

Alcester Town Council Environmental Committee		Policy Proposal Draft		Reference 23 August 2013	
Activity: To make Alcester a Bee Friendly Town – 1 st in Warwickshire			Site: Alcester Town and surrounding areas, Warwickshire		
People included: Residents, Volunteers, Retailers, Farmers, Cllrs, Local Clubs+ Assns, Children + Young People, Businesses and commercial organisations, Grounds maintenance contractors.			Partners, existing and proposed: Friends of the Earth, Soil Assn, Bumble Bee Conservation Trust, Bug Life, National Trust, Garden Organic, local schools and colleges, local Churches, local businesses, Orbit Housing Assn		
Contact Cllr: Nina Knapman Email: nina@hardy9724.freeserve.co.uk> Date: 23rd August 2013 Draft doc prepared by: Frances Carroll, Denise....Sally Environmental Committee Members				Tel: 01789 764319	

The Problem:

Britain's bumblebees are starving due to a shortage of flowers. Changes in agricultural techniques have meant that there are far fewer wildflowers in the landscape and this has caused a dramatic decline in populations. Bee decline has now gone from a serious problem to a crisis. Figures published by the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) last week show that a third of all honey bee colonies in England were lost over the winter of 2012/2013 – the worst figures since records began and double the losses of the previous year. A further 47 species of bee are vulnerable or endangered in the UK and many more of our treasured British solitary and bumble bees are being found in ever smaller areas of the country.

The most important thing that can be done to help conserve bees is to provide more flowers for them to feed upon. This may involve restoring habitats to conditions allowing more wildflowers to grow or having plants in parks and gardens that can be used by bees for food.

Policy Aim:

We aim to enhance Bee Diversity within and around the Town and improve the well-being of Alcester's residents by adopting a 'Bee Friendly Town' status for Alcester.

Objective 1				
To raise awareness of the plight of bees (and other pollinators) by educating and gaining support for action from all members of the community: businesses, schools, estate managers, local authorities, housing associations, clubs and associations, retailers, church's				
Item	When / Who	Actions And Challenges	Estimated Cost/Saving £	M + E
Ask a guest Speaker to address the Town and Council at an open to all meeting	Bee Strawbridge - F Carroll Adam Noon – Cllr N Knapman ATC Marketing and publicity Invite local clubs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise the meeting in local press, websites and blogs etc Explain issues and what needs to be done to local residents, businesses, retailers, schools to achieve a consensus Challenges:	Printing costs = Speaker TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a proposal for signing at the meeting Record attendees

	retailers, farmers, schools etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apathy / low public attendance • Cllr scepticism • Cost of speaker 		
Suggest Alcester in Bloom to adopt more bee friendly practices	Arrange meeting with AiB to discuss issues and possible way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest they discontinue use of traditional bedding plants and adopt pollinator friendly alternatives for town planters in future <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resistance from traditional horticulturalists who prefer familiar plants+ resent change 	<p>No cost to ATC</p> <p>Potential cost savings to AiB if perennials or seeds used in lieu of traditional bedding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure no of beds currently growing unfriendly plants and count those switched to bee friendly species
Propose Alcester Recreation Committee adopts a more best practice, bee friendly management on ATC Land	TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select areas where grass to be managed as conservation grassland = existing sward sprayed out and reseeded with a conservation / wildflower seed mix then cut 1 per annum in February and arising's removed • Select more ATC areas where grass can be mown 'less short' – minimum cut height 4" – and arising's removed. • Select more ATC areas where Bee Worlds can be created • The TC to change how it manages dead trees by leaving 1.5m stumps which volunteers to drill to turn into bee houses. • ATC to pledge not to use pesticides in the town's green spaces and to use bee-friendly pollination plants. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr scepticism delaying process and not approving areas for change / policy adoption 	<p>Cost of spraying, cultivation and seeding. Potential saving from switching from regular cutting of amenity sward to once a year</p> <p>Cost of collection and disposal of arising's</p> <p>Cost of spraying, cultivation, seeding and signage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure areas to be changed to conservation grassland • Count the number of pollinators in 2m2 before and after changes • Measure areas to be changed to longer sward grassland • Count the number of pollinators in 2m2 before and after changes • Measure areas to be changed to a Bee World • Count the number of pollinators in 2m2 before and after changes • Ask residences how satisfied they are with ATC Bee Friendly Policy at ATC surgeries before and after changes have occurred. • Record the number of bee hotels tree stumps created

