

## Environment Briefing July-August 2022

**Dear colleagues,**

This briefing covers a selection of the environmental work carried out by Kent County Council (KCC), alongside external partners. I trust you find it of interest and will share it with your communities.

**Susan Carey**

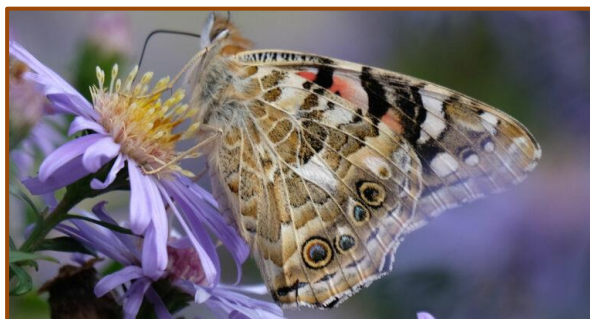
**Cabinet Member for Environment, Kent County Council**

### **The State of Nature in Kent**

This landmark report was published in July on the Kent Nature Partnership (KNP) website. With seven chapters featuring over sixty contributors, the report was funded by Kent County Council, Kent Wildlife Trust, and Kent Planning Officers Group. Under the Environment Act 2021, State of Nature reporting will be essential to inform future efforts to restore nature and will inform work such as our forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy and mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

The report describes in detail the pressures on nature over the last ten years, the efforts which have been made to restore nature, and the challenges we face as our climate changes. It shows how nature can provide solutions to climate change and using the Landscape Information Tool, it sets out the extent of land positively managed for nature in the county.

It includes a Red List assessment of species in Kent and highlights species threatened with extinction from Great Britain. The decline of species such as Swift and Adder are covered, along with increases in other species such as Heath Fritillary and Duke of Burgundy butterflies. Species for which Kent is a stronghold, such as Turtle Doves and Nightingales, are still at risk of being lost as breeding species.



***Iconic species in Kent: Painted Lady butterfly and Konik horses***

The report describes approaches to nature recovery which have either succeeded or failed in the past and is clear that partnership is at the heart of the successes. When action has been joined up, the outcomes have been dramatic. Under the chairmanship of Mathew Balfour, the KNP is working with a wide range of organisations to coordinate nature recovery, tackle climate change, and bring benefits to both wildlife and people. The State of Nature in Kent 2021 report will be an invaluable resource for Kent and Medway over the coming months and years. You can read the full report here:

<https://kentnature.org.uk/state-of-nature/>

### Kent's UNESCO Global Geopark bid



A little-known chalk ridge still connects the UK to France, stretching from Dover to Calais. This will be the centrepiece for the Cross-Channel Geopark bid to put Kent on the global sustainable tourism trail – as the world's first chalk geopark recognised by UNESCO.

The hidden ridge is all that is left after England and France were separated by a catastrophic flood hundreds of thousands of years ago, giving Kent its famous white cliffs and carving out Britain as an island. It's a joint application for UNESCO status by Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Parc Naturel Régional des Caps et Marais d'Opale in France. It would be the first of its kind to be awarded UNESCO status, and the only Geopark to be shared by two countries that don't share a land border.

#### *The Warren, Folkestone*

Taking in the entire Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (which covers about a quarter of the county of Kent) it would stretch from Sevenoaks in Kent, right through the Kent Downs and across the Dover Strait to France, into Saint-Omer, 40km (25 miles) inland – a total distance as the crow flies, of around 177km (110 miles).

A free autumn festival in Folkestone will kick off this ambitious bid to gain UNESCO status. The festival, September 23-25, will offer some really creative ways for people to get out into their landscape, learn about it, connect with it, and understand it. It will celebrate all things 'geo' with guided walks, community meals, foraging, performance, sculpture, gardening, swimming, photography, film, poetry, and more. [Aspiring Cross-Channel UNESCO Global Geopark - Kent Downs](#)

### Trees Outside Woodlands Project

Kent County Council launched its week-long Free Tree Scheme on Monday 1st August as part of the collaborative 'Trees Outside Woodlands' project, jointly led by Defra (the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), the Tree Council, and Natural England. The scheme was open to Kent residents, landowners, businesses, and organisations to apply for tree packs to plant within the county, on the condition that they have the landowner's permission.

Thousands of native trees were offered in bundles of 10, 20, and 30, ready for the 2022/23 planting season, along with biodegradable or plastic-free tree guards. There was an enthusiastic response with over 200 applications coming in each day across the county. Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be contacted in September, with bundles made ready for collection from a number of our Country Parks across two dates in November 2022 and January 2023.



### Making every drop count this summer

After a very dry winter and summer, and record temperatures, the way our weather affects us is more visible than ever. The second phase of a water saving campaign with South East Water and Southern Water started ahead of the hose pipe ban imposed by South East Water in August.

KCC's Kent Green Action branded postcards were sent to 110,000 households, in South East Water's catchment to encourage them to apply for free, water-saving devices.

