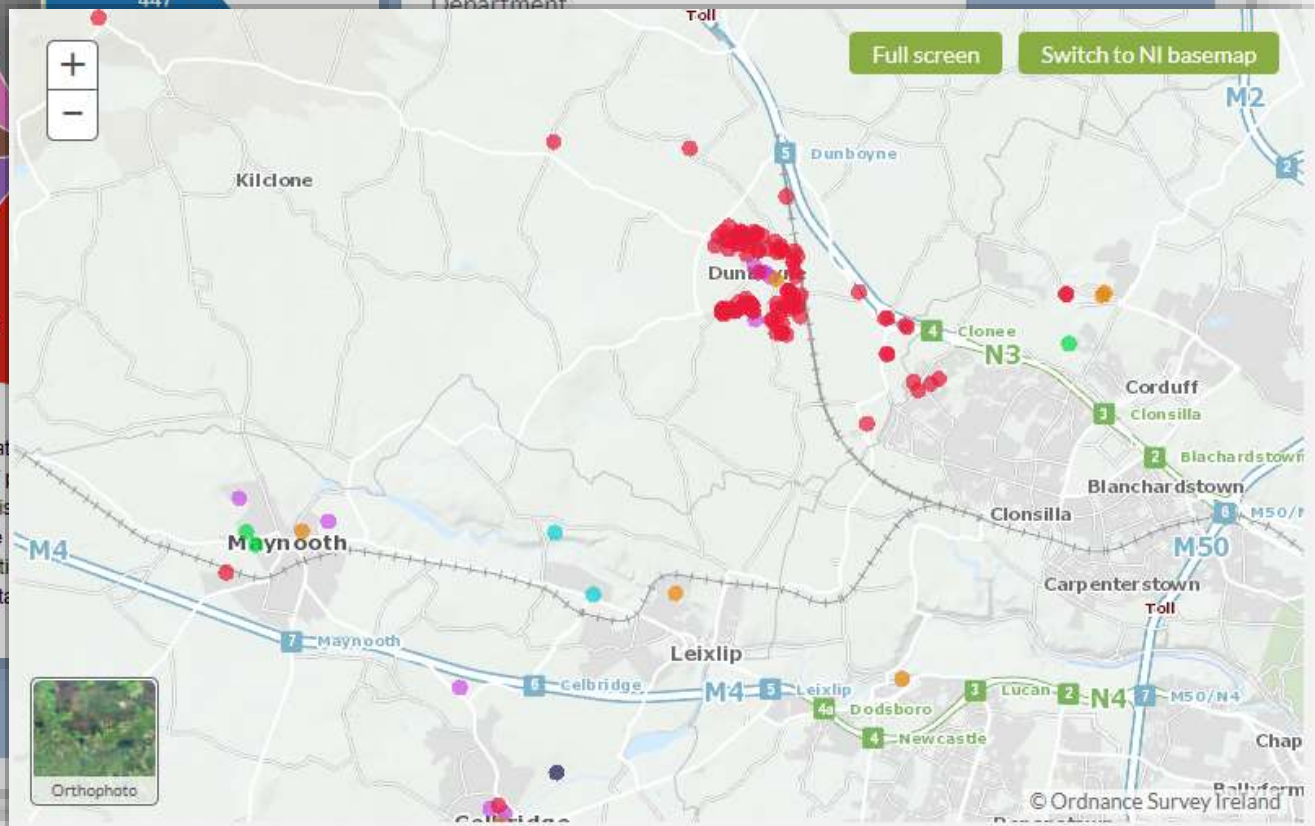
- A. Protect existing pollinator habitats
- B. Reduce mowing
- C. Pollinator friendly planting
- D. Provide nesting habitats
- Department

SHOW ALL

Switch to NI basemap

Full screen

Switch to NI basemap



## Site Details

Total polygon area: 4.12 km2

Councils-Actions

--- Attribute name ---

Show All

## Site Details

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Site Name</b>                               | Páirc an Phobail, Portlaoise  |
| <b>Date</b>                                    | 24/11/2017  |
| <b>Type</b>                                    | Councils-Actions  |
| <b>Area</b>                                    | 33855 m2  |
| <b>A. Protect existing pollinator habitats</b> | Area of semi-natural habitat managed/restored (m2) - 100  |
| <b>B. Reduce mowing</b>                        | Area managed as long-flowering meadow-1 cut & lift/year (m2) - 50   |
| <b>D. Provide nesting habitats</b>             | Number of bee hotels installed - 1  |
| <b>E. Reduce pesticide use</b>                 | Area where pesticide use has been eliminated (m2) - 32373<br>Signage used (number) - 4  |
| <b>F. Raising awareness of pollinators</b>     | Junior Pollinator Plan promoted (number of children reached) - 200<br>Number of pollinator workshops delivered - 2<br>Number of pollinator friendly guidelines/leaflets distributed - 200 |

Close

# Manage my sites

+ Add Site

## Edit site

### Site Information

Site Name

Type

Date

#### A. Protect existing pollinator habitats

Length of existing flowering hedgerow protected (m)

Area of existing earth banks or bare soil protected (m2)

