



Case Study

Cardiff volunteers helping us manage our parks for nature



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Year on year more areas in our parks and open spaces are being mowed less frequently, allowing plants to flower and support pollinating insects.



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With new machinery purchased through Welsh Government's 'Local Places for Nature' grant we're also increasing the number of sites where grass cuttings are collected after mowing (see photos below). Removing the cuttings will encourage the growth of a wider range of plants.



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Although the biodiversity benefits of reduced mowing frequency and 'cut and collect' grassland management are well-documented we thought it would be useful to record changes in plant species on our sites, providing local evidence to support proposals for expanding the practice.

Over the last two years, the Cardiff Local Nature Partnership has enlisted the help of volunteers to monitor the impact of these management changes. Volunteer surveyors are asked to record the number of different types of plant growing in an area of grass which is regularly mown and in an adjacent area which is cut once or twice a year.



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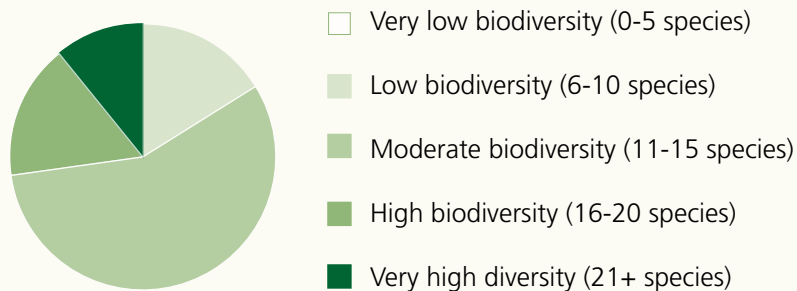
The Cardiff Local Nature Partnership has been working in partnership with the Wildlife Trust to develop a free programme of online and practical training workshops. This has helped our volunteers improve their wildlife identification skills. So far we've recruited and trained over 30 volunteers who have surveyed over 50 sites which is an amazing effort.



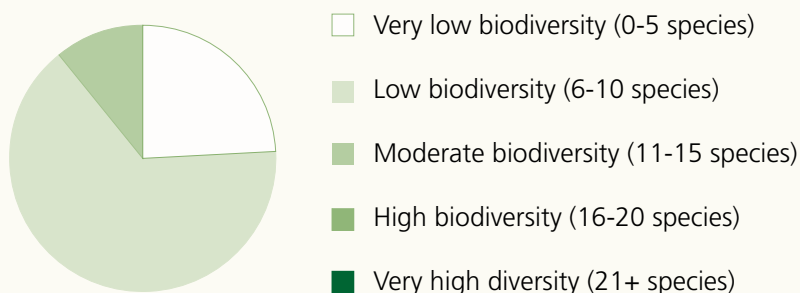
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The results from volunteer surveys undertaken during the summer of 2022 are shown in the charts below. The darker the colour, the greater the variety of plants recorded. As you can see, the results demonstrate that more plant species have been recorded at sites where mowing frequency has been reduced.

Plant diversity - 'one-cut' grassland 2022



Plant diversity - frequently mown grassland 2022



Feedback from volunteers and the Wildlife Trust has been very positive, some of the comments received are provided below:

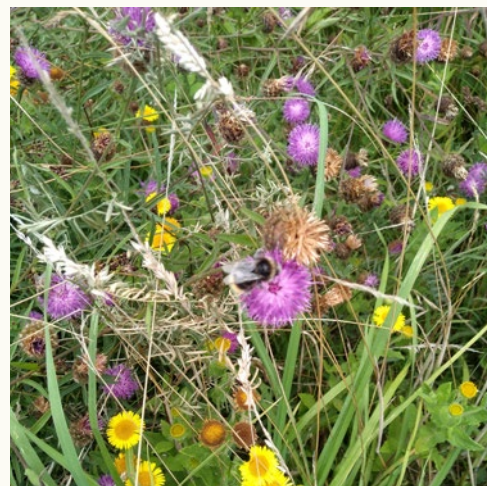
“I have really enjoyed being involved in the One Cut Grassland Survey, looking at Biodiversity. I have always been interested, but not too knowledgeable about plants, although I did Biology A level many years ago. We have had some amazing teaching sessions on plants, butterflies, moths, and bees. I now feel fairly confident identifying the common meadow plants and butterflies and I was blown away by the session on night flying moths, which identified 60-70 different species at Forest Farm, including the gorgeous Elephant Hawk Moth. The One Cut Meadows survey clearly demonstrated how the variety of plants increased and also the number of butterflies and bees and other insects.”



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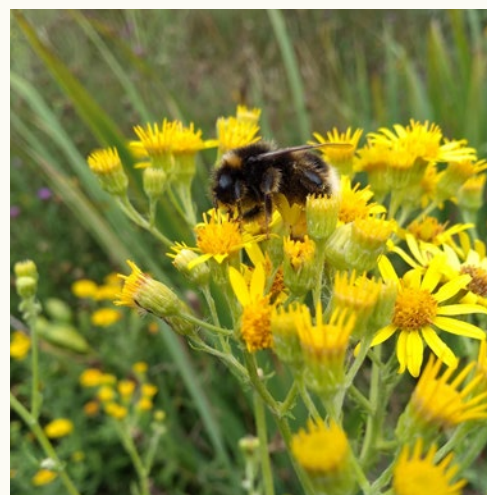
“I am very pleased to have had this chance to contribute as a volunteer, and have mentioned this project quite a few times to neighbours, friends and colleagues.

I would support any initiative that helps engage people with their local environment particularly here in Llanrumney, as it faces several large developments that I fear will impact negatively on local habitats.”



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“The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales has been delighted to organise the pollinator project training. The training has developed volunteer identification skills in grassland plants, bumblebees, butterflies and moths. We’ve had a fantastic group of volunteers attend the training. Since running the sessions all the ‘one-cut’ areas for this year have been surveyed. This is all thanks to the efforts and enthusiasm of the individuals that attended the training.”



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We’re continuing to develop our volunteer programme, offering training and survey opportunities for all seasons. If you live or work in Cardiff and would like to get involved please email Sam Eaves (Local Nature Partnership Coordinator) biodiversity.team@cardiff.gov.uk