A wider social media campaign from Kent Green Action also launched to encourage simple actions that save water and protect local environments.

There is also the opportunity to nominate your local school for the chance to win one of 10 water butts donated by the water companies. Entries close on 16<sup>th</sup> September so visit [www.kent.gov.uk/savewater](http://www.kent.gov.uk/savewater) to nominate your local school and follow Kent Green Action on [www.facebook.com/KentGreenAction/](https://www.facebook.com/KentGreenAction/) or [www.twitter.com/KGA\\_KENT](https://www.twitter.com/KGA_KENT) for news and tips.



*Example campaign post*

### Full fleet of electric vans

The Kent REVS electric van trial scheme has now received the final van to make a full fleet of 48 REVS vans. Kent businesses and other organisations can borrow one of these for up to two months so that they can properly experience running an electric vehicle.

KCC recently hosted Steve Elderkin from National Highways (project funder), who wanted to promote the REVS scheme benefits, and how it contributes towards Net Zero. The scheme will feature in National Highways annual report.



*Kent REVS team with National Highways*

The scheme has coordinated 240 free loans to businesses since it started, across Kent and Medway. Ashford and Swale have had the most uptake with 33 and 31 loans respectively. *Any organisation in Kent and Medway can enquire to trial a van by emailing [REVS@csltd.org.uk](mailto:REVS@csltd.org.uk) and drive towards net-zero carbon emissions.*

## Environment Briefing July-August 2022

### Decarbonising KCC's estate continues

KCC have just been successful in securing more funding to decarbonise its estate. £208,627 from Salix's Low Carbon Skills Fund will be used to commission:

- a heat decarbonisation plan for KCC's top 35 energy consuming sites
- feasibility studies, decarbonisation plans and energy efficiency measures, such as solar and LED, for 13 buildings
- heat decarbonisation plans with feasibility studies and designs for 11 further buildings and one school

*Heat pumps already installed at Henwood House, Ashford*



### No Mow May pledge 2022 results

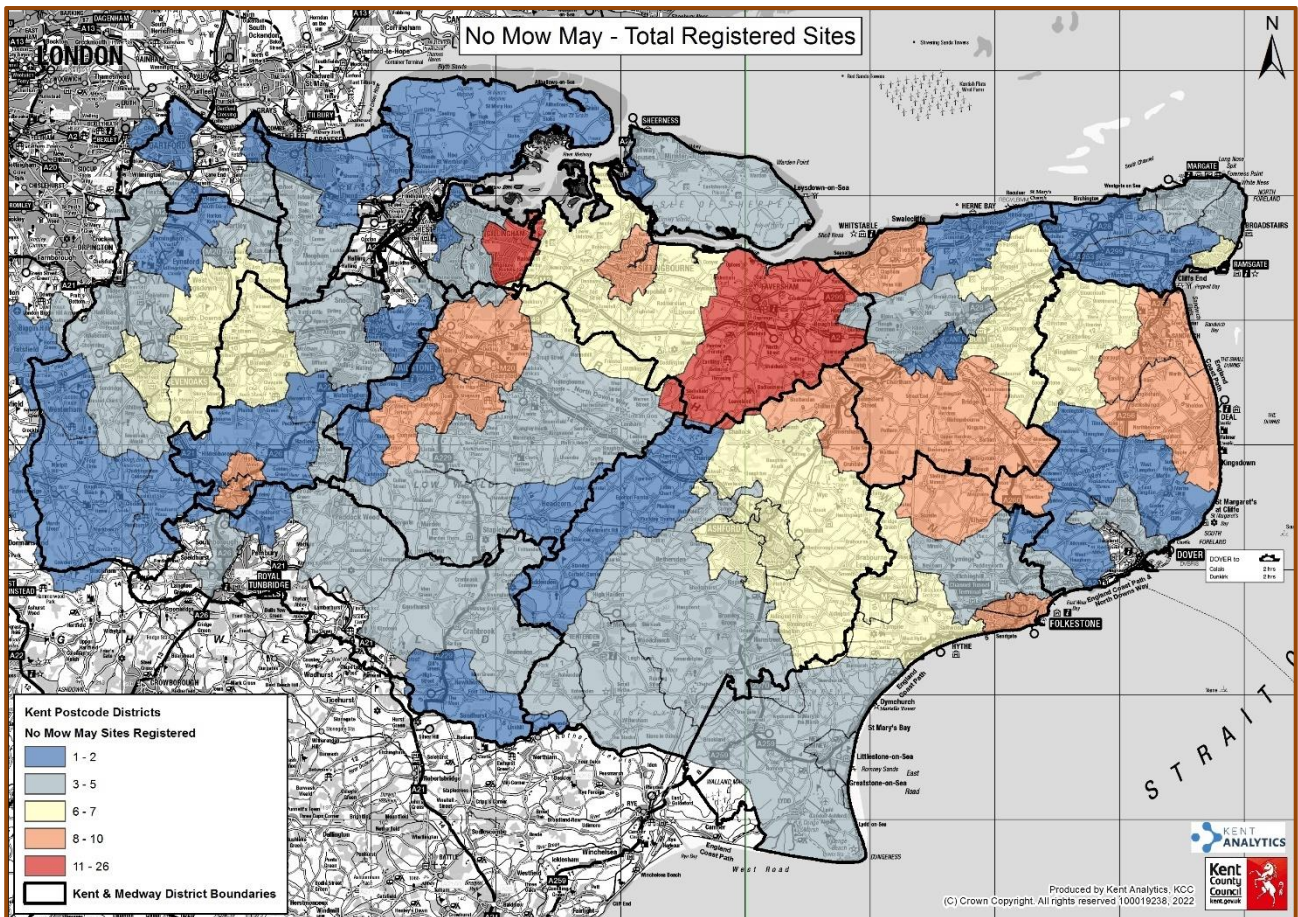
Using an online survey, Kent's Plan Bee collected information about commitments to leave lawns and grass uncut throughout May. The results revealed that:

