



Welcome to our Members' Day Saturday 2nd April 2022

**Butterfly Conservation
Hertfordshire & Middlesex
Branch**



Programme



- 2.00 **Welcome and Review of our activities in the last year - Malcolm Hull .**
The Branch Review 2021 and accounts are available on the Branch website
- 2.20 **Election of Branch Committee**
- 2.30 **“Big City Butterflies – improving urban greenspaces for butterflies?” – Steve Bolton, Conservation Officer**
- 3.25 15 minute break and drawing the raffle
- 3.40 **“The Wilder St Albans Project” – Heidi Carruthers**
- 4.25 Results of the online photo competition and closing remarks.
- 4.45 Close



Branch Review of 2021



- More outdoor activities
- Online communications
- Wider understanding of climate and biodiversity crises
- Increasing calls for more wild places



Malcolm Hull

Recording



**Recording is the foundation of all
we do**

- **Butterfly Recorder**
- **52,000 butterfly records in our
Annual Report**
- **Much increased use of I-record**
- **Moth Officer**



Andrew Wood



John Murray



Engagement (1)



- Winter events programme
- Butterfly walks and moth events
- Branch website – **Peter Clarke**
- Reaching wider and more diverse audiences through social media –
Instagram, YouTube



Liz Goodyear





Engagement (2)



Ian Small

- **Branch Newsletter Editor**
- **Membership Secretary**
- **Electronic communications with members**
- **Press and publicity**



Alex Lewis





Engagement (3)



- **Middlesex/London**
- **Big City Butterflies**
- **European Butterflies**

Group liaison

Paul Busby



Roger Gibbons





Conservation & Wilding (1)



Millhoppers Reserve

- New pond and chalk bank
- Habitat Management – conservation grazing

Christine Ridley



**Chris
Hilling**

Paula Reid & Peter Melitus



Conservation & Wilding (2)

Habitat creation – Greenwood Park, Chiswell Green



Knowledge sharing and practical conservation advice

- Low mow plots on road verges and in parks
- Seeding wildflower meadows
- Wilder hedgerows
- Better management of woods
- Working in partnerships with others



Conservation & Wilding (3)



- 1) Halve the number of UK's threatened species of butterflies & moths
- 2) Improve the conditions of 100 of the most important landscapes for butterflies & moths
- 3) Transform 100,000 wild spaces in the UK for people, butterflies & moths



How to get involved

- Submit your records!
- Make your garden a haven for wildlife
- Is there an area near you which could be improved for butterflies?
- We can help with advice and suggestions, but most wilding projects are driven by people who live on the spot.
- **Can you help?** - this page on the branch website lists tasks we'd like help with!



Treasurer's report for 2020/21

- Clifford Mullett



Financial Report for year ended 31 March 2021

Opening balances at 1 April 2020	£9,874
Income from Subscriptions	£6,663
Donations and other income	£782
Total Income:	£17,319
Less Transfers to Head Office	£6,900
	<u>£10,419</u>

Expenditure

Publications	£1,598
Committee Expenses	£479
Postage, Stationary & Computer Consumables	£763
Insurance	£76
Total Expenditure:	<u>£2,916</u>

Balance Carried Forward	£7,503
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Election of branch committee



At each Members' Day, one third of the Branch committee members in seniority rotation and any members co-opted onto the committee since the previous Members' Day shall retire and be eligible for re-election.

The following officers have agreed to stand for re-election

2022 Roger Gibbons, Liz Goodyear & Ian Small

No committee members were co-opted during the year

Proposed:

Seconded:



**THANK YOU to everyone who has helped
this year**

**Feel free to contact me or any of the other
committee members if you have any questions
comments or suggestions**

Donations



Big City Butterflies

Improving urban greenspaces for butterflies and moths

Steve Bolton
Conservation Officer

Big City Butterflies: Introduction

To help Londoners discover and connect with butterflies, moths and the greenspaces that support them.



