

Introduction

Waun Capel Park in Rhayader has a significant quantity of amenity grassland, regularly cut by Powys County Council (PCC). The park is situated next to the river Wye and bordering woodland and is part of an important wildlife corridor running through Rhayader and along the Wye connecting countryside to the north of the town with that in the south. In order to create more wildlife rich areas, to link the park with adjacent habitat and bring wildlife closer to the people of Rhayader, Green Connections worked with the Park Trustees to create a management plan which would increase wildlife rich long grass areas and as a consequence help to reduce PCC time and expense by reducing routine grass cutting.



Wildlife Corridors

A wildlife corridor can be formed by rivers, woodland or hedgerows. These corridors provide important routes for wildlife to spread and colonise new areas. Fauna and flora all benefit from being able to move within the safety of the corridor. Waun Capel, outlined in red, is an important part of this corridor.

The Project

Hopes were to convert mown amenity grassland areas within Park into more wildflower-rich areas, reduce grass cutting to provide all year round longer areas of grass for invertebrates and other wildlife. Large wooden planters with flowering herbs and pollinator friendly plants to be installed as an entrance feature at the Castle site, and a bee hotel, and 'wild for nature' signage to let users know areas are being managed for wildlife. Thus, creating important habitat for wildlife and bringing wildlife closer to the people of Rhayader.

Green Connections staff organised an initial community launch event in August 2021, with wildlife information stalls to engage local people about the project and an evening bat walk. The event was also a recording event and local people found and identified 57 species on the day.

Site meetings and discussions were held with Park Trustees, a Cadw officer and PCC grass cutting officer to agree project work, discuss the new mowing regime for the grass areas and tree works to be undertaken by PCC.

With the help of local Park gardeners and other volunteers, the grassland areas were scarified, wildflower seed sown and plug plants planted

'Wild for nature' signage was installed, along with two large wooden planters filled with peat-free compost and bee-friendly plants at the Castle entrance. A bee hotel and interpretation signage were also installed.

To ensure future management continuity GC staff wrote a 5-year biodiversity enhancement plan for the Park.

Project Outputs

Event	Attendees
Wildlife Day	80
Pollinator day	7
Pollinator day	7
Bat Walk	12



- A Wildlife Day to introduce the project to the community attracted 92 visitors.
- A bioblitz at the same event identified 57 species and provided a baseline survey on which to build future records.
- A bat walk on the evening of the Wildlife Day found 3 species of bat,
- Two pollinator identification days were delivered.
- One kilo of wildflower seed sown, and 70 wildflower plug plants planted.
- Two large wooden planters with pollinator plants and a bee hotel installed.
- Installed five 'wild for nature' signs.



Project Outcomes

- Park Trustees empowered to continue to enhance the park for wildlife and people, with 5-year biodiversity enhancement plan as a guide to follow.
- An agreement with PCC to cut only half wildflower grass areas each autumn as per the biodiversity action plan.
- Agreed that PCC routinely cut a wide grass path through longer grass area of Castle site for people to use and be within the wildflower area without trampling it.
- Empowered Park gardeners and volunteers to undertake annual raking of half the wildflower grass areas each autumn and compost it. Park gardeners and residents living next to the park to look after and maintain the plants in planters.
- 'Wild for nature' signage has educated park users to the creation and long-term management aims to encourage wildlife.