

# Kent's Plan Bee

## Spring Newsletter 2024

### Our First Seasonal Newsletter

This is our first seasonal newsletter - happy spring! As the world bursts back into life, Kent's Plan Bee has been working hard to support Plantlife's No Mow May campaign for the third year.

We are also thrilled to welcome two new graduates to our team! They have been revamping our [Facebook](#) communications and launching our new [Instagram](#) page.

Speaking of Facebook, we've seen incredible growth in 2024. Over 100 new followers have joined our Facebook community, and our content has reached a staggering 45,300 people—a 139% increase in interaction! We love seeing your enthusiasm, ideas, and photos—keep them coming. Don't forget to follow us on our new Instagram Page as well.

### No Mow May has begun!

Kent's Plan Bee is abuzz with anticipation as we proudly announce that we are supporting the No Mow May campaign, for the 3rd year running! This initiative invites everyone to take a break and refrain from mowing their lawns throughout the month of May, letting the flowers grow and provide a crucial source of sustenance for our beloved pollinators.

No Mow May isn't just about letting grass grow; it's a celebration of biodiversity and a chance for individuals, businesses, and communities to come together in support of our natural world. Over the past two years, we've seen remarkable success with No Mow May, witnessing vibrant wildflower meadows springing to life across Kent, enriching our landscapes and nourishing our pollinator populations.

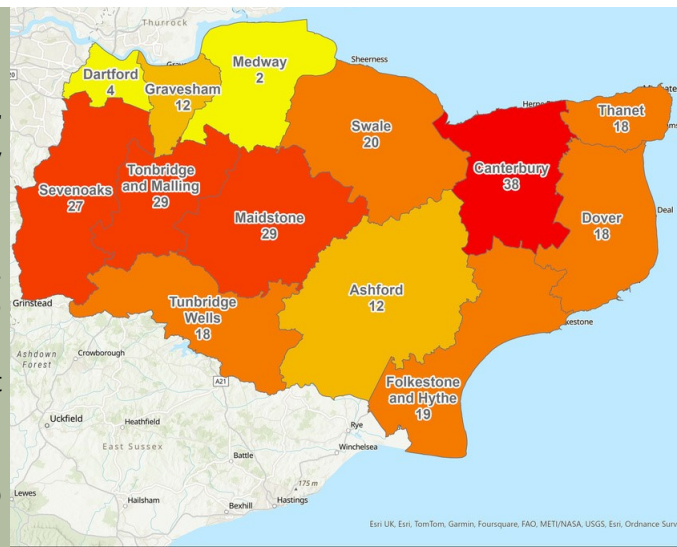
Last year's results were seriously impressive, with 272 responses totalling 131,510m2 of pledged land – that's roughly 32 acres or 503 tennis courts! This year, we aim to surpass those numbers.

This Spring, Kent's Plan Bee has been collaborating with various departments within KCC to select new areas for No Mow May! From our Highways to Country Parks, Waste and Recycling centres and KCC managed Estates, teams across the county are taking a break from mowing. These areas, like roadside verges and community parks, will serve as vibrant sanctuaries for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators to thrive. Throughout the summer, Kent's Plan Bee will showcase these designated areas on its social media platforms, inviting residents to explore and appreciate the beauty of untamed wildflowers!

### We're at the last week of May but its not too late to pledge

Check out the our mid-month map! How many pledges has your district managed so far? Canterbury was in the lead at the half way point, but it's still all to pledge for!

We want to hear from you! Whether you're a seasoned gardener or a first-time participant, your involvement in No Mow May is invaluable. Share your experiences and photos on the No Mow May Pledge page hosted on [Let's Talk website](#) and join us in making a positive impact on our environment. If you're curious about the success stories from last year or seeking resources to kickstart your own No Mow May journey, head over to the Let's Talk page for insights and inspiration. Hopefully in our Summer edition we'll have plenty of No Mow May success stories to share with you!



# B-Lines

Ever felt the isolation of small pockets of wildland in our urban jungles? Buglife's B-Lines project is changing that narrative! By creating flower-rich 'insect pathways,' the project is to reconnect fragmented habitats and support our small wild inhabitants get from A to Bee! B-Lines will cover the UK like a mosaic, creating a passable network as large as Gran Canaria Island (1,500 sq km)- and they might need your garden to link it all up!

Head to their [website](#) and explore Buglife's B-Lines map and see if your area is part of this nature roadway. If it is, great! You're already on a path to help bees, butterflies, and other small creatures thrive.



## PoMS Fit - Why monitor pollinators?



The PoMS Fit scheme aims to monitor how pollinator populations are changing nationally. By collecting flower-insect data from across the nation, this huge dataset will form an invaluable resource to measure pollinator population trends and target conservation efforts. With reports of dramatic losses of insects occurring across the globe due to habitat loss, pesticides and climate change, and concern about what this means for broader biodiversity and ecosystem health, there has never been a more important time to document evidence of change in populations of pollinating insects.

What can you do? Spend 10 minutes watching flowers and insects in good weather. This is a simple survey counting the number of insects visiting a particular flower. Every single count helps! Go to the [PoMS Fit website](#) for more information.