To improve the quality and connectivity of green spaces in London

To increase levels of recording and monitoring across London

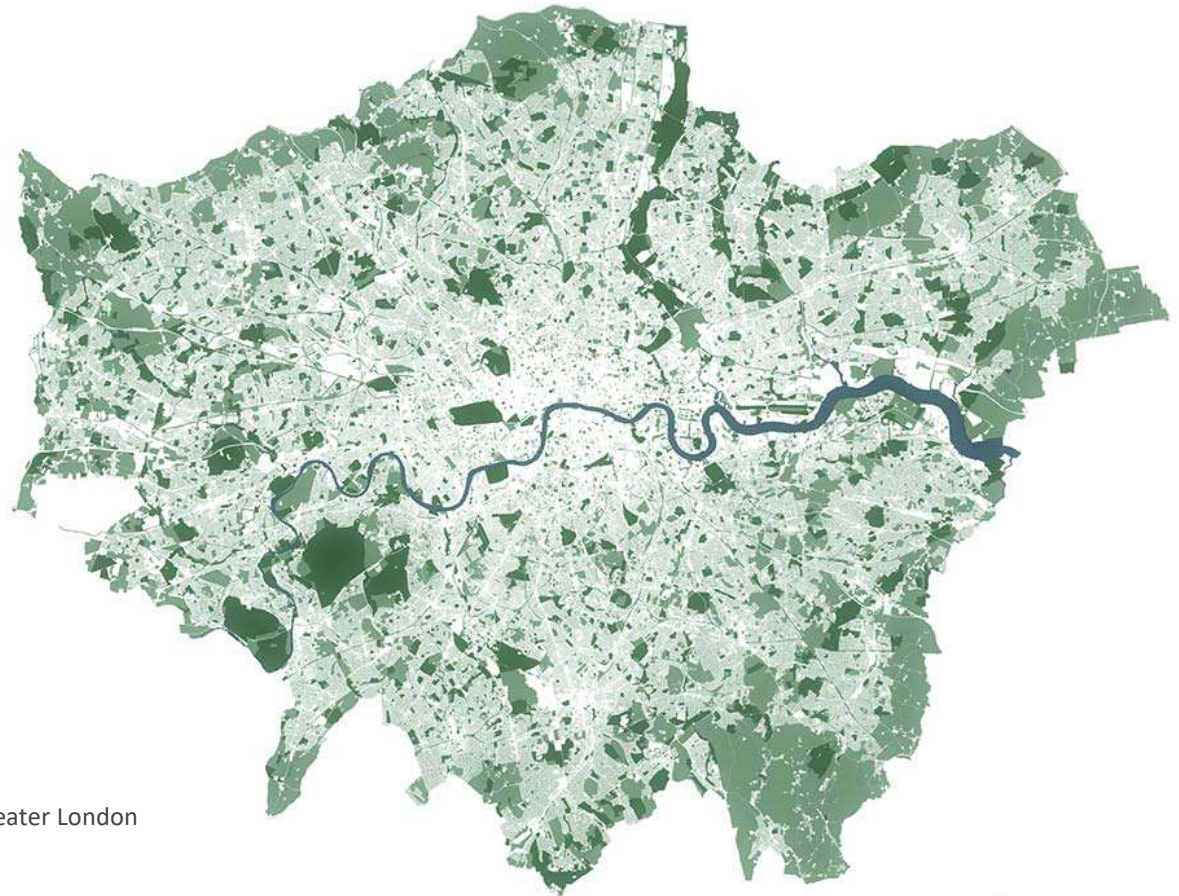


To engage with new audiences

To enable BC to develop and test new approaches to conservation in an urban context

