



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Transport's 'Road Verges for Wildflowers' Initiative



# The trunk road and motorway network of Wales.

- Over 1000 miles of trunk roads and 75 motorways.
- Associated estate of land = 3,000+Ha.
- Made up of;
  - Woodland.
  - Hedges.
  - Individual trees.
  - Grassland (including verges but also larger mitigation areas).
  - Wetlands.
  - Ornamental planting.

# About the Initiative

- The initiative was launched in June 2014.
- A 5 year commitment to improving some road verges along the trunk road and motorway network for wildflowers.
- Links with the Action Plan for Pollinators.

# Themes of the Initiative

- Briefly grouped in three themes.
- **Theme 1** - Creating new Wildflower verges.
- **Theme 2**- Designating Wildflower verges.
- **Theme 3** - Improving them through appropriate maintenance.

# Gaining support - Making the policy links.

- Government of Wales Act (2006), Welsh Government's commitment to promote Sustainable Development, of which this is part.
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), requires public bodies to have regard for enhancement of biodiversity in their work.
- Programme for Government – '*Environment and Sustainability*' includes
  - Protecting healthy ecosystems.
  - Creating sustainable places.
- Links to Welsh Government's 'Action Plan for Pollinators' (2013)

# Gaining support - Initiative's objectives framed as 'Proposals' with expected outcomes – Theme 1

Theme 1- Creating new wildflower road verges.	
Proposals under this theme	Main outcomes we would expect from the proposal
<b>a)</b> Identify suitable locations, for example at Deeside and Merthyr Tydfil areas; or other key gateway sites on the network, and carry out 10 'Wildflower Verge' creation projects.	The completion of 10 wildflower verge creation projects during 2014.
<b>b)</b> Use the detailed data from the road verge survey (Theme 2) to identify a longer term programme of 'Wildflower Verge' creation projects, sustained over a 5 year period. The target will be to carry out up to 10 improvement projects per year.	A sustained programme of wildflower verge creation schemes, with up to 50 projects completed by 2019.
<b>c)</b> Review existing road infrastructure projects currently being designed to ensure that the creation of wildflower areas is included in the landscape design.	More wildflower verge projects created in the road infrastructure schemes Transport are currently delivering.
<b>d)</b> Ensure that the principles of identifying opportunities for the enhancement or creation of wildflower areas is an objective when planning and designing new road infrastructure and improvement projects in the future.	Improved guidance for project teams and an increased number of wildflower verges delivered as part of future new road infrastructure schemes.
<b>e)</b> Communicate the benefits and objectives of the 'Road Verges for Wildflowers' initiative.	Appreciation of the importance of road verges for wildflowers and an awareness of Transport's work to improve them.
Resources and Delivery – Theme 1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals under this Theme will be resourced through our capital programme.</li> <li>Delivery will be through either; a) New road infrastructure projects, or b) Network Management programmes.</li> <li>We will scrutinise costs and monitor projects under this theme, to ensure we obtain value for money.</li> </ul>	

# Proposals and outcomes identified for Themes 2 & 3

Theme 2- Designating Wildflower Verges to protect them.	
Proposals under this theme	Main outcomes we would expect from the proposal
f) We will survey 20% of the verges we manage each year, identifying existing important wildflower communities, opportunities to change management practices or to enhance them.	Detailed information about the verges we manage with an ongoing plan of action to improve them.
g) Where the survey of our verges warrants it, we will designate them as a 'Wildflower Verge' to both recognise their importance and ensure they are protected.	A network of designated and protected wildflower verges.
Theme 3- Improving Wildflower verges through appropriate maintenance.	
Proposals under this theme	Main outcomes we would expect from the proposal
h) We are reviewing our guidance on maintenance and will build on our previous successes and lessons learned to improve conditions for wildflowers.	Improved roadside verge management guidance to benefit wildflowers.
i) As the results of the detailed survey become available (on a year by year basis), we will identify opportunities to change management of the verges when it is appropriate and cost effective to do so.	In this way, by the time the 5 year survey programme is completed we will already have brought about significant improvements in maintenance for the benefit of wildflowers.
Resources and Delivery – Themes 2 & 3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals under this Theme will be resourced through existing revenue budgets. We anticipate that this will largely be cost neutral as it changes rather than increases existing maintenance.</li> <li>Delivery of this part of the initiative will be through our maintenance contracts.</li> <li>We will scrutinise costs and monitor activities/actions under these themes, ensuring value for money.</li> </ul>	

# Gaining support – emphasising the Economic and Social Benefits.

## *ECONOMIC*

- Identifying and utilising Welsh suppliers of seeds, plants and materials; some of which will be SMEs
- Procuring locally, specialist landscape services to carry out improvement projects.
- Links with businesses and communities to enhance local environments, contributing to regeneration objectives and potentially increasing pride in their area.

