

## **SDCC Pollinator Plan Update**

2021 was a very successful year in terms of carrying out works to advance the county's Pollinator Plan. Works carried out on our meadows in previous years have really started to pay dividends with spectacular displays of wildflowers in meadows across the county right throughout the summer period. This is very encouraging, and we expect that the meadows will continue to improve as the management practices continue year on year.

### **2021 Meadows:**

Public Realm managed 145 hectares of parkland as natural meadows in 2021 and this is being added to year on year.

Regular cutting of the meadows is an important part of the healthy management of meadows. SDCC Some of the meadows are cut at the end of the flowering season while others are left to overwinter and are cut later in the Spring. Public Realm have allocated funding to allow for cut, lift and removal of cuttings. Cutting and Collecting the meadow depletes the soil of nitrogen, allowing natural wildflowers to grow and establish during the following years. This is a carefully managed and sustainable way of increasing biodiversity while promoting wildflower habitats and food sources for pollinators.

Ongoing botanical and insect surveys are part of SDCC's natural meadow management and will guide future management practices.

### **2021 Other actions:**

In addition to the natural meadows, pollinator actions in 2021 included:

- Bulb planting on roadsides as part of pollinator friendly planting schemes.
- Perennial planting schemes at prominent locations across county
- Implementation of a Communication Strategy in relation to SDCC's Pollinator Plan
- Providing information to the general public , including schools
- Publishing of SDCC Pollinator Plan booklet <https://www.sdcc.ie/en/services/environment/pollinators/sdcc-pollination-action-plan.pdf>
- Producing a video to promote the SDCC pollinator Plan. <https://youtu.be/mCLZArN1oTY>
- Planting of ornamental wildflower meadows at prominent locations around the County
- Contribution to National Tidy Towns Pollinator Award prize fund.
- Provided SDCC Pollinator Action Plan and the National Pollinator Plan booklets to schools and community groups
- Co-funding research on alternatives to herbicides for public spaces.

- Investigated new grassland management techniques.
- Investigation into sustainable use of meadow cuttings.
- Planting of fruit trees and trees recommended in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.
- Inclusion of All Ireland Pollinator Plan in new County Development Plan, Green Infrastructure Plan and other Council Strategies

## **2022 Actions:**

Public Realm have received funding in SDCC's budget to support further pollinator supporting projects in 2022. Some of the actions planned for 2022 are outlined below:

- In 2022 Public Realm will expand the meadowland managed area to 163 hectares.
- Continuing actions from 2021 which are multi annual; e.g. maintenance of bulb areas and high profile pollinator planting areas, new native tree planting, on-going communication, and social media promotion etc.
- Public Realm will also continue to investigate maintenance regimes that will be most suitable for introducing meadows into smaller open space areas and engaging with local communities in this regard.
- We will continue investigation into sustainable uses for the meadow cuttings.
- Urban planting will continue to transition to pollinator supporting planting; with pollinator planting to be included in some urban roundabouts in 2022.
- On-going liaison with SDCC's environmental awareness section and Community Dept to coordinate actions relating to pollinators and advice to other internal departments as required.
- We are developing additional training videos for groups interested in improving their areas for pollinators.

SDCC's Biodiversity Plan is in place supporting the above work, the Green Infrastructure Strategy for the county is being finalised and will in place as part of the County Development Plan once it is adopted in 2022 and Sustainable Urban Drainage Guidelines for SDCC will be issued in 2022.

All of the above strategies, plans and guidelines will contribute to protecting and creating areas for pollinators and will support and enhance the work above.

Public Realm look forward to working with the community in 2022 to continue this work.

For more information please see the Council website:

<https://www.sdcc.ie/en/services/environment/pollinators/>