



## Case Study: Leicester Bee Roads

### The Buzz

The Leicester Bee Road project is aimed at improving the connectivity and diversity of major road verges across Leicester so that pollinators can more easily disperse across the city and better connect to our more species-rich areas of meadows, parks and nature reserves.

This case study provides details of how the Urban Buzz Project (2017-2019) used partnership working between Buglife and the City Council to create over 4000m<sup>2</sup> of pollinator habitat around Leicester's road network.



### The Background

Leicester is encircled on its outer boundary by a ring-road which enables commuters to travel from one part of the city to another without travelling through the city centre and other minor roads within residential areas. As such, and typical of other Midlands cities, the roads are busy with an almost constant flow of traffic.

The road network was typically designed prior to much of its surrounding infrastructure and incorporates many of the utilities required for residents and businesses. Roadside verges are generally quite wide at 5 to 10m or more, seeded generally with a low diversity amenity grassland mix and until recently were mown frequently throughout the growing season to maintain a short sward.

Some verges although rare, are naturally species-rich and support orchids, other areas were created with turf grasses cut from meadows prior to residential housing being developed. More recently, several areas were re-seeded with wildflower seed following changes in road scheme layout to enhance biodiversity generally.

## The Project

Working closely with the Council's Nature Conservation and Parks teams, the Urban Buzz officer helped to identify sites on the outer ring road that were suitable for wildflower seeding. The criteria for selection was based on sites of low diversity and which formed a connection to nearby sites that were higher biodiversity value such as large parks or nature reserves. By taking this approach it was hoped that the green network of sites across the city could be enhanced and provide pollinator pit-stops for insects to facilitate their conservation and dispersal.

A total of eight Pollinator Pit-Stops were created with two wildflower seed mixes to provide a range of diverse species over a long flowering period between May to October. The two seed mixes are:

**Native wildflower Seed Mix** – native wildflowers, mainly perennials, with some annuals

**'Sarah Bouquet' Mix** – native and non-native species including annual and perennial

## The Sites

The sites were split into linear grass strips running parallel to the road and roundabouts as shown below. Further details of the sites are described in a separate report with plans available in the Leicester Urban Buzz Evaluation

### Roundabouts

Hamilton/Troon Way  
Beaumont Leys Lane  
New Parks/Dominion Road  
New Parks/Hinckley Road

### Road Verges

Goodwood Road  
Wakerley Road  
Glenfrith Way  
Glenhills Boulevard

## Site Preparation and Seeding

Each site was prepared by the Council maintenance team by cut and collection of arisings and scarifying the surface. The sites were then seeded by the Urban Buzz officer and a team of volunteers in April 2018 using demarcated areas for each seed mix.

## Monitoring



Volunteers were trained to identify plants and pollinators by Naturespot, the Council ecologist and Urban Buzz officer prior to undertaking a monthly monitoring programme from June to September to establish the flowering season of each seed mix and pollinators they attracted.

The University of Leicester undertook additional surveys to establish which types of pollinators were attracted to certain plants and their behavioural interaction between species

Further monitoring has been programmed in for spring 2019

## Further Information

Further information and how to get involved is available at [www.leicester.gov.uk/promoting-biodiversity](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/promoting-biodiversity)

