

Will you Advoc8 for bumblebees?

Dear

I'm writing to tell you how I've helped bumblebees, and to ask you to take action to protect these vital pollinators.

I took part in a Pollin8 Challenge to raise money for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. The Trust's work is urgent because pollinators, especially bumblebees, are crucial to our ability to produce healthy, affordable food in the UK, and 90% of wild plants depend on them to reproduce. Our landscape would be unrecognisable without them.

I'm really concerned that bumblebee populations have crashed over the past century – since 1940, two have become extinct and several others are declining dramatically. But local authorities are in a unique position to help reverse this, and many of the actions needed would save money or be cost-neutral. Would you be willing to work with other councillors to make our area a place where bumblebees thrive? Here's what would make the most difference:

 **Create flower-rich habitats.** The loss of 97% of flower-rich grasslands in the UK since WW2 is a major reason for bumblebee decline. But simple changes to the way public spaces and parks are managed can make a huge difference. They can even save money. Flower-rich grassland locks up carbon too (more per hectare than some types of woodland) and mitigates against both drought and flooding, so this is a huge win for the climate. Councils can:

 **Turn public parks and roadside verges into pollinator havens.** More and more councils, including Orkney Islands, Burnley and Denbighshire, are successfully reducing mowing and allowing wildflowers to flourish, while still keeping areas of grass short where needed for safety or recreation. This approach has saved Dorset Council over £200k per annum.

 **Switch to bee-friendly amenity planting.** Shrub and tree planting can use flowering species that benefit pollinators. Swapping annual bedding plants with limited value for pollinators, for more sustainable, pollinator-friendly perennial plants that come back year after year, saved Burnley Council over £28k per annum.

 **Phase out the use of pesticides.** Many councils, including Lambeth and Cambridge City, have opted to go pesticide-free, successfully using other weed control methods. Many others have reduced their use – for example, Vale of Glamorgan Council has stopped spraying its public parks.

 **Make pollinator action a strategic priority.** Councils throughout the UK, such as Glasgow City, Kent and Blaenau Gwent, have Pollinator Action Plans – these embed pollinator-friendly action across all the council's work. Pollinators should be a central feature of nature and climate policies – particularly given the potential for flower-rich grasslands to sequester carbon and mitigate against both drought and flooding.

I believe this help for bumblebees would be win-win for people, nature and the climate. I would be very grateful if you could let me know what the council is currently doing to help pollinators, and whether you support the actions above.

Kind regards