



# NETWORKS FOR NECTAR

Final report of the  
Networks for Nectar project  
April 2014 – March 2016  
Sarah Robinson, Project Officer



## Contents

1. Summary	3
2. Introduction	3
3. Methodology for creating nectar patches and mini-meadows	3
4. Nectar patch schemes 2014 and 2015	4
5. Stirk House Hotel – a flagship site	5
6. ‘Wildflowers into the Meadows’ – our schools partnership	6
7. Lancaster Beekeepers – successful community collaboration	8
8. Field scale meadow restoration work 2014 & 2015	9
9. Promotion, partnership and participation	11
10. Conclusions	12
Appendix 1: Nectar patch and mini-meadow schemes 2014 & 2015	14
Appendix 2: Copy of N4N information sheet	16
Appendix 3: Stirk House interpretation panel	18
Appendix 4: A selection of work from the ‘Wildflowers into the Meadows’ project	19
Appendix 5: Location map of meadow restoration and nectar patch sites	22
Appendix 6: A selection of media cuttings	23
Appendix 7: Project performance indicators	25

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## 1. Summary

The Networks for Nectar (N4N) project began in the Forest of Bowland AONB in April 2014 and, with additional funding from Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT) and the AONB, will continue until the end of March 2016. The project has successfully created 25 nectar patches and 7 mini-meadows, helping to bridge the gaps between the larger meadow sites in the AONB. The project also continued with the field scale meadow restoration work begun through the Hay Time project, with 35 ha of meadows restored and enhanced over the summers of 2014 and 2015. The project has worked successfully with businesses, community groups and with schools. Over the two years of the project our public events attracted 170 people, hopefully all taking the message home that everyone can do something to help pollinators.

## 2. Introduction



The Networks for Nectar project aimed to help create a living network of nectar hubs for bees and other vital pollinating insects across the Forest of Bowland Area AONB.

Delivered by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust in partnership with the Forest of Bowland this 18-month project aimed to restore and conserve a network of small patches of species-rich grasslands, such as field corners, road verges, churchyards, school grounds, orchards, village greens and farmland.

Networks for Nectar aimed to create 'stepping stones' in the nectar network, allowing pollinating insects to move from one nectar-rich habitat to another, effectively joining up some of the existing larger wildflower areas. It aimed to benefit local populations of insects, birds and small mammals, and to provide many more opportunities for people to enjoy the iconic beauty of native wildflowers.

The project built on the success of Bowland Hay Time through which the AONB and YDMT worked with farmers and land owners to restore 65 hectares of wildflower hay meadows between 2012 and 2015. Both of these projects have been made possible with funding by the Lancashire Environmental Fund.

## 3. Methodology for creating nectar patches and mini-meadows

Nectar patches are described as any small patches of native flowering plants or shrubs which add a nectar and pollen source for pollinators. They can be produced by planting or by seeding. Sowing cornfield annual seed produces a spectacular display of wildflowers



usually found in arable fields. Sow a mix of cornfield annuals in the late autumn or spring onto a pre-prepared seedbed. Leave to grow throughout the spring and summer. Cut back once all the flowers have finished, and remove the cuttings. The seeds can be collected for the following year. In order to have cornfield annuals on the same site each year, repeat the process of sowing into pre-prepared bare soil. When planting native species, it is best to grow plants which together produce as long a flowering period as possible, as this will ensure a steady supply of nectar and pollen. Match species to the local ground conditions and aspect. Fruit trees and soft fruit bushes are a fantastic addition.

Mini-meadows can be established in existing grassland or on prepared bare ground. Adding yellow rattle seed before Christmas to a tightly mown and raked existing lawn allows this important species to establish the following spring. Leave the lawn area unmown from the beginning of the year through till the end of the summer and then cut and rake up all the cuttings. If possible leave the grass to dry before raking up. The following year, repeat the process but this time add wildflower seed instead of the yellow rattle. You can also add in plug plants of particular species, it is best to do this in the autumn after you have cut and raked the site. On a pre-prepared seed bed, sow a native wildflower and grass seed mix either in the autumn or the early spring. It is a good idea to also sow a cornfield mix at the same time as a 'nurse' crop to the wildflowers. The cornfield annuals grow and flower in the first summer, whilst the meadow species take longer to establish and are protected by the annuals. As above, leave the area unmown until the end of the summer, then cut and remove the cuttings, keep mown until the end of the year and then let the site grow. Your meadow will not be successful on fertile soil. You will need to remove top soil before preparing the seed bed.