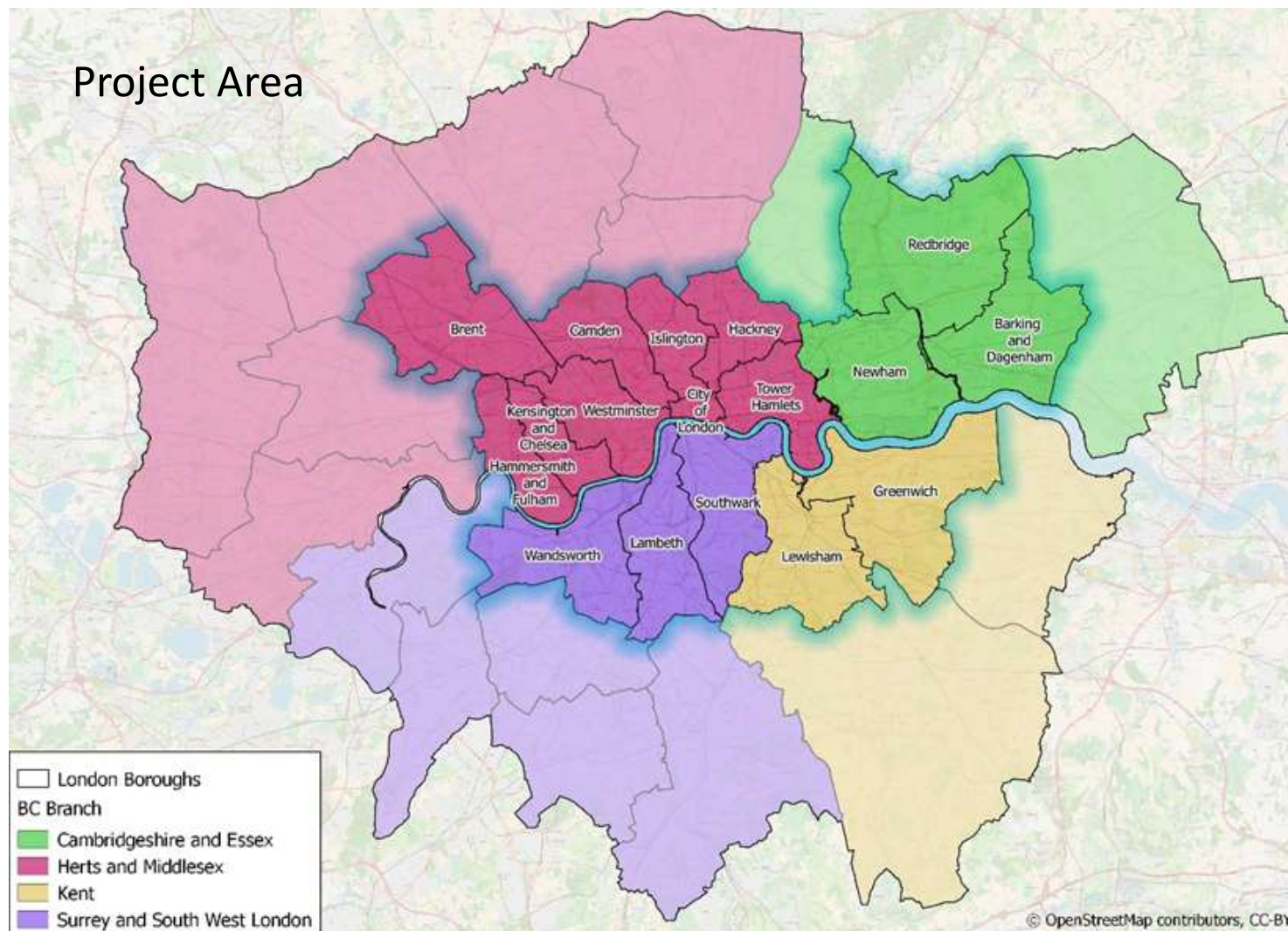
Big City Butterflies: Introduction

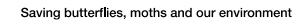
- 37 SSSIs
- 147 LNRs
- 1,586 SINCs
- >3000 parks and open spaces
- 49.5% of London is Green and Blue!



