# Business Supporters Newsletter: February 2026

Dear All

We're delighted to welcome the following companies as business supporters of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan: TLI Group, Tureen Landscapes, Promise Gluten Free (Gallaghers Bakery), Mannings Bakery and Hortiland Ltd.

**February 2026's newsletter highlights include:**

- To spot this month - **keep an eye out for large bumblebee queens emerging from hibernation**
- To do this month: **make a plan Q1-Q4 for how you'll help pollinators in 2026**
- **The National Biodiversity Data Centre is recruiting for an All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Programme Manager** - application deadline 6 March 2026
- Planning ahead: **Please think twice about planting wildflower seed mixes**
- Tracking biodiversity: **Review of Flower-Insect Timed Counts in 2025**
- Event Blog: **Irish Pollinator Research Network meeting 2026**
- Dispatches from Researchers: **Research update - are new woodlands good for nature? Pollinators can help us find out**
- **Pollinator noticeboard: February 2026**

**ESG | CSRD/VSME | BIODIVERSITY | NATURE-POSITIVE**

- **2026 INTAKE OPEN!** Join **Business for Biodiversity (BFBI)** (and KPMG/Deloitte) to explore approaches to nature-positive through the FREE #Discovery Track of the Nature Strategy Accelerator Programme.
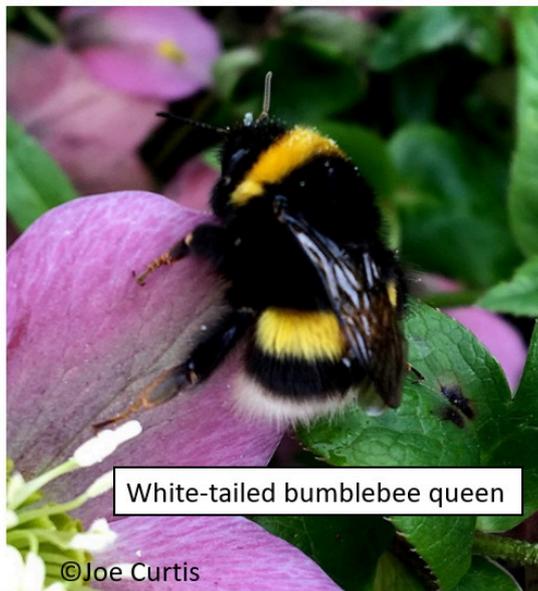
Additional tracks available #Action #Strategy and #Evolution depending on where you are on your nature-positive journey. Avail of in-person workshops, peer learning and expert guidance in relation to CSRD (and VSME). Contact Dr Maria Fitzpatrick manager@businessforbiodiversity.ie, BFBI's Executive Director.

- **Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI)** - explore BITCI's Accelerate - The Business Pact for Climate and Nature.and BITCI's Business Working Responsibly Mark ("The Mark") Ireland's *Environmental, Economic, Social and Governance* (EESG) standard, verified by the National Standards Authority of Ireland. Contact Cillian McMahon CMcMahon@bitc.ie
- **Business in the Community NI (BITC)** - explore BITC's Business and Biodiversity Charter Contact Traci.Adams@bitcni.org.uk

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a framework bringing together different sectors across the island of Ireland to create a landscape where pollinators can survive and thrive. Its implementation is coordinated by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

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# TO SPOT THIS MONTH: keep an eye out for large bumblebee queens that have emerged from hibernation

The two most common bumblebee queens you will spot this month are the Buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) and the White-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lucorum*). They are similar to each other – both have one band on the thorax, one band on the abdomen and a whitish tail. The Buff-tailed bumblebee has orange bands and a buff or off-white tail. The White-tailed bumblebee has lemon yellow bands and a clean white tail. Submit your sightings to the National Biodiversity Data Centre. You can attach a photo if you're not sure if you have the correct identification. Want to track what's happening on your business site? Sign up to the Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme around your area (March-October each year).
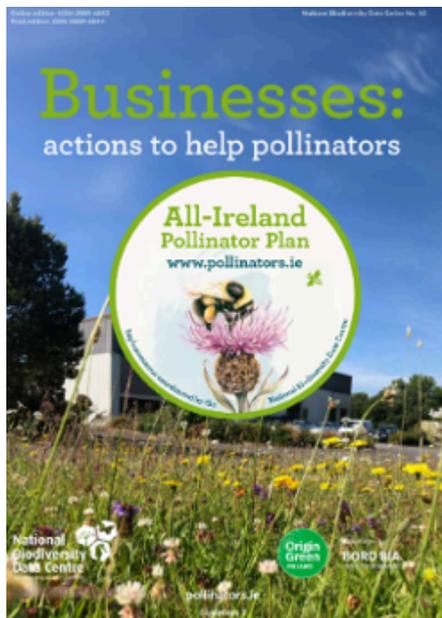
Buff-tailed bumblebee queen
©Jonathan Derham

White-tailed bumblebee queen
©Joe Curtis

**SUBMIT: Your bumblebee sightings**

**DOWNLOAD: Bumblebee poster**

**STUDY: Free online bumblebee identification course**

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# TO DO THIS MONTH: make a plan in Q1 for how you'll help pollinators in 2026

We're often asked about the best ways to help our declining wild pollinators and support wider biodiversity. Review and consider the Q1 'Top 5 monthly actions' for your business site.
Then check-off which actions you are planning to deliver on the Scoring Checklist on Page 34-35 of the guidelines _Businesses: actions to help pollinators_. Already prepared for Q1? Consider planning for Q2 onwards.