Length of existing dry stone walls protected (m)

Other pollinator friendly habitats protected

#### B. Reduce mowing

Area where Dandelions are allowed to bloom- first grass cut delayed till mid-April (m2) ☒ 30

Area mown every 6 weeks to allow Clover to bloom (m2) ☒ 30

Area managed as long-flowering meadow-1 grass cut & lift/year (m2) ☒ 5

#### C. Pollinator friendly planting

SPRING-flowering pollinator friendly plants/trees/shrubs ☒ main species

SUMMER-flowering pollinator friendly plants/trees/shrubs ☒ main species

AUTUMN-flowering pollinator friendly plants/trees/shrubs ☒ main species

#### D. Provide nesting habitats

Area of earth bank or bare soil created for mining bees (m2) ☒ 0.5

Plant stems left standing (type) ☒ Raspberry

Number of holes drilled in wood ☒ 5

Number of bee hotels installed

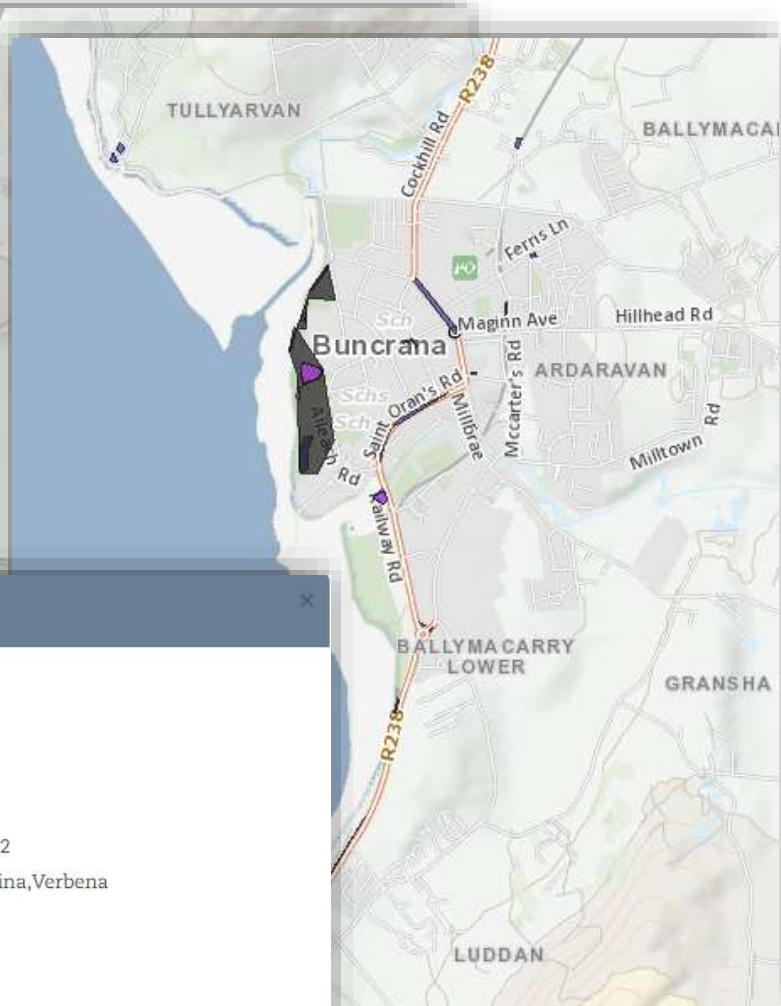
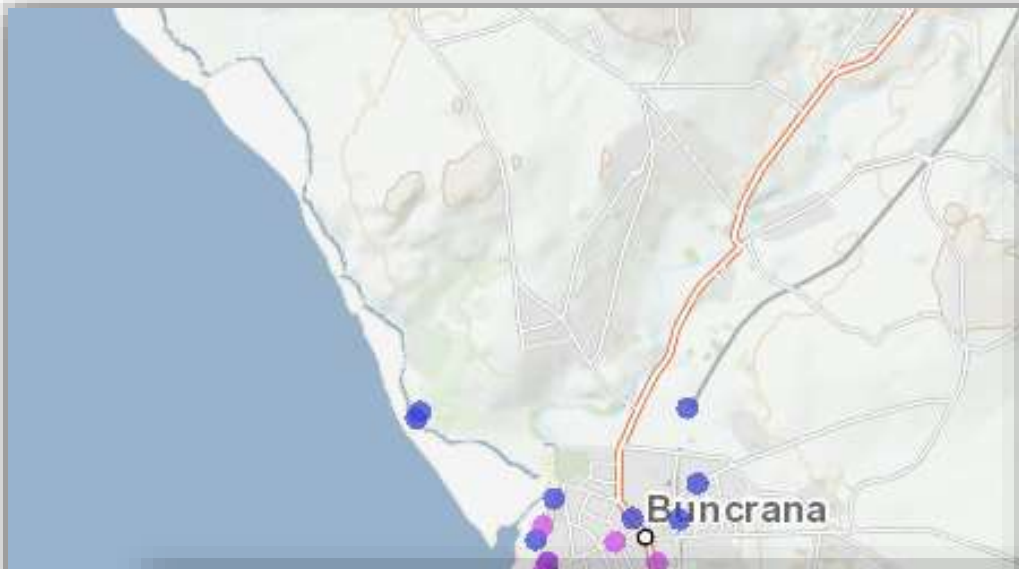
Cancel

