

# Helping Nature Recover The Wakefield Experience



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# Introduction

**In March 2021 Wakefield Council declared a biodiversity emergency and ecological crisis.**

**Not only is the whole world suffering from the loss of biodiversity and the impact which results but the UK happens to be one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.**

**The Council has an important part to play in coping with climate change and improving the environment sufficiently enough to encourage and sustain an increased level of flora and fauna.**

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# What are we doing?

Wakefield Council have developed a Nature Recovery Plan, working collaboratively with residents, partners, community groups and elected members to change how we do things and reverse the decline in wildlife habitats across the district.

We're nurturing nature everywhere we can, not only in our parks and nature reserves but also on roadside verges and other spaces.

The plan includes:

- Planting trees
- Natural flood management. SUDS, SWALES
- Reduced mowing maintenance in some areas
- Creating wildflower meadows in parks
- Creating wildflower reserves on RSV
- Developing herbaceous beds



# Changes

## **Wildflower meadows**

**In winter 2022 set a target of creating 10000sqm of wildflower meadows within our parks over the next 2 years.**

## **Herbaceous beds**

**In winter 2022 set a target of developing 550sqm of herbaceous beds within our parks over the next 2 years.**

## **Wildflower RSV reserves pilot**

**Set a target of creating 6000sqm this year**

# Benefits

## Increasing Biodiversity

Wildflower meadows, herbaceous beds and wildflower roadside verges are important for many species of insects to complete their life cycles. They provide food sources for pollinators such as:



butterflies

hoverflies

bees

beetles

moths

These areas are also important habitats for mice and voles which in turn provide food for owls and other birds of prey



# Challenges

## Perception

Our meadows may not look beautiful to humans all year round, but they are being carefully looked after to provide a natural habitat that genuinely helps wildlife



## Budget



## Resources

Staff, equipment, infrastructure



# Communications



Communications are key

- Stakeholder consultation
- Website
- Social media
- Boards with QR code
- FAQ

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# Success – Wildflower Meadows



The 10000sqm target  
has been achieved  
across four parks

Castle Grove Park,  
Manygates

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# Success – Herbaceous Beds



Over 1000sqm has  
been achieved  
across seven parks

Pontefract Park

# Success – Community Project, Pontefract



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# Wildflower RSV (Roadside Verges)

Sites have been prepared and we are currently awaiting results.



Spring – Prepare the area by clearing the soil of weeds, grasses and other plants



Spring – Sow the wildflower seeds



Summer – Watch the wildflowers grow



Autumn – Maintain the verge by cutting and collecting arisings

# Evaluation

We are learning all the time

We are seeking and acting on feedback

We may need to change our approach

