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## Green Connections Powys

Green Connections Powys is a collaborative Wildlife Trusts project across Powys that will be working with community groups, small businesses, landowners and statutory organisations to take local action to address climate change and biodiversity loss and create a nature recovery network across the county.

Together we will be surveying and mapping wildlife, advising on habitat management and nature-based solutions, helping people encourage more wildlife into their communities and offering opportunities for upskilling and volunteering.

The project is funded through the Welsh Government's ENRaW scheme. It will run from April 2021 to March 2023 with Radnorshire Wildlife Trust as the project lead partner. We see this project as a springboard to help landowners and communities begin to take action, develop projects and seek funding for future activity.

### Aims and Objectives

**A: Support Powys County Council and other statutory bodies to take action for climate change and the ecological emergency.**

Building on the work of previous Local Wildlife Sites and Road Verge projects, Green Connections will support PCC and local councils in better management of road verges and green spaces to benefit wildlife and add to the ecological network. The project will also support PCC and local Councils in planning green infrastructure and embedding Local Wildlife Sites and SINCs into the planning system by identifying, designating and mapping the best places for wildlife in Powys.

**B: Encourage landowners to undertake work to improve management of habitats, connect habitats and strengthen ecological networks.**

Many landowners are keen to improve their land for wildlife but are unsure where to start.

Advice on habitat management and species monitoring will be available for landowners and communities to help them undertake work to benefit wildlife. We also aim to connect landowners with volunteers to survey and monitor wildlife on their land. This information will contribute to a Wales-wide understanding of biodiversity distribution and enable our team to provide management advice, look for nature-based solutions to issues, develop ecological connectivity and seek funding streams to enable work to take place where appropriate.

The Green connections Project will be looking at opportunities for collaborative work between volunteer groups and landowners on conservation grazing, habitat management and species monitoring.

**C: Undertake specific habitat management work for rare or uncommon species on identified target areas in wider countryside.**

The project will undertake specific habitat management work on a few targeted sites where it can make a significant difference to the site's value for wildlife. This may be through scrub clearance, hay meadow enhancement or the reintroduction or reinforcement of uncommon species into certain habitats which will be well looked after and have a good chance of spreading naturally.

**D: Help community groups improve their natural environment and take action for climate change and the ecological crisis.**

An important part of the project will be supporting community groups to safely and effectively take action through the management of community green spaces, buildings and gardens. We will help groups of all ages develop ideas and undertake work that will benefit wildlife as well as people's health and well-being. We will be offering advice and training as well as habitat identification and recording.

The actions taken by the community will be mapped on a nature recovery map for Powys and be celebrated through social media and newsletters. We will encourage community groups to share ideas, support each other and to encourage others to form groups and take action.

The project will also be looking into ways to develop community enterprises growing native species and trees, either to improve their green spaces and gardens or sell to raise funds for more work.

### **E. Provide opportunities for people to learn about wildlife and take part in training and volunteering activities.**

There will be opportunities for people to learn habitat management and species monitoring skills while volunteering and we will be supporting groups that wish to set up in their local area.

Staff and local experts will lead some training about wildlife for volunteers, communities and landowners. In addition, there will be opportunities for intermediate level of training through external organizations or trainers, not always available to volunteers. Examples might be habitat mapping and monitoring change for landowners, first aid courses for volunteers and tree safety training for community woodland owners.

### **F. Support rural businesses in making changes in their land management to implement nature-based solutions and support biodiversity.**

The Green connections project aims to encourage rural tourism businesses and industrial estates to improve the management of their green spaces around buildings and car parks to encourage wildlife to return. Advice on nature-based solutions, for example rain gardens and pollinator friendly planting, can be provided.

The project will be establishing a merit badge system for businesses, landowners and communities who are looking after wildlife.

### **G: Create a Nature Recovery Map for Powys showing opportunities and achievements on both the local and landscape scale**

We will be working with our Local Record Centre (BIS) to produce a nature recovery map which is the base of all the work of the project. It will build on mapping work being undertaken by other organisations and will show land like nature reserves, road verges, local wildlife sites and community green space being managed for nature. But it will also help us identify places where connectivity of habitat is needed for rarer species like dormice, bats, and water voles.

### **Feasibility Studies**

We have three feasibility studies running through the project to explore different ways of working:

- Rarer plant reintroduction to suitable new sites, led by a specialist nursery
- Setting up collaborative groups based on the Wildlife Trust practical conservation volunteering model for habitat management or species monitoring
- Community and SME growing and sale of local provenance, native plants and trees for enhancing habitats and green spaces.