## Community Gardens

Amidst the jungle of urban sprawls, a quiet revolution is taking root: community gardens. These green spaces, often tucked away in the heart of bustling towns, are more than just patches of soil and plants. They're vibrant sanctuaries that play a crucial role in supporting our pollinators. Community gardens are like mini-ecosystems. they provide a diverse range of plant species, from native wildflowers to fruit-bearing trees. This variety attracts bees, butterflies, and other pollinators, creating a rich tapestry of habitat within urban limits where pollinators would otherwise struggle. Imagine the cumulative effect of countless community gardens across neighborhoods, cities, and countries. [Together, they can positively influence regional and international environmental efforts.](#) So, if you're without a garden, consider exploring the world of you local community gardens. For information on how to find your local community garden we recommend RHS.org.uk, 'Find-a-Group' Webpage!

For a Pollinator Friendly Garden of England





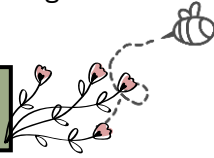
# What will you see this season?

Keep your eyes peeled for a dazzling array of pollinators as the days get warmer. Common Blue butterflies, with their vibrant wings, flit amongst gardens and parks, while Clouded Yellow butterflies bring sunshine to open fields and coastal cliffs. Look out for the busy bees, too! The fuzzy Wool Carder bee diligently pollinates herbaceous plants, and brightly coloured Shrilk Carder bees buzz between flowers in gardens and hedgerows. Don't forget the night-time visitors! The impressive Elephant Hawk-moth, with its large wingspan, pays night-time visits to fragrant flowers like honeysuckle.



No Mow May offers the perfect opportunity to witness a floral spectacle on your lawn. Dandelions, those bright yellow suns often dismissed as weeds, become a vital food source for bees. Just eight of them can fuel a bumblebee for a whole day! Cheerful daisies not only brighten your lawn but are a favourite among bees and moths. You might also find Common Bird's-Foot Trefoil, which is beautiful and a food plant for butterfly larvae. Creeping Buttercup, Yellow Rattle, Field Forget-Me-Nots, Meadow Buttercup, and White Clover – all these wildflowers join the party, creating a continuous buffet for pollinators throughout May and beyond.

## Asian Hornets in the UK



**Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina*** (also known as yellow legged hornet)  
An invasive hornet from Asia which poses a significant threat to honey bees and other pollinators. Often confused with native hornets, see below for life size comparison highlighting key features:



***Vespa velutina*** × Non-native      ***Vespa crabro*** ✓ Native to UK

Illustrations by Sarah Bunker



**Legs:** Yellow at ends  
**Head:** Black from above, orange face  
**Thorax:** Black and velvety  
**Abdomen:** Mainly black with one obvious yellow/orange band  
**Activity:** Never active at night

**Brown**  
Brown from above, yellow face  
Black and brown  
Mainly yellow with black bands, spots marks like 'dripping paint'  
May be active at night

There is a rising concern about Asian hornets coming into the UK. While they might look like our native hornets, these newcomers pose a significant threat to our native pollinators. Asian hornets feed on bees and wasps so that they can have a devastating impact on the local insect populations. Scientists say invasive species, like the Asian hornet, contribute to 60% of extinctions around the world. All possible sightings must be reported so experts can take quick and effective action to eradicate Asian Hornets.

Please keep an eye out, and if you think you've spotted one, please try to take a picture (safely) and report it. There is an Asian Hornet Watch app you can download to report any sightings. The Asian hornet is smaller than our native hornet and poses no greater risk to human health than our native wasps and hornets. Please go to the British Beekeepers Association [website](#) for more information!



If you want to carry out a PoMS Fit Survey, head to their website for more information!

<https://ukpoms.org.uk/fit-counts>

## Making Space for Nature



If you want to get involved in the LNRS but missed the workshops, it's not too late! Head over to the [MS4N website](#) and share your thoughts on the draft shortlist of priorities for nature recovery in Kent. You can map where you would like to see these priorities. You can even participate in the self-led workshops and surveys to have your say.



[Plantlife's website](#) is a fountain of knowledge advising you on the best way to handle your No Mow May lawn and how to easily manage your lawn for Let it Bloom June to keep sections longer for wildlife and pollinators.

If you received this email indirectly and would like to subscribe to our mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Sign Up". If you wish to unsubscribe from this mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Unsubscribe". Do you have a Kent pollinator news story or event that you would like featured in our newsletter? Have you created a pollinator friendly community space? Got your neighbours together to create a row of pollinator friendly gardens? Or do you have an event about Kent's pollinators you would like advertised? Email it to the address below and we will be in contact about a potential space in the Newsletter. [planbee@kent.gov.uk](mailto:planbee@kent.gov.uk) All the previous editions of the Newsletter have now been added to our webpage. You can download them as PDFs or share the website address on your social media. Find all the Newsletters on the Pollinators section of Kent County Council's website. Edited by Philippa Bromley & Annalice Line, Graduate Biodiversity Officers, Kent County Council

For a Pollinator Friendly Garden of England