Source: GiGL - Greenspace Information for Greater London
www.gigl.org.uk

Big City Butterflies: Introduction

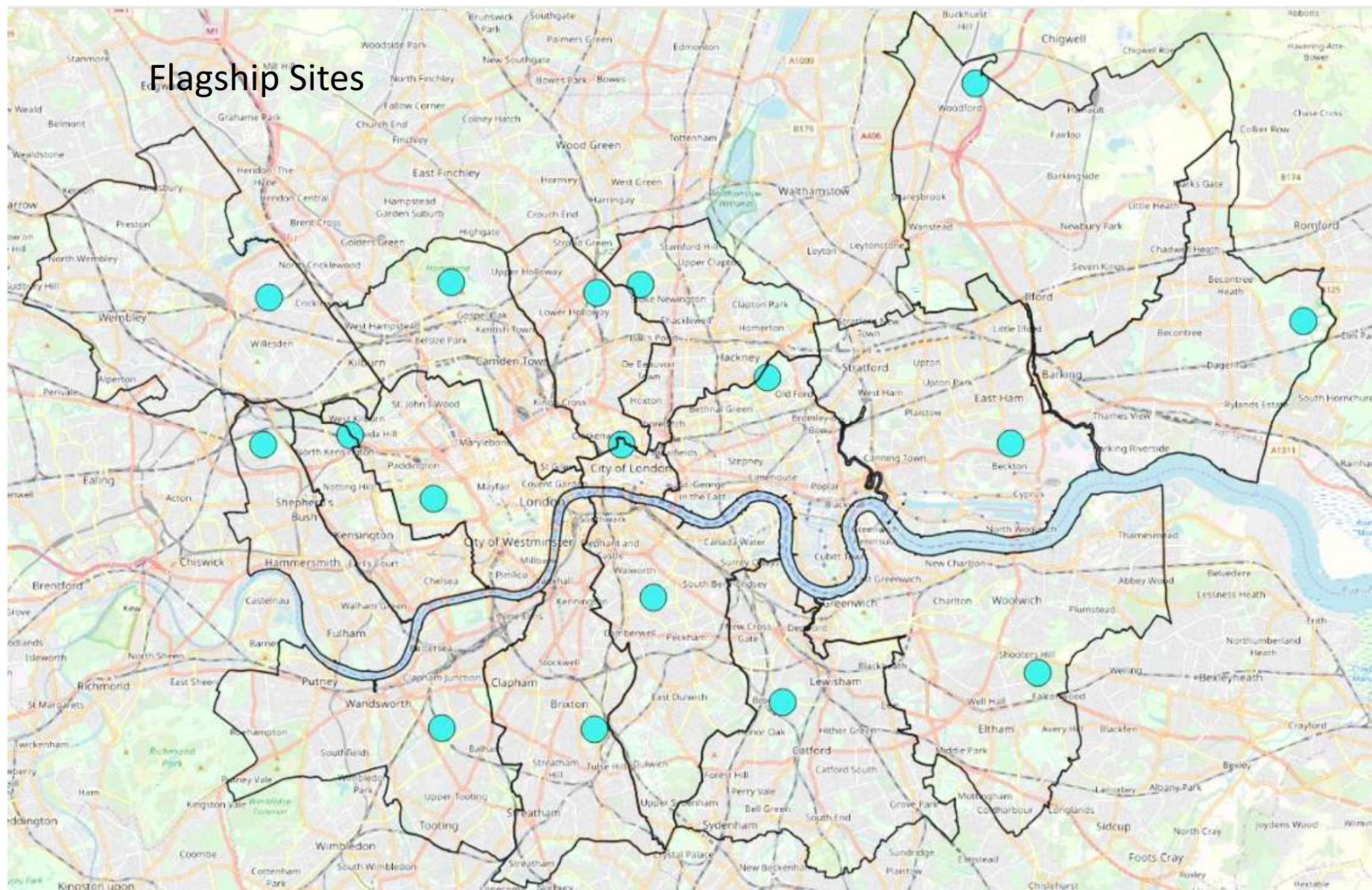




Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Big City Butterflies: Introduction

Flagship Sites



Big City Butterflies: Introduction



**Recording &
Monitoring**



Engagement



**Habitat
Management**

Butterflies of inner London

- Hibernators
 - Brimstone, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Comma
- Whites
 - Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Orange Tip
- Little Brown Jobs
 - Small, Essex and Large Skippers, **Brown Argus**, Small Copper
- Blues
 - Common Blue, Holly Blue
- Canopy species
 - **Purple Hairstreak, White-letter Hairstreak, Brown Hairstreak**
- Browns
 - Speckled Wood, **Marbled White**, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Small Heath, **Ringlet**
- Migrants
 - Painted Lady - plus Clouded Yellow (infrequent), Red Admiral



Marbled White

Butterfly life cycle

To complete their life cycle, butterflies need:

- **Caterpillar foodplants:** Birds-foot Trefoil, Sorrel, fine grasses, coarse grasses, nettles, Nasturtium, Honesty, Blackthorn, Elm
- **Nectar resources:** Knapweed, Ox-eye Daisy, Scabious and Marjoram, Vetch's, Yarrow, Wallflowers, Verbena
- **Shelter:** territories, warm conditions, egg and caterpillar development (e.g. tall grass)
- **Over-wintering refuge areas:** For hibernating eggs, caterpillars, chrysalises or adults (e.g. grass tussocks)

Grassland enhancement

Our best grasslands for wildflowers, bees and butterflies develop on the poorest soils

Lots of plants are able to compete for what nutrients are available

Coarse grasses can't dominate



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What does soil fertility do to grassland?