Q1 Top 5 monthly actions for business sites

READ: how collaborators, competitors & suppliers supported biodiversity in 2025 'AIPP Business Supporters Annual Review'

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# The NBDC is recruiting for an All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Programme Manager - application deadline 6th March 2026

To meet the expanding ambitions of the next All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2026-2030, the National Biodiversity Data Centre is inviting applications from suitably qualified applicants to apply for the Programme Manager role. They will be responsible for coordinating implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and will oversee a team of six Project Officers who are based in the National Biodiversity Data Centre. This is an exciting opportunity to drive a more ambitious AIPP over the coming years.



READ MORE & DOWNLOAD the candidate information booklet

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# PLANNING AHEAD: Please think twice about planting wildflower seed mixes on your business site (or in your garden)

Our pollinators need the native flowers they have evolved alongside. Studies have shown that the seeds in many wildflower seed mixes are imported from other countries, and are not native, despite what the packet might say. There is a huge risk of accidentally bringing in invasive species like Black grass that, if spread, would be devastating to the Irish agricultural industry.

*Wildflower seed mixes are much more attractive to humans* than to pollinators.
If you decide to buy wildflower seed, source it very carefully, and never plant outside your business site (or garden) setting. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan does not endorse any seed suppliers or wildflower seed products. If you really want to help biodiversity, our advice is always to Don't Sow, Let it Grow.

**Post construction works? Follow the advice on Page 10 of Businesses: actions to help pollinators**
In areas where you want to establish a meadow on bare ground, perhaps after construction works, we suggest you purchase a fine-leaved grass mix that includes species like Red Fescue, Common Bent, Crested Dog's-tail and Sweet Vernal Grass. Ensure seeds purchased are native and of Irish origin. This will prevent soil erosion and dominance of more aggressive weedy species. Going forward, the area can then be managed as a short or long-flowering meadow, and wildflowers will begin to appear naturally over time.



**READ MORE HERE**

**REVIEW: Biodiversity comparison table on Page 6 - reduced mowing versus wildflower seed mixes**

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# TRACKING BIODIVERSITY: Review of Flower-Insect Timed Counts in 2025
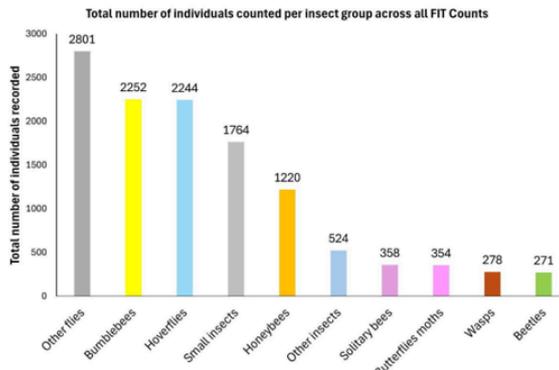
Flower-Insect Timed Counts (FIT Counts) is a citizen science scheme that collects information on the numbers of flower-visiting insects. Volunteers watch a 50cm x 50cm patch of flowers for 10 minutes and count how many insects visit. Anyone can take part, and you can carry out a FIT Count in any location with flowers including your business site and/or garden. In 2025, gardens were the most common habitat in which FIT Counts were carried out.

In 2025, over 1,000 records were submitted through the scheme by 235 volunteers with over 12,000

insects counted in total. We would like to express our sincerest thanks to everyone who submitted FIT Counts during 2025. Your continued efforts and support will help assess changes in the number of flower visiting insects.



**FIT COUNT WEBINAR: sign up for 1 April 2026 with Dr Michelle Larkin**

**REVIEW the FIT Count scheme (full breakdown) & learn how to start FIT Counts (April-September)**

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# EVENT BLOG: Irish Pollinator Research Network meeting 2026

Pollinator researchers descended onto UCD campus this year for the 9th annual Irish Pollinator Research Network (IPRN) meeting, hosted by Dr Dara Stanley and Dr Julia Jones. Researchers from eight universities and research institutions presented their research to the group, with approximately 40 members in attendance. This year's meeting was one of the largest, showing that while pollinators are in decline, there is a large group of dedicated people working hard to reverse this.