## *SOCIAL*

- In meeting the needs of local communities, supporting their aims for improving their local environment.
- Identifying and working collaboratively with stakeholders such as schools or community groups to meet and deliver joint aims and objectives.

# Delivering the Initiative

Cameron Lewis

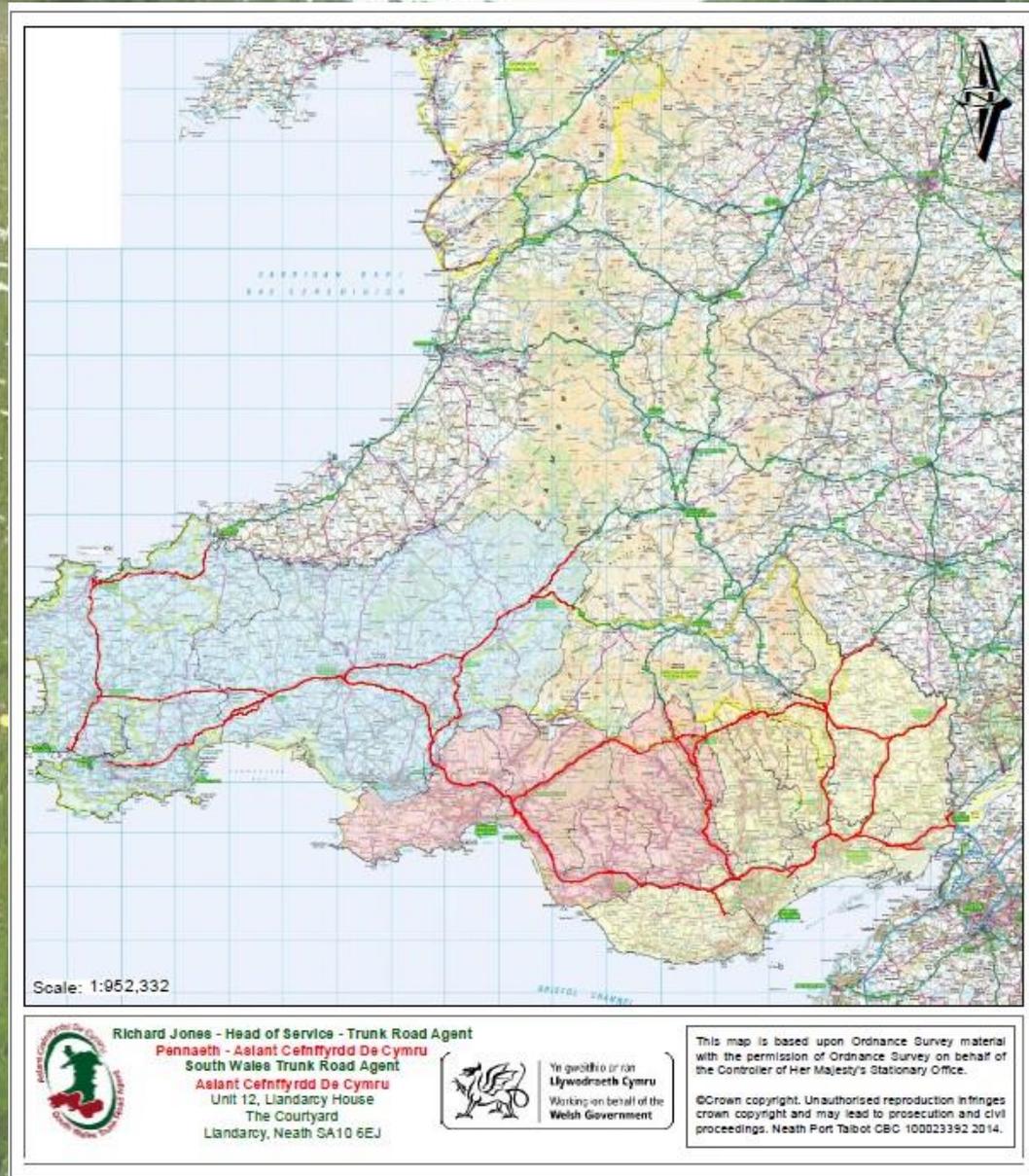
South Wales Trunk Road Agent.