#### 4. Nectar patch and mini-meadow schemes 2014 and 2015

The N4N project has worked with ten community groups, six private landowners, ten businesses and five schools during the two years of the project, creating and managing a total of 25 nectar patches and 7 mini-meadows. As shown in the table in Appendix 1, some sites were seeking advice and guidance when the project started in 2014. Others worked with us over the length of the project in order to ensure that patches and mini-meadows were both created and the ongoing management was put in place, whilst a third set started working with the project during 2015. The map at Appendix 5 shows the location of the N4N sites across Bowland, as well as the location of the meadow restoration sites created in the related Bowland Hay Time project.



As the project involved such a diverse selection of sites, I have decided to illustrate its results through a series of case studies. The first, Stirk House, looks at how the project interacted with businesses; the second, 'Wildflowers Into the Meadows' looks at how we worked with schools; and the third, Lancaster Beekeepers looks at how we delivered more by supporting community groups with similar aspirations and intentions.

## 5. Stirk House Hotel – a flagship site



Stirk House Hotel near Gisburn was one of the businesses which expressed an interest in being involved at the start of the project. With 22 acres of grounds, it was well placed to be able to provide space for pollinating insects, and is also situated close to a Hay Time restored meadow. During the spring of 2014, we worked with Chris Dobson, the chef at the hotel, to formulate plans for a mini-meadow strip, which was seeded with cornfield annuals and a traditional meadow mix. The cornfield annuals provided a fantastic display in 2014, as did the meadow flowers in 2015. One of the successes of this part of the project has been the relationship with the hotel, and the ability of the gardener to put all the necessary cutting management in place.

### *Cornfield annual mix at Stirk House*

The meadow planting in the spring of 2014 was complemented by the planting of an orchard, a collection of various Buddleia varieties, which together have a long flowering period, and a soft fruit orchard. In late spring 2015, another meadow area was seeded with a cornfield annual 'nurse' mix and a wet meadow mix, which better suited the ground conditions.

In April 2015, the hotel hosted a 'Networks for Nectar' training day, with private landowners



and small business owners attending to see what work had been done at the hotel, and get hands on experience of the practicalities of creating a nectar strip or mini-meadow. As part of that event, we produced the N4N Information Sheet which is at Appendix 2, as well as a permanent interpretation panel for the hotel explaining the work completed so far, which can be found at Appendix 3.

In October 2015 the hotel hosted the final large event of the N4N project, with 45 Rainbows, Brownies and Guides from the Clitheroe Division of the Girl Guides joining AONB and hotel staff to build 'Bowland's Biggest Bug Hotel'. Three cable reels donated by the B4RN project (Broadband for the Rural North) were put together into a tower by Jim Robertson, groundsman from the hotel, and then were filled with logs, leaves, straw, tiles, bricks, wood offcuts and stone, to provide a fantastic giant bug hotel. The girls were rewarded with cake and hot chocolate provided by Chris Dobson and his team at the hotel.



*Bug hotel construction at Stirk House Hotel*

Unfortunately the bug hotel was damaged by the storms in December, and so will be repaired and re-sited to a more sheltered position in the hotel grounds in the New Year.

### 6. 'Wildflowers into the Meadows' – our schools partnership

During the winter of 2014, we were approached by Anne Pickup, a retired head teacher and local Rotarian, to help her to put together an outdoor learning project for her to deliver to



local schools in 2015. After some discussion, we devised 'Wildflowers into the Meadows', a school growing project which was subsequently funded in partnership by the AONB's Sustainable Development Fund, Ribblesdale Rotary Club and N4N. In the project, five schools were provided with the equipment needed to grow meadow plug plants, as well as training sessions for the class teachers and copies of the YDMT produced 'Into the Meadows' education packs. The five schools, with help from our volunteer Phil Dykes, set up seed growing nurseries in the spring of 2015. In June, all the schools then visited the meadow at Stephen Park in Gisburn Forest, which is managed by the Forestry Commission and which was restored by the Bowland Hay Time project in 2012, in order to spend a day identifying flowers and bugs, learning about meadows and pollinators and enjoying spending time outdoors.



*Bug hunting and recording meadow plants at Gisburn Forest meadow in June 2015*

In September 2015, the children returned to the meadow, and spent a morning planting out the different species they had grown.