Between 2021-2025 there were ~76 pollinator-related scientific papers published in Ireland. Read more on the Irish Pollinator Research Network (IRPN) and the publications. This research supports the work of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

**READ: IPRN event blog**

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# DISPATCHES FROM RESEARCHERS: Research update - Are new woodlands good for nature? Pollinators can help us find out

Are new woodlands good for nature? Pollinators can help us find out. Kate Harrington, an ecologist and post-doctoral researcher based at Trinity College Dublin tells us about her research.
This blog is part of the 'Dispatches from Researchers' series, which features guest articles written by experts in pollination and related fields.



Edge of a 12-year-old native woodland plantation in Co. Dublin

**BLOG: 'Dispatches from Researchers' - new woodlands**

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# POLLINATOR NOTICEBOARD: February 2026

**RESOURCES - BLOGS - WEBINARS - EVENTS etc.**

- How to Plan for Pollinators in Q1-Q4.
- Setting a biodiversity budget for 2026 - Plan for Pollinators.
- Invite colleagues, Biodiversity Champions and your Green Team to sign up to the business supporters newsletter.

**WHERE TO START ON YOUR POLLINATOR-BIODIVERSITY JOURNEY & HOW TO COMMUNICATE**

- START with the Checklist on <u>Page 34 Businesses: actions to help pollinators</u>.
- Run a <u>Biodiversity Maps</u> report (down to 1km2) for your site.
- Check out which of your business neighbours are delivering <u>Actions for Pollinators</u>.
- Review your Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) - <u>Action for Biodiversity</u> and speak to your local <u>Biodiversity Officer</u> to increase engagement..
- Nominate a Biodiversity Champion and create a Green Team. Invite them to sign up to the <u>AIPP business supporters monthly newsletter</u>
- Connect through socials - Insta @allirelandpollinatorplan, X @PollinatorPlan
- Communicate what you are doing for biodiversity by aligning with the <u>All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Key Campaigns and Messages 2025</u> - 2926 update imminent.
- Learn about pollinators-biodiversity with <u>free online courses</u>.
- Participate in biodiversity <u>Training Events Workshops and Webinars</u>

## POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

- **Planting & Maintenance:** <u>Top Ten Guide</u>, <u>Pollinator-friendly planting code</u>, <u>Planting/Management on New Construction Developments</u> (a Cluid guide) - biodiversity actions endorsed by the AIPP.
- <u>Native hedgerows</u>, <u>Nesting habitat</u>, <u>Orchards</u>.
- <u>Reduced mowing/ meadows</u> and verges (and lift the cuttings!)**.**
- <u>Solar Farms</u>, <u>Wind Farms</u>, <u>Healthcare sites</u>.

## POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY CONSIDERATIONS

**Why your business should consider an:**

- <u>ALTERNATIVE action to sowing a wildflower seed mix after earthworks - Page 10</u> - choose a fine-leaved grass mix and then reduced-mowing and lift the cuttings.
- <u>ALTERNATIVE action to honeybee hives</u>.
- <u>ALTERNATIVE action to sowing/gifting wildflower seed mixes</u>. Think carefully by reading <u>Dr Noeleen Smyth's article on the issues with wildflower seed mixes.</u>
- ALTERNATIVE employee/client, choosing instead a <u>Bumblebee poster</u>, <u>herb packets</u> (Page 12), <u>sunflower seeds (Page 27)</u>, or <u>bulbs (Page 11)</u>, <u>or choose from the TOP TEN guide of pollinator-friendly plants for different situations</u>.

## POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY IDEAS

- <u>Create *thematic* places for pollinators - sensory, herb, rain or moon garden/planter as part of a biodiversity walking trail</u>?
- <u>Raise awareness in your value chain</u> including <u>Client engagement for pollinators</u>.
- Identify AIPP pollinator-friendly <u>procurement (tendering/specifying) and sponsorship</u>.
- Score how <u>pollinator-friendly your car park</u> is (Page 31).
- Develop an <u>ecological corridor</u> with business neighbours in your <u>business/technology park</u>.
- **Geographic-based local actions:** <u>Large Carder Bee - coastal areas across the island</u>, <u>Shrill Carder Bee - Roscommon, South Galway or The Burren</u>), <u>Great Yellow Bumblebee - Mullet Peninsula/ Belmullet, Co. Mayo</u>.

## TRACK - MEASURE - MONITOR: MAP EARLY, MAP OFTEN

- <u>Score your business </u>site (Checklist Page 34) on pollinator-biodiversity-friendly actions.
- Add pollinator-biodiversity actions to <u>Actions for Pollinators (GIS)</u> to layer data over time.
- Identify which biodiversity is on or 'adjacent' to your site via <u>Biodiversity Maps</u>.
- Engage your <u>value chain with AIPP evidence-based actions</u> and set simple SMART targets.
- <u>Track and measure what's happening to pollinators on your site</u> in a scientifically robust manner e.g., Friday FIT Counts (easy-level App) and Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme (mid-level).
- Map, track and manage invasive species via <u>www.invasives.ie</u>
- Healthy meadow indicators: <u>Track/record rare bee orchids on your site</u>.

**Invite colleagues, Biodiversity Champions and your Green Team to sign up to the free monthly AIPP business supporters newsletter**

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