Confirm

Gardens:  
actions to help pollinators

All-Ireland  
Pollinator Plan  
2015-2020





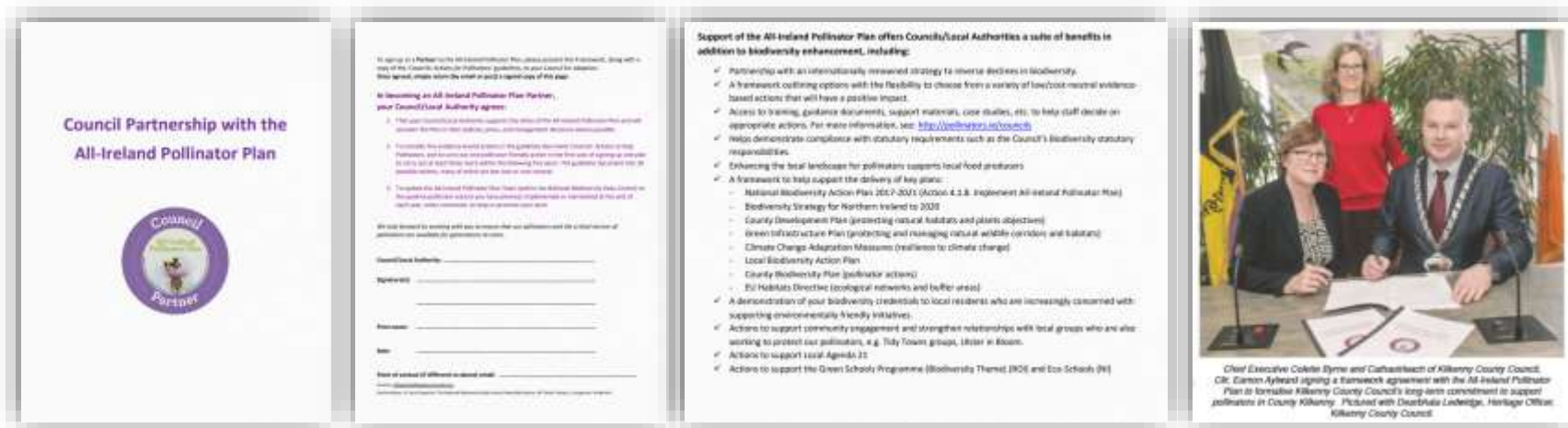
## Site Details

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Site Name                       | Amazing Grace Park  |
| Date                            | 25/04/2017  |
| Type                            | Councils-Actions  |
| Area                            | 1872 m2   |
| B. Reduce mowing                | Area managed as long-flowering meadow-1 cut & lift/year (m2) - 100m2  |
| C. Pollinator friendly planting | Area planted with pollinator friendly perennials (m2) - Stachys byzantina, Verbena bonariensis, Rudbeckia, Perovskia atriplicifolia, Dahlia Species<br>Number of pollinator friendly bulbs planted - Allium species, Muscari. |



Close

# Partnership Framework for Councils/Local Authorities



Most Local Authorities are already taking actions to support pollinators on public land.

**February 2019:** To better support these efforts and to better promote the work being undertaken, we have developed a framework for recognising Councils as partners of the Plan.

## In becoming an All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Partner, your Council/Local Authority agrees:

- That your Council/Local Authority **supports the ethos** of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and will consider the Plan in their policies, plans, and management decisions where possible.
- To consider the evidence-based actions in the guideline document *Councils: Actions to help Pollinators*, and **to carry out one pollinator-friendly action in the first year of signing up and plan to carry out at least three more within the following five years**. The guideline document lists 30 possible actions, many of which are low cost or cost-neutral.
- To **update** the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Team (within the National Biodiversity Data Centre) on the positive pollinator actions you have planned, implemented or maintained at the end of each year, when contacted, to help us promote your work.



KILKENNY  
COUNTY COUNCIL



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council



Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown  
County Council Comhairle Contae  
Dhún Laoghaire-Ráth an Dúin



Limerick  
CITY & COUNTY  
COUNCIL



Comhairle Cathrach  
& Contae Phort Láirge  
Waterford City  
& County Council



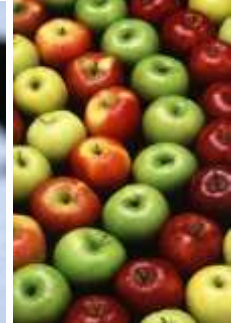
Lisburn &  
Castlereagh  
City Council

fingal.ie



# CALL TO ACTION

[www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)



[pollinators@biodiversityireland.ie](mailto:pollinators@biodiversityireland.ie)  
[ufitzpatrick@biodiversityireland.ie](mailto:ufitzpatrick@biodiversityireland.ie)

## Thank You

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council