*Children from local Clitheroe schools planting plug plants at Gisburn Forest*

The children had also produced some fantastic work in school, some of which can be found at Appendix 4. The success of this part of the project was due to the way in which we were able to work in partnership with Anne Pickup. Her knowledge and experience of working with the schools involved and the relationships she already had with the staff meant that we were able to achieve much more than if we had begun those relationships ourselves from

scratch. We were able to input technical help and support, as well as help on all the visit days and training sessions for the teachers, but without Anne and Phil Dykes, we would not have had such a successful schools programme. All the teachers praised the educational resources contained within the 'Into the Meadows' pack produced by YDMT, and it was great to be able to use resources which had come out of a previous meadows project.

## 7. Lancaster Beekeepers – successful community collaboration

In 2013, Lancaster Beekeepers (LBK) started work on a Community Pollinator Patch project, working with local residents, church groups, scouts, brownies, cubs, Duke of Edinburgh scheme members, Community Payback teams and landowners to replace areas of mown grass with pollinator patches of corn field annuals, in order to increase forage areas for their honey bees. Working in the north of the AONB, they successfully set up patches in Hornby and Caton. Following a guided group visit to see the meadows at Bell Sykes that summer, I met with Erica Sarney from LBK and we decided that we could work very well together. In late 2014, a small site at the Crook O'Lune car park was prepared and seeded with a mixture of cornfield annuals and meadow species.



*Crook O'Lune car park area in preparation in 2014 and in bloom in June 2015*

Another part of the site was raked and seeded with yellow rattle, whilst a third woodland edge area was planted with the bulbs of aconite, bluebell and snowdrops. The N4N project provided technical input and covered the cost of the seed and bulbs, Lancashire County Council (the owners of the site) removed the turf and provided some low barrier fencing, residents from Littledale Hall drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre helped to prepare the site and Erica acted as the project manager coordinating all the different parts.





Following on from that site, N4N provided additional bluebell bulbs for a shaded stretch of the Millennium Cycleway, which were planted out in November 2015, as well as cornfield annual and meadow seed for an additional patch along the cycleway, which will be prepared and planted in March 2016.

*Littledale Hall residents raking patches to be seeded with yellow rattle, December 2014*

## 8. Field-scale meadow restoration work 2014 & 2015

Field-scale meadow restoration, ie 'Hay Time', within the Forest of Bowland AONB has continued throughout the N4N project, funded through the Coronation Meadows project and through the High Level Stewardship (HLS) agri-environmental scheme. In addition, during May and June 2015, I was able to visit and re-survey all the sites which received restoration management under the previous Hay Time project.

The donor sites during 2014 and 2015 were Bell Sykes, Barn Gill and Moss Side. Details of these donor sites can be found in the final report of the Bowland Hay Time project, produced in 2014. The same methodology was used as previously in terms of site selection and donor matching.

In 2014, as two of the restoration sites were too far away from any of our donors to use the green hay transfer method, we borrowed a brush



harvester from the Nidderdale AONB Hay Time project. This machine runs behind a quad bike and operates a pair of rotating brushes on drums which sweep the seed from the hay crop into a hopper. This seed material is then dried and spread by hand at the same 1:3 ratio as the green hay.

*Brush harvesting seed*

In 2015, all the restoration work was within a small geographical area, and so we were able to use the green hay method. Despite periods of settled dry sunshine at the beginning of the summer, the weather in 2015 was really tricky, with what seemed like no two dry days together! We began the first of the six transfer schemes on 29<sup>th</sup> July and finished the last on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, the longest Hay Time transfer season to date.



*Cutting and collecting green hay at Barn Gill SSSI, Black House Farm, July 2015*

In total over the two years, 21.4 ha of meadows were restored and 13.8 ha of meadows were enhanced. The table here provides a summary of the schemes undertaken in 2014 and 2015.

Receptor	Donor	Restoration (ha)	Enhancement (ha)	Funding source	Method
2014					
Cappleside	Moss Side		4.6	HLS	green hay
The Stables	Bell Sykes	1.8		CM	Brush harvested seed
Inn at Whitewell	Bell Sykes		1.1	CM	Plug plants
Lower Dutton	Bell Sykes	0.4		CM	Brush harvested seed
Melling Green	n/a		0.5	N4N	mowing
TOTALS 2014		2.2	6.2		
2015					
The Stables	Bell Sykes		1.8	CM	Plug plants
Lower Dutton	Bell Sykes		0.4	CM	Plug plants
Ramsclough	Verges		0.5	N4N	Plug plants
Stephen Park	Verges		1.8	N4N	Plug plants
Long Bank Farm	Barn Gill	2.29		HLS	Green hay
Leagram Mill Farm	Bell Sykes	1.32		HLS	Green hay
New Laithe	Bell Sykes	5.39		HLS	Green hay
New Ings SSSI	Bell Sykes		2.0	HLS	Green hay
Ashnott farm	Bell Sykes & Barn Gill	9.1		HLS	Green hay
Inn at Whitewell	Bell Sykes		1.1	CM	Plug plants
Lower Stonybank	Barn Gill	1.1		N4N	Green hay
TOTALS 2015		19.2	7.6		
TOTALS		21.4	13.8		
TOTAL AREA FOR PROJECT		35.2 ha			

The location of all of these sites can be found on the map found in Appendix 5.

