



For Immediate Release

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Hatch Warren and Beggarwood is the BIZ-ness

A popular biodiversity pilot project aiming to improve habitats for wildlife and flora by managing road verges and open spaces differently, has revealed 150 different species of wildflowers and grasses during its first year.

The Hatch Warren and Beggarwood Biodiversity Improvement Zone has been run by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council across eight verges and open spaces between April and September 2020. During this time the areas have been cut differently and regularly monitored to measure the benefits. These have included a greater number of wild flowers and grasses providing better habitats for creatures to live and feed in, along with green corridors for wildlife to travel from one area to another.

The project, which has proved to be very popular with local residents, is just one of the ways that the council is responding to the Climate Emergency declared in July 2019 and helps to address concerns about losses of pollinating insects, wildflowers and other wildlife.

Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and the Natural Environment Cllr Mark Ruffell said: "The BIZ seeks to preserve and enhance the many plants and grasses that support local wildlife and has been widely welcomed by local residents who wish to encourage local biodiversity.

"The Council has introduced a new management regime that allows grasses to grow, but involves the collection of mowings when areas are cut so that the soil is not enriched, allowing delicate chalk land flowers to flourish. It has been wonderful to see the range of species found in Hatchwarren and Beggarwood.

"This project paves the way for other Biodiversity Improvement Zones in other appropriate sites across the borough. We are looking forward to seeing what new species emerge during the next growing season."

The verges will be cut back in the spring in order to help encourage new growth and create habitats suitable for the more delicate flowers and plants. The project will continue in 2021 with a range of measures to encourage new species including leaving some areas uncut and introducing different mowing regimes in others.

For updates on the project including videos of the survey work and species found go to www.basingstoke.gov.uk/hatchwarren-and-beggarwood-biz

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