

Biodiversity for All – 2024

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority awarded Huntingdonshire District Council a three-year £1.35 million bid to accelerate the delivery of measurable biodiversity net gain in Huntingdonshire. This will be delivered through five key themes – CPCA Overview, Jobs and Skills, Strategic Open Spaces, Community Driven Delivery and Mapping. Four of these themes have developed into their own work programmes - please see project updates below.

Project Updates: 9th August 2024

Jobs and Skills

The Vision:

To increase local green skills to help tackle the biodiversity crisis and facilitate further green jobs, bringing local stakeholders and residents together to support nature, educate and contribute towards a Net Zero Huntingdonshire. Find out more [here](#).

What has been achieved this week?

- Work continues at the sixth Green Skills at Stukeley Meadows. The structural part of the pond has been completed. The pond will be filled up over the next couple of weeks.
- As part of the Biodiversity for All funding, the Biodiversity for All team and Countryside Services have worked collaboratively with Anglia Ruskin University to offer two interns an opportunity to gain work experience at Paxton Pits Nature Reserve and Hinchingsbrooke Country Park to compliment their studies during the Summer months.



The interns conducted active butterfly and wild meadow surveys, helping them learn how to identify different species, understand habitats and assess population health.

Alongside surveys, they also gained experience using a variety of equipment and hand tools such as the router and brush cutter, with the rangers at Paxton Pits.

The interns found their time to be “fulfilling” and found that it helped them “boost their knowledge”, encouraging “all who is passionate about wildlife promotion and sustainability to get involved!”.



Strategic Open Spaces

The Vision:

To prioritise key HDC strategic sites across Huntingdonshire for biodiversity development. The aim is to gather evidence, engage with the community to co-design and deliver on projects to boost biodiversity on these sites.

What has been achieved this week?

- Having consulted with members of the public and Huntingdonshire District Council's planning team, key deliverables for [Priory Park](#) and [Hill Rise](#) have been highlighted.

Priory Park, St. Neots:

Transform the park into a parkland habitat overlooking a diverse grassland habitat. The park will be loosely zoned with the sports area kept as amenity grass. These are the key proposed changes:

- Improvement an expansion of Woodland areas
- New and improved Wildflower meadows
- Remove litter and improve water flow through ditches

- Installation of deadwood areas and bug hotels to provide habitats for invertebrates
- Pond restoration and boardwalk



Hill Rise Park, St. Ives:

Biodiversity improvements will seek to improve the habitats in the park. The central space will remain as amenity grass for football use and events. These are the key proposed changes;

- Enhance woodland and establish a mixed scrub buffer
- Plant cherry orchard trees
- Convert modified grassland to species rich neutral grassland
- Establish new species rich hedgerow to the South
- Ensure habitat continuity through new tree planting
- Enhance existing wildflower strip



Hill Rise Park, St. Ives



Community Driven Delivery

The Vision:

To encourage and enable others within Huntingdonshire to increase biodiversity through community engagement and delivery.

What has been achieved this week?

- This week, the Graduate Ecologists continue to write their reports and recommendations, which are typically over 10,000+ words each.
- Payments have been scheduled for further applicants of the Pilot Round for the Community Biodiversity Grants. Applicants such as Ramsey Town Council.
- This week highlighted the importance of the Graduate Ecologists using the 'Biodiversity Community Grant Scoring Metric' tool to allocate grant funds based on a points based

system. This tool was influenced by a student challenge event at Anglia Ruskin University. A group of students took part in a Student Challenge activity in April 2023 called the 'Green Team' where they were hypothetically tasked with a £65,000 grant pot to spend for improving biodiversity with the aim of doubling nature. Please see the metric tool developed by the Graduate Ecologists below. Please also see the how the 'Green Team' group of students influenced this tool.

HDC Biodiversity Community Grant Scoring Metric:

Biodiversity Community Grant Scoring Metric

Note: Just fill out an unused 'SITE' page for calculation, the names and data will fill in automatically

	Site Name	Town/Village	Score	Relevant Body
Site 1	Coneygear	Huntingdon	26	HTC
Site 2	Onyett's Field	Warboys	29	WPC
Site 3	Old Cemetery	St Neots	29	SNTC
Site 4	Woodland	Sawtry	22	SPC
Site 5	Recreational Ground	Yaxley	27	YPC
Site 6	Apreece Way	Stilton	28	SPC
Site 7	King George V Playing Field	Ramsey	23	RTC
Site 8	One Leisure	St Ives	42	Please enter manually
Site 9		0	0	Please enter manually
Site 10		0	0	Please enter manually

