

## Wildflower Areas: Guidance note

*Flintshire County Council are creating wildflower areas*

### Why are we creating wildflower areas?

**To create an important habitat for insects, birds and mammals and establish natural connections through our urban areas.** *Urban flowers are proven to support pollinator species. 1 in every 3 mouthfuls of our food needs an insect for pollination.*

**To create a nicer place for walking and recreation.** *It looks nicer and spending time in a natural place is proven to make people feel calmer.*

**Increasing natural vegetation can help reduce pollutants in the air.** *Natural vegetation growing in an urban setting can increase deposition of air pollutants from the air onto the surfaces of the plants, making air cleaner to breath.*

**Natural areas can help reduce surface water flooding.** *Heavy rainfall can be absorbed into the permeable ground and by plant root systems which all reduces the amount and speed of water movement.*

**Natural areas are important to help slow the impacts of climate change.** *Growing vegetation absorbs carbon from the atmosphere and stores it as biomass.*

It's our duty, we have a duty to seek to "maintain and enhance biodiversity" wherever possible within the proper exercise of our functions under the Environment (Wales) Act (2016) and are required to carry out sustainable development under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)

### What are we doing?

We will create wildflower areas using one of the following methods:

**Slow grow:** These are areas of grassland which usually still have some diversity that we will gradually improve through correct management. We do not add anything to these grasslands we are trying to allow seeds that are still in the seedbank to grow. The benefit of this approach is that any wildflowers that do appear will have always been at that site. It is a slower process and we will see the wildflowers and diversity increase gradually over years.

**Planted:** These are areas which may have lost a lot of their diversity. We will give them a helping hand by planting some native wildflowers as plugs (which are small plants) or as bulbs, we will plant plugs or bulbs in the spring or the autumn.

**Introduced:** These are areas which have low wildflower diversity often amenity grassland away from any sensitive sites where we will bring wildflower turf or seed onto the site. Usually the existing vegetation is removed. Wildflower turf or seed can establish wildflower areas over a shorter timeframe is generally successful.

### How will these areas be managed?

These areas need to be managed correctly to ensure wildflowers flourish long term.

The areas usually need to be allowed to grow and flower through the spring and summer then cut late summer after setting seed, this makes sure that there are seeds to grow in future years. After cutting, the cuttings need to be removed this reduces the nutrients going back into the ground. We will do this wherever possible. Wildflowers prefer a nutrient poor soil.

Some sites may benefit from an additional spring cut (around April) to keep dominant grasses under control.

We are installing small signs at sites where we are managing an area for wildflowers to ensure the correct management is undertaken.

For more information about wildflowers visit <https://www.floralocale.org/HomePage>

If you want to find out more about what you can do to help our wildflowers see our website <http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/LeisureAndTourism/Countryside-and-Coast/Home.aspx>