



CREATING HABITATS FOR NATURE



INTRODUCTION

Football Clubs can play an important role in supporting nature recovery across Wales. Even small areas of land around pitches, clubhouses, car parks and training facilities can provide valuable habitats for wildlife.

Creating habitats for nature does not require large budgets or significant changes to how facilities operate. Simple actions such as leaving areas of long grass, planting native species, installing bird and bat boxes, bug hotels and creating ponds can provide food, shelter and breeding opportunities for a wide range of species.

This resource provides practical actions that Clubs can take to create and enhance habitats for wildlife.

This resource will support your Club to:

- Understand why wildlife depends on suitable habitats to survive.
- How to create wildflower and pollinator areas.
- How to provide habitats for birds, bats, insects and other species.
- Explore opportunities for community engagement and education.
- Support biodiversity recovery and nature-friendly management.





BENEFITS

Why Habitats Matter

Wildlife depends on suitable habitats to survive. Across Wales, many species face increasing pressures from habitat loss, fragmentation, pollution and climate change.

Football Clubs often contain green spaces that can help reconnect habitats across towns, cities and rural communities.

By creating habitats within club grounds, Clubs can:

- Support biodiversity and nature recovery.
- Increase the number of pollinators and beneficial insects.
- Provide nesting and breeding opportunities for wildlife.
- Improve the appearance and environmental value of Club facilities.
- Create educational opportunities for players, volunteers and local communities.
- Contribute towards local and national biodiversity goals.

The most successful sites provide a variety of habitats rather than relying on a single intervention.





POLLINATOR AREAS

Create Wildflower And Pollinator areas

Wildflowers provide essential food sources for bees, butterflies, hoverflies, moths and many other insects.

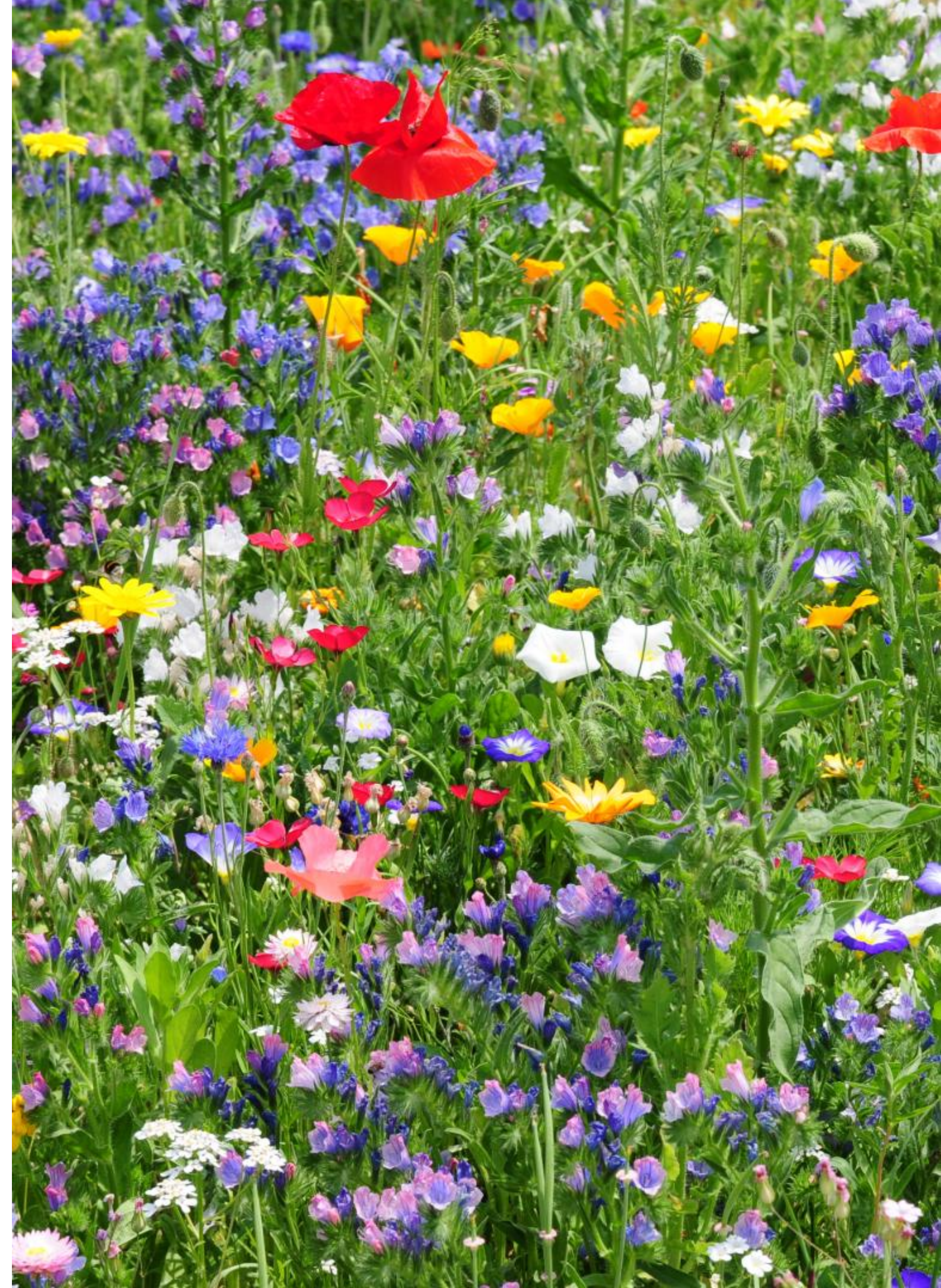
Areas managed for wildflowers can often be created simply by reducing mowing frequency and allowing naturally occurring flowers to grow.