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Grassland management – 2 systems



Assessing soil fertility in urban greenspaces



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Assessing soil fertility in urban greenspaces

Higher fertility

- coarse broad leaved grasses
- few herbs
- thick, no gaps
- cut and leave...



...or no cutting



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Does soil fertility need to be reduced?

Higher fertility - YES



3 OPTIONS

- 1. Repeat cut and collect**
- 2. Turf/topsoil removal**
- 3. Import low nutrients soils**



**Then scarify if required and
seed with a meadow mix**

Lower fertility - NO



**scarify and seed
maintain by cut and collect**



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Cut and collect method



3 x cut & collect in 2017
Short fine grasses in June 2018



Once regularly mown amenity grass, 3 cut-and-collect started 2017,
seeded in autumn 2017, now wildflower meadow in 2019

Cut and collecting methods



Scarification methods – aim for up to 50% bare ground



Meadow seeding

- Green hay from nearby species rich site
- Meadow seed mix from supplier such as Emorsgate
- Native perennials and grasses
- Cornfield annuals
- Sow at rate of 2g – 4g/sqm
- Chalk mix recommended for chalk/neutral soils @ £12 per 100g – covering 50sqm
- Plants that do well in any soil type; Birds-foot trefoil, Common Knapweed, Ox-eye Daisy, Yarrow, Red Clover, Lady's Bedstraw



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Burgess Park, use of low fertility soils





Topsoil stripping, seeding and plug planting



Created autumn 2020



Summer 2021

Turf stripping and seeding



Wildflower Turf



Yellow Rattle seeding – The Meadow Maker

- Parasitizes grass, reduces grass growth
- More space for wildflowers
- Must be sown in autumn – requires a cold period
- Disturb soil, sow seeds and tread in, do not bury



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Yellow Rattle seeding – The Meadow Maker

- Year 1 - sow yellow rattle in autumn
- Year 2 - autumn cut and remove, sow wildflower seeds
- Option to plant wildflower plug plants
- Year 3 – autumn cut and remove and sow seeds if needed



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Beckenham Place Park

- In partnership with Lewisham
- Cut and collect 5+ years
- Fine grasses and herbs but species poor



Beckenham Place Park

- In partnership with Lewisham
- Cut and collect 5+ years
- Fine grasses and herbs but species poor
- 2 methods
 - 1000 sqm rotovated and seeded
 - 3 x 40m turf stripped and seeded



Clapham Common

- In partnership with community groups and Lambeth
- Objective to create species rich meadow habitat
- Topsoil removal selected as best option



Clapham Common



- 150mm topsoil removed to expose low nutrient subsoil
- Topsoil used to create bunds
- Incorporate scrub planting





Brockwell Park

- In partnership with Lambeth
- Improve existing cut and collect meadows
- 3 x cut and collect – Apr, July and September
- Scarify and seed
- Create feature wildflower strips



Maintaining flower-rich meadows

- First year – control creeping thistle and dock, cut and collect in late summer
- Cut areas once or twice a year in early spring (before April) or in the autumn (after August).
- Avoid cutting grassland too short, as many species require longer vegetation.
- Always leave some part of the site uncut each year as refuge areas - 1/3 recommended on a 3 year rotation.
- For example, the caterpillar of the Small Skipper butterfly spends the winter in a dead leaf sheath of the grass Yorkshire-fog.



Over-wintering refuge



Maintaining flower-rich meadows

- Remove clippings to reduce soil fertility, but if possible leave for a few days after mowing to allow wildflower seed to fall and invertebrates to escape.



Tree and shrub planting

- Woodland creation, lone trees and hedge planting.



Tree and shrub planting



Grassland restoration

De-enrichment of site through cut and remove before scarification and re-seed with wildflower mix and subsequent twice yearly hay cut.

Scrub/Woodland creation

Providing vertical and horizontal structure fringing existing mature trees. Shrub layer clumped planting of mixed native trees and shrubs interspersed with shade and light tolerant wildflower mix.

Tiny Forest

- Dense fast-growing native woodland; blackthorn, buckthorn, rose's, broom, elm, honeysuckle, strawberry, foxglove



Summary

- Low nutrient soils support greater biodiversity.
- Meadow creation is one of the most cost-effective and fastest ways to increase biodiversity and store carbon.
- Improving habitats in parks and greenspaces will help connect existing nature reserves and create a better environment.
- Local community groups want to support biodiversity and can help drive positive changes.