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resistance from traditionalists who prefer short grass + resent change • resistance to tamper with grounds maintenance contracts for fear of cost penalties 		
<p><i>Form partnerships and cooperation agreements with local residents, schools, retailers, businesses, colleges, housing assn's, churches, farmers & landowners, residents' associations colleges, clubs + associations and other local authorities (SDC + WCC)</i></p>	<p><i>Coordination role: TBC + Cllr Knapman Printing and distribution: ATC Clerk ATC newsletter and notice boards All members of ATC playing a part but principally the Environmental Committee members and volunteers</i></p> <p><i>Local Press and TV</i></p> <p><i>Local MP</i></p> <p><i>Local Schools / colleges / stakeholders and partner's 'news items' websites'</i></p> <p><i>Retail outlets'</i></p> <p><i>107 new Coronation Meadows to be created?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prepare bee friendly information fliers / emails and send to organisations for expression of interest in bee friendly projects and actions</i> • <i>Prepare programme of activities and actions based on expressions of interest and determine which are practical and achievable</i> • <i>Provide basic advice on pollinator friendly gardening / land management and direct towards more detailed (online) information sources</i> • <i>Write to local retailers formally requesting them not stock / sell chemicals containing neonicotinoides</i> <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cllr scepticism delaying process and not engaging with the spirit of the policy</i> • <i>resistance / apathy from organisations and lack of response</i> • <i>time commitments on volunteers / councillors and consequential lack of progress</i> 	<p><i>FoE, BBCT or Garden Organic may help with layout and content design Printing costs =</i></p> <p><i>Cost each programme + action as they arise. Apply for funding from environmental organisations, stakeholders and partners</i></p> <p><i>No cost to ATC</i></p> <p><i>Economic benefit to all if bee decline is halted as food costs will rise rapidly without bee pollination</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Count and record no of organisations interested in taking part in bee friendly initiatives</i> • <i>Prepare individual M+E indicators for each initiative as they arise</i> • <i>Record number of fliers distributed</i> • <i>Record no of ATC website hits</i> • <i>Record bee friendly retailers and list on website.</i> • <i>Provide bee friendly stickers / signs for participating retailers to display</i>

Objective 2

To provide an effective, user friendly information exchange from bee friendly organisations & partners for use / updates by residents

<i>Create a web link within ATC site on the Bee Friendly Town Policy</i>	<i>ATC Clerk TBA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for use by residents, stakeholders and partners as an information hub 	<i>TBA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record no of ATC website hits
<i>Create an information section in library on Bee Friendly Activities</i>	<i>TBA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for use by residents, stakeholders and partners as an information hub <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time commitments volunteers/ staff / councillors and consequential lack of progress 	<i>Nominal – part of library service</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record no of library information visits

Objective 3

To improve the well-being and health of residents by encouraging them to take part in Bee Friendly activities and initiatives

<i>Encourage more walking / fitness</i>	<i>ATC Volunteer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a town trail between Bee worlds and newly created meadows along existing paths 	<i>Printing and distribution cost only Improved fitness = less medical costs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record number of leaflets distributed
<i>To benefit residents' happiness levels and mental health and increase popularity of the Council and local politicians</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public reaction to Bee Decline has been significant and concerned. Elsewhere attempts to improve things for bees have been positively received with good local media coverage for such projects. 	<i>An improved feel good factor = improved mental health and well being</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record public reaction to proposals and their feel good factor