# Road Verges for Wildflower Initiative

Management of South Wales Trunk Road  
Wildflower sites

# SWTRA network



# A40 Near Llandeilo

**Summer 2013**



**January 2014**



# A40 Near Llandeilo

**June 2015**



**July 2015**



# A40 Near Llandeilo



# A40 Near Llandeilo

**April 2016**



**June 2016**



# A40 Near Llandeilo



# A470 Near Merthyr Tydfil

**April 2016**



**June 2016**



# A470 Near Merthyr Tydfil

Improved woodland edge following season



# Enhancement by seeding

**Pollinator wildflower mix**



**Yellow rattle sowing**

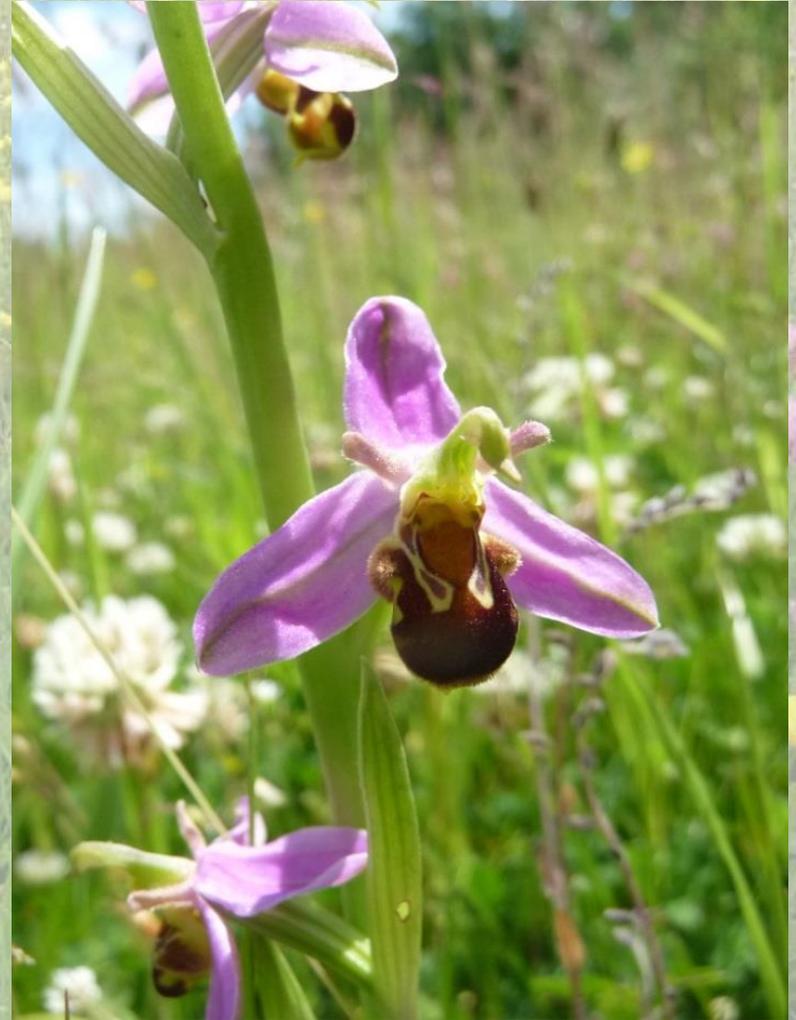


# Cross network species of interest

**A40/A449 Raglan Pyramidal orchid**



**A449 Usk bee orchid**



# Providing interest to pollinators throughout the season

A48 Carmarthenshire - June



M4/A470 Coryton gyratory - May



A4060 Cowslips - April

A470 Merthyr Tydfil – early July



Pont Abraham – late July

# Summary of progress

- On course to complete the programme of wildflower verge creation schemes, with up to 50 projects by 2019.
- Improved guidance for project teams and an increased number of wildflower verges delivered as part of future new road infrastructure schemes.
- On course to complete road verge surveys which will inform an ongoing plan of action to improve them.
- As the results of the detailed survey becoming available (on a year by year basis), opportunities are being identified to change management of the verges when it is appropriate and cost effective to do so. In this way, by the time the 5 year survey programme is completed we will already have brought about significant improvements in maintenance for the benefit of wildflowers.

# The future

## Challenges.

- Keeping up the momentum.
- Sustaining the 'goodwill'.
- Resources!

## Opportunities.

- Building the evidence base.
- Collaborating and sharing.
- New or emerging policies (e.g. Green Corridors)

# Thank you for listening

Please feel free to ask any questions.

## Our contact details

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