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Questions?

Steve Bolton

Conservation Officer, Big City Butterflies
Butterfly Conservation

Email: sbolton@butterfly-conservation.org

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/BCB>



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wilder

ST ALBANS

Aims to increase biodiversity across the District of St Albans

Partnership with St Albans City and District Council

£100,000 funding for 2 years

Wilder St Albans Project Officer to develop a Wilder St Albans Plan and help community groups to deliver projects.

30% managed for wildlife by 2030

Big or small, every act makes a difference. But bigger is better!

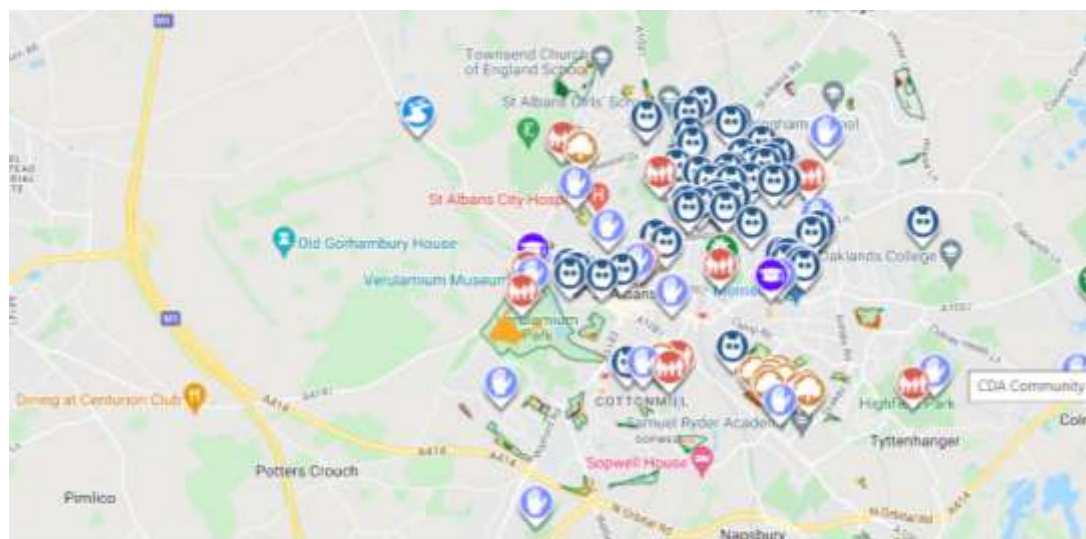


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ST ALBANS

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ACTIONS



Key



Wilder Group



Wilderhood Watch



Wilder Communities



Wilder Water



Wilder Meadows



Wilder Trees



Wilder Schools

WILDER ACTION PLAN

Some of the actions identified by the Meadows and Trees Working Groups:

- Increase species richness of amenity grassland
- Better manage existing meadow and heathland habitat on key Local Wildlife Sites
- Deliver conservation management training to green spaces teams and contractors
- Create one hectare of flagship meadow
- Increase habitat for small blue butterflies and other chalk grassland species and better connect existing calcareous grassland sites across the District
- Increase number of local surveyors to monitor grasslands
- Support the planting and management of new and diverse hedgerows
- Gather a District-wide picture of hedgerows and hedgerow health to help steer conservation efforts
- Creation of a 'Wilderwood', a mosaic of habitats established through natural succession with woodland, scrub, meadows and wetlands.

Wilder St Albans Recorders

38 no-mow plots monitored July/August 2021 by 27 volunteers from HMBBC and Ver Valley Society

20 butterfly species (492 individuals) and 124 species of plant recorded

‘Lower Luton Road’ best for butterflies – 9 species and 81 individuals.

‘Bluehouse Hill’ best for plants - 87 plants including a broad leaved helleborine, a locally rare orchid.

Management recommendations and opportunities put forward based on what we know so far.

More no-mow plots to be added following on from the **Wilder Spaces Initiative**



Wilder Spaces Initiative

July to September 2021

120 individual spaces nominated

Nominations have been assessed
and are awaiting final approval from
either HCC/SADC



Wildlife Gardening Champions

Partnership initiative with Wilderhood Watch

15 passionate volunteers to pilot 'Wildlife Gardening Champion' roles.

Free 45-minute consultation and bespoke advice on improving gardens for wildlife.