Clubs can:

- Create long flowering meadow areas around pitch boundaries.
- Introduce shorter flowering meadow areas managed on a rotational cut.
- Allow dandelions, clover, self-heal, bird's foot trefoil and knapweed to flower.
- Establish pollinator-friendly flower beds near club entrances.
- Create pollinator corridors linking different habitats across the site.
- Use signage to explain why areas are being managed differently.

Native wildflowers generally provide greater biodiversity benefits than ornamental planting alone.

For further information on creating wildflower areas download the '[Managing Off-Pitch Grass for Pollinators](#)' resource.





BIRD HABITATS

PROVIDE HABITATS FOR BIRDS

Bird populations rely on safe nesting sites, food sources and shelter throughout the year.

Many football Clubs can support a variety of species, including robins, wrens, blackbirds, swallows, house martins, sparrows and starlings.

Clubs can:

- Install bird nesting boxes around Club grounds.
- Retain mature trees where safe to do so.
- Plant native berry-producing shrubs.
- Maintain native hedgerows.
- Leave some areas of vegetation undisturbed during nesting season.
- Provide fresh water sources where appropriate.

Different bird species require different nest box designs, so consider providing a variety of box types.





BAT HABITATS

Support Bats

All bat species in Wales are protected, and many rely on buildings, mature trees and dark corridors for feeding and roosting.

Bats play an important role in controlling insect populations and are valuable indicators of healthy ecosystems.

Clubs can:

- Install bat boxes on suitable buildings or mature trees.
- Retain mature trees where safe.
- Reduce unnecessary lighting in biodiversity areas.
- Use downward-facing lighting where illumination is required.
- Maintain hedgerows and tree lines that bats use as navigation routes.
- Create insect-rich habitats to provide feeding opportunities.

Bat boxes are relatively inexpensive and can provide valuable roosting opportunities where natural sites are limited.





INSECT HABITATS

Create Habitats For Insects

Insects form the foundation of healthy ecosystems and support pollination, pest control and food chains.

Many insects require specific nesting and overwintering habitats.

Clubs can:

- Leave areas of bare ground for mining bees.
- Retain dead wood where safe to do so.
- Create log piles in quiet areas.
- Allow some long grass to remain through winter.
- Install insect hotels in suitable locations.
- Retain leaf litter beneath hedgerows and trees.

Not all insects require purpose-built habitats. Often, the most valuable action is simply allowing nature to develop naturally.





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SMALL PONDS

Create Ponds And Wetland Features

Ponds are among the most valuable habitats for biodiversity and can support a wide range of wildlife.

Even small ponds can attract amphibians, insects, birds and mammals.

Clubs can:

- Create small wildlife ponds where space allows.
- Develop rain gardens to manage surface water naturally.
- Create wetland areas near drainage features.
- Allow natural vegetation to establish around pond margins.
- Avoid introducing fish into wildlife ponds.
- Use ponds as educational and community engagement features.

Ponds can also help manage rainfall and improve climate resilience across Club sites.





LOG PILE

Retain Dead Wood And Natural Features

Dead wood provides habitat for fungi, insects, birds and small mammals. Removing all fallen branches and natural materials can reduce biodiversity value.

Clubs can:

- Create habitat piles using logs and branches.
- Retain tree stumps where safe.
- Leave some fallen timber in biodiversity areas.
- Use natural materials to create wildlife features.
- Create habitat corners away from active playing areas.

Dead wood habitats often become biodiversity hotspots over time.





COMMUNITY

Engage Your Club Community

Habitat creation projects can provide excellent opportunities for community engagement and education.

Involving volunteers, players and local schools can increase awareness and support for biodiversity actions.

Clubs can:

- Organise community planting days.
- Run wildlife recording events.
- Create biodiversity interpretation boards.
- Develop nature trails around club facilities.
- Involve junior teams in habitat projects.
- Partner with local schools, conservation groups and Local Nature Partnerships.

Sharing progress through social media can inspire other Clubs to take action.





MONITOR & CELEBRATE

Monitor And Celebrate Success

Monitoring helps Clubs understand the impact of their actions and identify opportunities for improvement.

Clubs can:

- Record wildlife sightings.
- Photograph habitat areas annually.
- Participate in citizen science projects.
- Track the number of species observed on site.
- Share success stories through Together Greener.
- Celebrate biodiversity achievements with members and the local community.

Nature recovery often takes time, but even small actions can produce significant results over several years.





FURTHER SUPPORT

Creating habitats for nature is one of the most effective ways football Clubs can contribute to biodiversity recovery in Wales. By providing food, shelter, nesting sites and connected habitats, Clubs can support a wide range of wildlife while creating greener, healthier and more engaging environments for players, volunteers and communities.

Use what you have learned in this resource to:

- Identify opportunities for habitat creation around your Club.
- Develop a biodiversity action plan as part of your Together Greener journey.
- Support pollinators, birds, bats and other wildlife through practical habitat improvements.
- Engage members and the wider community in nature recovery projects.
- Contribute to a greener future for Welsh football and future generations.

Further information on Biodiversity can be found at www.faw.cymru/TogetherGreener-biodiversity

If you require support with this resource, please contact sustainability@faw.cymru