

PRESS RELEASE

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Local Authorities in Wales Urged to Rethink Grass Cutting past No Mow May

Councils and organisations across Wales are being urged to put the brakes on the mowers and go beyond No Mow May — a powerful change that can help reverse decades of habitat loss.

Carolyn Thomas MS, speaking from a roadside in Denbighshire, urged local authorities to rethink their approach to mowing and make bold, long-term commitments to transform how road verges and green spaces are managed. “Adopting new approaches to grassland management allows us to give biodiversity a boost while continuing to meet the needs of our communities,” said Carolyn. “By treating road verges as wildlife corridors, we can combat the nature and climate crisis.”

The area covered by roadside verges across Wales is estimated to be over 15,000 ha of land, around the size of Swansea. With thoughtful management, they could become one of Wales’ most extensive networks of wildflower-rich grassland. This is vital, given there was an estimated decline of more than 90% of lowland semi-natural grassland in Wales between the 1930s and 1990s.

Denbighshire County Council is setting the gold standard. Their pioneering roadside verge management project treats verges and urban green spaces as wildflower meadows. The council collects seed from these sites and grows native plants in its own nursery, ensuring all new planting is locally sourced and ecologically sound. The number of species increased from around 40 to 120 after just 4 years of management. Welsh Government support has helped fund this project, which has become a model for others.

Unfortunately, only a handful of councils in Wales have signed up to No Mow May this year. “There may be reasons some local authorities feel compelled to mow in May,” said Mark Schofield, Road Verges and Green Spaces Advisor at Plantlife, “but if we’re serious about restoring native wildflowers, we need to move from short-term tidy-ups to long-term transformation.

“No Mow May is a great place to start — but leaving some open space unmown for longer can support the lifecycles of a huge diversity of wildlife that depend on less disturbed wildflower-rich grassland. If we approach it as different zones, some areas can be left as unmown sanctuaries, some can be managed more like a meadow with a late summer cut, while others can be kept shorter for amenity.”

But the campaign is not just about public green spaces. Around a third of people in Wales still mow their own lawns twice a month during the summer.

Carolyn Thomas MS added: “We’re encouraging more people across Wales to help and connect with wildlife in their gardens by letting the wildflowers grow and being part of the No Mow Movement, starting in May and continuing through the summer.”

Join thousands of households, councils and organisations letting nature take the lead, letting No Mow May bloom into June. For tips, resources, and how to sign up, visit:

www.plantlife.org.uk/nomowmay

#NoMowMayAndBeyond #FlowerPower #BritishWildflowers

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About Plantlife:

Plantlife is the global charity working to enhance, protect, restore and celebrate the wild plants and fungi that are essential to all life on earth. With two in five plant species at risk of extinction, biodiversity loss is now the fastest it’s ever been and Plantlife’s work has never been more vital. Plantlife champions and accelerates conservation action, working at the heart of a global network of individuals and organisations, to influence and inspire landowners and land managers, public and private bodies, governments and local communities. As time begins to run out, Plantlife’s position as the global voice for wild plants and fungi will help to bring lasting and positive change to our natural world – for everyone’s sake.