



Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report on actions under All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2019

A 'Rewilding Parks' report was submitted to Ards and North Down Borough Council and passed in April 2018.

This report focused on:

- Managing amenity grasslands, from our open space portfolio, to promote biodiversity
- Sustainable Annual Planting
- Leaving of Deadwood

Managing amenity grasslands for pollinators

Using an external contractor, four open space sites in the south of the Borough have been subjected to a 'cut-and-lift' mowing regime. Cut-and-lifts took place at each site in September 2018, April 2019 and early October 2019. The clippings were removed by the contractor and used as fodder. All four sites would have previously been cut infrequently or every week and the cuttings left.

Site 1: Killinchy Open Space – Total cut and lift area 0.65 hectares

Site 2: Ballystockart Open Space – Total cut and lift area 0.44 hectares

Site 3: Cloughey Road Open Space – Total cut and lift area 0.88 hectares

Site 4: Tullymalley Road Open Space – Total cut and lift area 0.23 hectares

Annual Planting

According to our horticultural officer 7,639m² of the Borough's bedding were sown with wildflower pollinator-friendly seed mixes.

Leaving of Deadwood

Limited reporting back on this. One team leader states he is actively removing fallen branches due to storm damage to wooded areas.

Plans for 2020

I am currently reviewing other open spaces in the Borough, with our Parks officer and Team Leaders, with the objective to include more sites under the Rewilding Policy in 2020. The challenges we face include access to some of the sites, available machinery required for a cut-and-lift, and appropriate disposal of cuttings.

A number of our team leaders have embraced this change and have gone further by reducing their chemical usage 2018-2019 and pledged to make further reductions by 2020. This data is still being captured. I am hoping to use this enthusiasm to encourage other team leaders to make the same changes and ensure adequate means of capturing this data.

I plan to have a surveys carried out in 2020 at all four sites to determine plant species present using a methodology that can be easily repeated.

Promoting Awareness

Just to note we held an initial pollinator workshop in February 2018 for all parks and cemeteries staff to promote awareness and hopefully to gain support on the ground for these changes for management. We intend to hold another workshop for all staff again early in 2020, to provide an update and continue to encourage a reduction in chemical usage, change in mowing regime and annual planting practices for the benefit of pollinators.

- [Noleen Farry, Biodiversity Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)