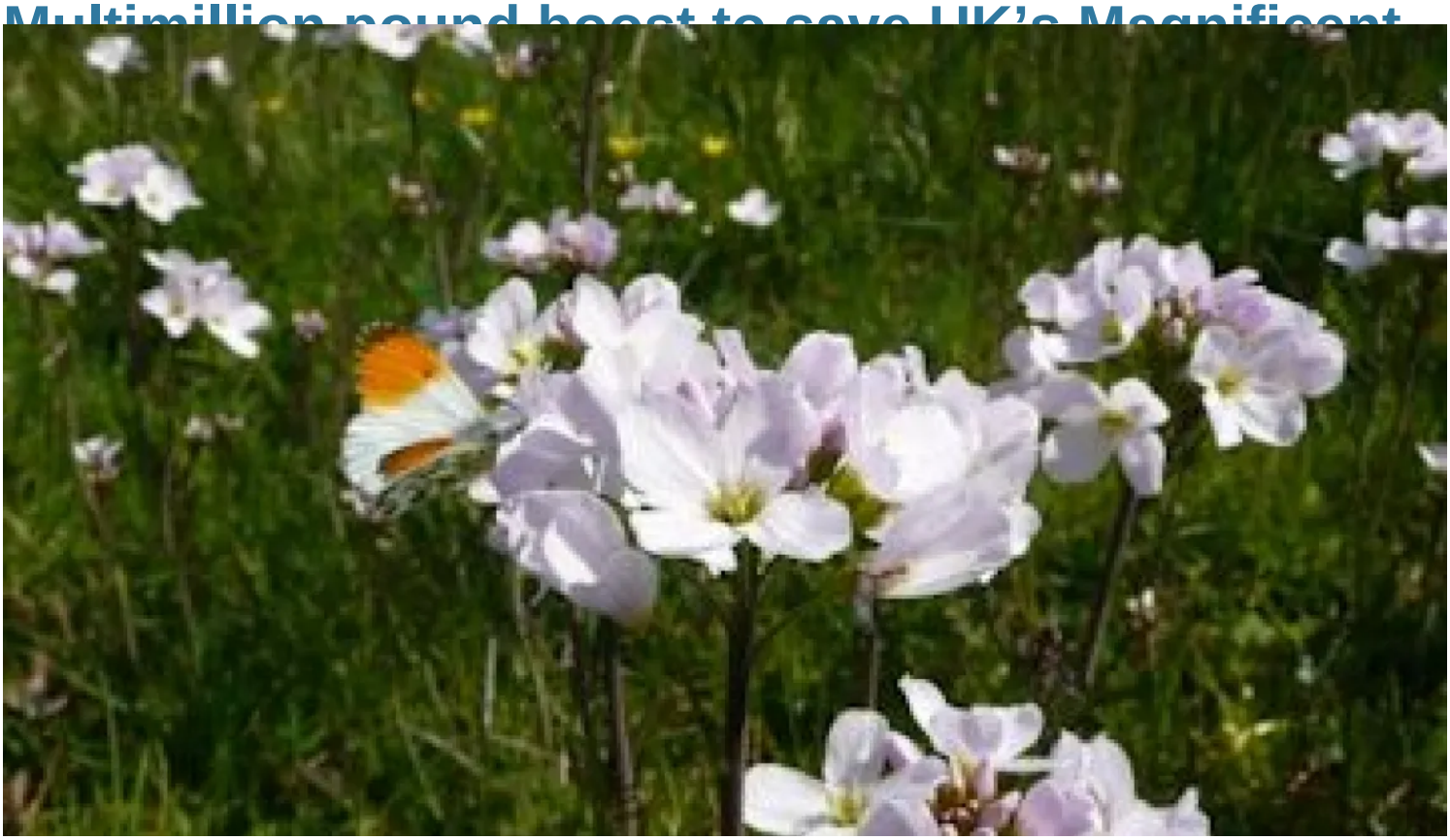
Multimillion pound boost to save UK's Magnificent



There were once natural wild flower meadows in every parish – today only 2% of the meadows that existed in the 1930s remain. Nearly 7.5million acres of wildflower meadow have been lost so far and they are still being destroyed.

The Save our Magnificent Meadows Project:

- A £3million project which will transform the fortunes of our vanishing meadows and grasslands
- Over the next four years, over 74,000 acres across the UK will be targeted
- Over 500,000 members of the public will be involved
- Save our Magnificent Meadows is led by Plantlife working in close partnership with ten organisations including county wildlife trusts, the National Trust, RSPB, Cotswold Conservation Board and Medway Valley Countryside Partnership

Wildflower meadow planting is enjoying a huge vogue in gardening; they look beautiful and attract wildlife, particularly threatened pollinators. But real wildflower meadows are vanishing – and with them native flowers such as green-winged orchid, oxlip, dyer's greenweed, and meadow saffron. Meadows and other grasslands are an intrinsic part of the UK's natural and cultural heritage: rich in landscape character, farming, folklore and history, they are as much a part of our heritage as the works of Shakespeare.

The Save our Magnificent Meadows project will protect, conserve and restore wildflower meadows and other grasslands across the UK, and will focus on the Fermanagh grasslands of Northern Ireland, the pastures of west Wales, Scottish grasslands from Edinburgh to Aberdeenshire, the calaminarian and whin grasslands of Northumberland and traditional meadows and pastures in southern England.

Nicola Hutchinson from Plantlife said: "For the conservation of grassland plants and other wildlife this is incredible news. Our aim all along has been to establish a programme and a profile for the 'Cinderella of the conservation world'. There has never been a grassland programme of this scale or ambition before and it is an amazing opportunity for Plantlife, for the project partners, for all the beneficiaries of the project and for grassland wildlife."

Drew Bennellick, HLF's Head of Landscape and Natural Heritage,said: "The Heritage Lottery Fund is proud to be supporting this project to help protect and sustain one of our most precious yet disappearing habitats. 'Saving our Magnificent Meadows' is brilliant in its simplicity, its partnership approach and its ability to harness the power of hundreds of volunteers. The project will deliver a landscape-scale ecological impact working across 55 sites from Scotland to the West Country. It is projects like this that HLF is so keen to support to ensure we continue to benefit from the free ecosystem services these habitats provide and that they continue to survive for future generations to enjoy."

Notes to editors

The Save Our Magnificent Meadows project partnership consists of 10 organisations:

- Plantlife
- Cotswolds Conservation Board
- Medway Valley Countryside Partnership
- National Trust
- Northumberland Wildlife Trust
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Scotland and Wiltshire
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Somerset Wildlife Trust
- Ulster Wildlife Trust
- Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Further information

Plantlife: Justina Simpson on 07584 995 929, email:justina.simpson@plantlife.org.uk.

HLF press office: Katie Owen on 020 7591 6036, mobile: 07973 613 820.