Bees buzzing around wild flowers

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will develop a new approach to grassland management - restoring our traditional meadows and grasslands and letting them grow to create a range of positive impacts for local wildlife. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has earmarked £135,000 in support of the three-year project and provided £9,000 upfront to help develop the plans in more detail.

Currently some publically owned grasslands and road verges are over-managed. Some can be cut several times each month, partly due to public demand for neat and tidy mown grass. By contrast traditional hay meadows are cut once at the end of summer, allowing flowers and insects like bumblebees, moths and butterflies to flourish. The Don’t Mow, Let it Grow project will work in partnership with Transport NI and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) to restore a number of public grasslands and road verges to flower-rich meadows. Invasive species which pose a real threat to our natural heritage, such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed, will also be managed and where possible eradicated.

A number of verges and amenity grasslands will be identified where various management techniques will be trialled. A toolkit will be created to share these techniques with other public and private organisations, spreading the message beyond the immediate area and helping to improve the management of sites right across the country. As we are used to seeing these public grassy areas kept tidy an important part of the project will be convincing the local community of the benefits of allowing our native wildflowers to grow, flower and set seed. Volunteers will be recruited to take part in

surveying and recording the species and habitats, and an education programme will help raise awareness of the wider benefits of the project.

[quote=Paul Mullan, Head of HLF NI]"This exciting project has the potential to transform how we manage our public grasslands."[/quote]

Paul Mullan, Head of HLF NI, commented: “This exciting project has the potential to transform how we manage our public grasslands. It will restore native grasslands and meadows that were once an important part of our natural heritage, allowing them to grow and flourish. Thanks to National Lottery players we are able to earmark £135,000 for this local project which has the potential to be of national importance, and we are delighted to be involved. It will have huge benefits for the environment and the host of insects and wildlife that live in these habitats."

Further information

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