- 352 pledges were received from 336 residents and 16 organisations
- The total area of land pledged to be left uncut amounted to over 14 hectares or 35 acres, which roughly equates to almost 500 tennis courts!
- The highest area of land pledged was in Swale, and the largest individual numbers of pledges were recorded in Swale and Canterbury.

The biggest motivation for people to take part in No Mow May was 'to grow more flowers for pollinators', which is a strong affirmation for Plan Bee and its objectives. This was supported by the additional reasons that 'wildflowers are beautiful' and 'to mow less often throughout the year'. For some people, No May Mow is part of their organic and wildlife-friendly approach to gardening, to encourage as much wildlife as possible – as well as reducing the amount of time, effort and fuel used.

For 2023, we know that there is much more that we can continue to improve across our estate, including the management of verges and the land we manage around our buildings and offices. We also hope to collect pledges from Districts, Boroughs, Town and Parish Councils.

Let Kent's Plan Bee know what you think about #NoMowMay for next year by emailing [planbee@kent.gov.uk](mailto:planbee@kent.gov.uk)



**Map of participation in No Mow May 2022**

## Another landmark for LoCASE

The July grants panel saw another 10 Kent and Medway firms receive support for their business, taking the total for this phase of the programme to £1.14 million of grants for 167 Kent & Medway SMEs. In this batch alone, the scheme supported a cycle events company, two manufacturing firms, a gymnasium, a garage, an EV charging company, a bird observatory, a plant hire firm and a landscaping company.

Businesses of all shapes and sizes can get support on their journey to Net Zero, the Low Carbon Kent team run a host of projects that can provide help. The energy price rise will hit our business communities just as hard as our residents, so please promote this help across your networks.

## Kent drivers to benefit from new pilot to increase EV charge points

Drivers will benefit from more electric vehicle charging points as Kent County Council (KCC) was announced as one of nine local authorities to be enrolled in a Government pilot. The Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme will see KCC receive a share of £10 million of government funding shared among the successful local authorities, which is part of a wider £450 million scheme.

In Kent the cash is expected to deliver 26 public charge points across four different locations (The Turner Gallery, Kings Hill, Paddock Wood Community Centre and Gravesend Cyclopark). Crucially, the pilot will allow KCC to test out new technologies to bring forward charge points in areas constrained by electricity supply.

### Heritage News



Alan Ridgers, KCC's Heritage Champion has been continuing his visits to community archaeology projects in Kent. In July he visited Shorne Woods Country Park and is pictured here with Kent Archaeological Society's Vice President Gerald Cramp.

Work is continuing there on a site adjacent to Randall Manor as part of their open weekend. Alan reports:

*"Some extraordinary finds were made during my visit. A Victorian token and a worked neolithic flint!"*

**Alan Ridgers and Gerald Cramp at Shorne Woods Country Park**

### Energy efficiency

KCC are working with 9 partners to develop a behavioural insights trial to encourage households to adopt the most effective energy saving actions. Please support our research on energy saving at home by completing and sharing **this survey** which is live until 31<sup>st</sup> August. The responses will shape this project to reduce energy use and fuel bills this autumn and winter.



### Dates for diaries

**8<sup>th</sup> September: KCC's Environment & Transport Committee.** Papers for this meeting are published on the KCC website about a week before the meeting, the meeting is webcast live and a recording is then available on [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk) under 'council meetings'. As well as our normal updates on meeting our carbon reduction target there will also be a report on KCC's Plan Tree, tree establishment strategy.

**24<sup>th</sup> September – 2<sup>nd</sup> October: Great Big Green Week in Kent** KCC will share a map of environmental events happening across the county and encourage people to get involved- the map will launch in early September on our Let's Talk Kent pages [Let's talk Kent](#)

**10<sup>th</sup> November: Kent Environment Strategy Conference** hosted at Canterbury Cathedral Lodge. Reserve your ticket here [Kent Environment Strategy Conference 2022 Tickets, Thu 10 Nov 2022 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](#)