Graph of site scores

Weighting:
 >26 points
 25 - 20 points
 19 - 15 points
 14 - 0 points

HOME SITE (1) SITE (2) SITE (3) SITE (4) SITE (5) SITE (6) SITE (7) SITE (8)



Biodiversity Grant Scoring System

Town/Village: Warboys Site Name: Onyett's Field

'Biodiversity'	Points	Point explanation
<u>Priority landscapes and habitats</u>		
Does this project repair/restore existing priority habitats?	3	N/A
Does this project restore a lost habitat?	3	N/A
Does this project extend a currently existing habitat?	2	N/A
Does this project create a new habitat?	1	N/A
<u>Metapopulation benefits</u>		
Is the site of your project part of or within 2km of one of the following priority landscapes: Great Fen, Ouse Washes, Great Ouse Valley, Nene Washes, Nene Valley?	2	2 points per priority landscape within 2km
Is the site of your project within 2km of a nature reserve or SSSI?	2	N/A
Does your project include or prioritise any of these (within 2km) priority habitats: Ancient Woodland, Lowland Meadow, Relic Fenland, Traditional Orchard?	0	2 points per priority habitat within 2km
If restoring a woodland, does your project include: adding a variety of young trees, clearing spaces, coppicing, maturation of woodland (standing deadwood, upright logs), addition of bat boxes, removal of invasive non-native species (e.g. buddleia or Cotton Easter)?	3	1 points per woodland restoration effort
If restoring a hedgerow, does your project include: filling hedge gaps with a variety of native species, creating wider hedge edges, maturation of trees, providing bat boxes?	2	1 point per hedgerow restoration effort
<u>Priority species</u>		
Are there any habitats within 2km of the project site that will support local priority species?	3	N/A
Does your project include habitats for any of the following priority species: bat boxes, log piles for invertebrates, swift boxes, wood	4	2 points per priority species habitat

HOME SITE (1) SITE (2) SITE (3) SITE (4) SITE (5) SITE (6) SITE (7) SITE (8) SITE (9) SITE (10)

'Green Team' points-based tool suggestions:

Application to HDC

- With ecological site audit or Local Recovery Toolkit, HDC can guarantee a scientifically backed application with recommendations
- Points awarded based on amount of biodiversity net gain, additional benefits, longevity of plan and financial efficiency
- Initial sifting system order of priority provided by HDC and further research – not a final judgement



[Doubling-Nature_Local-nature-recovery-toolkit.pdf](#)
[\[natural.cambridgeshire.org.uk\]](http://natural.cambridgeshire.org.uk)

Habitat priorities

1. Habitat restoration and/or improvement +3
2. Habitat Expansion +2
3. Habitat Creation +1



Section 1: Biodiversity Metapopulation Priorities

- Priority landscapes – unique ecological and geographic features and intrinsic local value
 - *Is the project site within 2km of Great Fen, Ouse Washes, etc?* +2
- Priority habitats - nature corridors and designated sites
 - *Is the project site within 2km of an Ancient Woodland, Lowland Meadow, etc?* +2
- Priority species – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Action Plan (2015) and Additional Species of Interest (2021)

Section 2: Non-ecological benefits

- Social
 - Economic – employment
 - Education and training opportunities
 - Health
 - Community cohesion/aspiration
- *Is your project likely to promote public through access?* +1
- *Does your project have additional land/allotments, that is likely to create educational opportunities?* +1

Section 3: Logistics and upkeep

- It can take up to 30 years for a site to reach its full potential regarding biodiversity (Biodiversity Net Gain metric).
- Site maintenance
- Partnerships with local organisations
- Length of time planned
- Clear outcomes to encourage community adoption
- Potential risks accrue negative points, e.g.
 - Conflict with local landowners –1
 - Introducing non-native invasive species –3



Mapping

The Vision:
To collate data, collecting observations of species on sites. To inspire and educate future generations to raise awareness of biodiversity and the part they play in the ecosystem.

What has been achieved this week:

- iNaturalist statistics – In the past two weeks, observations have increased by **272** to an overall total of **13,632** and identified species have increased by **15**, totalling **2,149**. There are currently **1,058** Huntingdonshire residents signed up to log observations through the iNaturalist app.
- This week, observers found (amongst many!):

Red Admiral



Common Hedge - Nettle



- The past two weeks have been in celebration of [Love Parks Week \(26th July – 4th August\)](#). You can find different resources below that can help you connect with nature!
 - Take a survey about the future of Berman Park [here](#).
 - Try out the [new running track at St. Neots Priory Park!](#)
 - Download our free park activity sheets [here](#).
 - Download the iNaturalist app to log your species findings across the district!



What is iNaturalist?

Citizen Science

Every observation can contribute to biodiversity science, from the rarest butterfly to the most common backyard weed.

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