Here's to an even wilder
2022....



Wilder St Albans Plan and delivery

More actions and tangible impacts

Continued support of local groups and
ideas

Celebratory **Wildfest** event in July



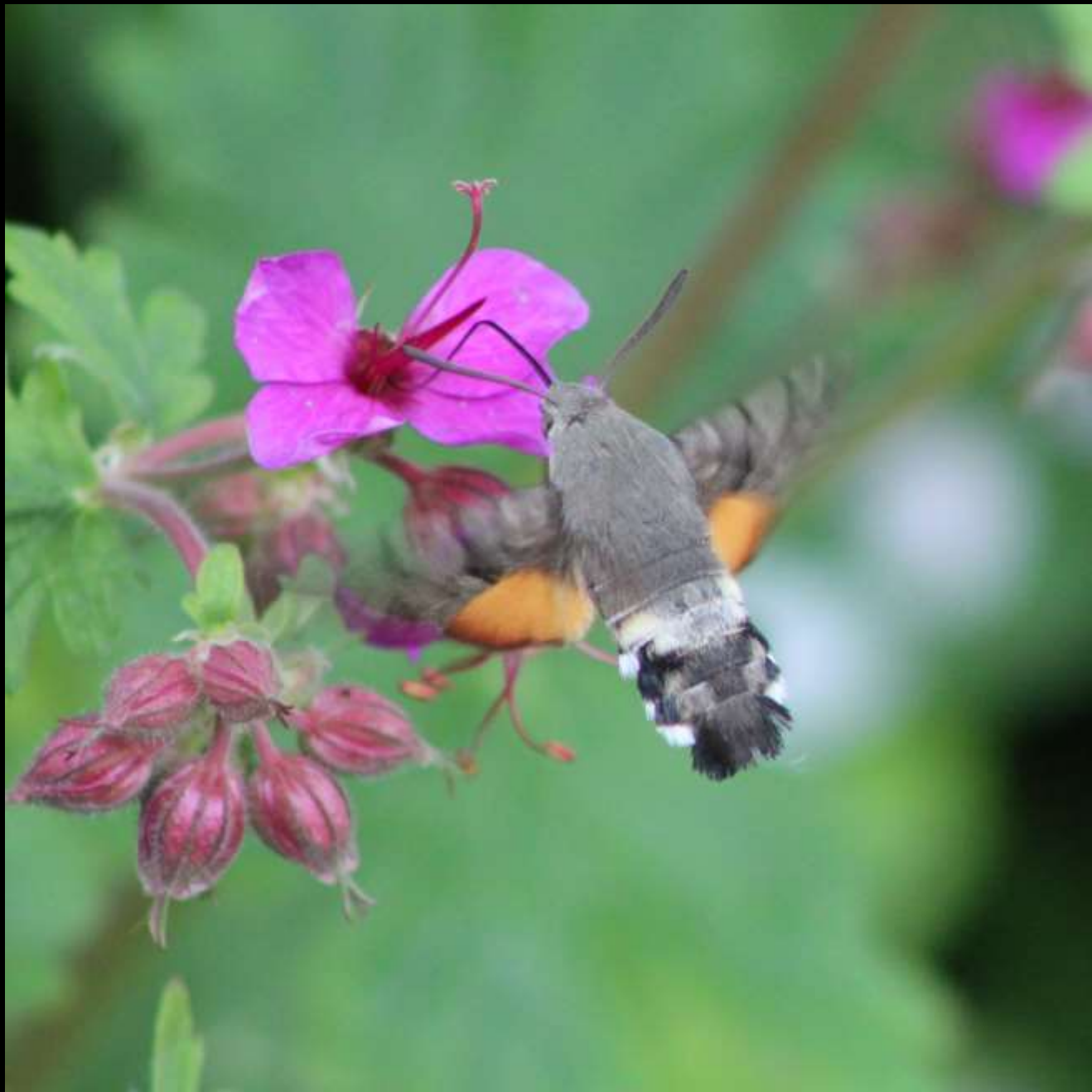
Online Photographic Competition

Winners

UK Butterflies – Dark Green & Silver-washed Fritillaries by Colin Meager



UK Moths – Hummingbird Hawkmoth by Annie Sutcliffe



Behaviour – Orange Tips by Ian Small



Non-adult – Emperor Moth larva by Annie Sutcliffe