## 9. Promotion, partnership and participation



At the beginning of the project it was decided that, because we were hoping to work with local businesses to help them create nectar patches, it would be a good idea to have a specific project logo designed. This has been used in all our communications, pop-ups, postcards and also on the project twitter feed. You can find a link to the

feed [here](#) [[@networks4nectar](#)]. We have been very fortunate with the amount of local news cover we have been able to generate, a selection of articles and a copy of the top of the project twitter feed can be found in Appendix 6.

The project has been run using a partnership approach. This has enabled us to have a much larger reach and bigger impact than if we had been working in isolation. Hopefully this has been illustrated in the case studies. The work we have undertaken with the Lancaster Beekeepers and their Community Pollinator Patch Planters (a link to their Facebook page is [here](#) [[www.facebook.com/Lancaster-Beekeepers-Community-Pollinator-Patch-Planters](#)]) has shown that by supporting others with similar aims, the project could reach to areas of the AONB we would have been less likely to penetrate. The support the project was able to give to the Sustainable Development Fund funded Ribblesdale Rotary Club project 'Wildflowers into the meadows' meant that we were able to impact on a much larger number of schools in a shorter space of time than if we had had to develop this work without the expertise of Anne Pickup and Phil Dykes.

The project has delivered a variety of events, from technical training in how to create and manage nectar patches and mini-meadows, through guided walks and meadow teas, to craft activities and bug hotel building. These are always enjoyable to undertake and we hope that they provide fun and informative ways of getting messages about the importance of pollinators and their habitats across to people. A summary of all the events is shown in the table below.



*Making hay fairies at Beacon Fell*

Event	Date	Details	Attendees
Meadow Open Day		A day of guided walks, tea and cake at Bell Sykes farm, Slaidburn	20
Scythe training		Two day training course tutored by Steve Tomlin held at Bell Sykes farm, Slaidburn	8
N4N training day	10/4/15	Morning training event at the Stirk House Hotel for owners of nectar patches	8



Wonderful meadows of Hyndburndale	27/6/15	Guided walk through the meadows of Hyndburndale with Jon Hickling	12
Scythe training	9-10 & 16/7/15	Two scythe training courses	5
Coronation teas	10 & 11/7/15	Two days of guided walks, tea, cake and scything demonstrations at Bell Sykes farm	30
Summer activity day	12/7/15	A day of meadow related crafts at Beacon Fell Country Park	20
Mowing Party	17/7/15	An evening mowing party & BBQ at Bell Sykes farm	8
Seed collection, drying and storage course	15/9/15	A day course passing on the information I learned at a similar course run by the Kew Gardens Millennium Seed bank staff, at Wakehurst Place.	14
Bug Hotel	18/10/15	Building of a 12 ft bug hotel at Stirk House Hotel with local Rainbows, Brownies & Guides	45
Total events	12	Total attendees	170

## 10. Conclusions

The Networks for Nectar project has been very successful in producing nectar patches and mini-meadows on non-farmed land across the Forest of Bowland AONB. The areas created and managed have been more numerous than expected within the timescale of the project. The project has also continued to facilitate and fund field-scale meadow restoration, with a further 35 ha of meadows restored or enhanced over the two years of the project.

We have worked with individuals, community groups, schools and local businesses, and have adapted to meet these different needs. Not all the initial enquiries resulted in work on the ground, in some cases we just offered advice, and in a few others, contact did not continue past this.

The project has benefitted from working in partnership, as seen in the case studies looking at the Lancaster Beekeepers Community Pollinator Patch Planters and the Ribblesdale Rotary 'Wildflowers in the Meadows' schools project.

Two new partnerships which we hope will continue are with Buglife, and with the KewGardens site and Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place:

Buglife are a UK wide organisation, championing the conservation of threatened invertebrates. Their project 'B-Roads' mapped out where corridors containing pollen and nectar rich habitats will help pollinating insects move through the countryside. We have contributed to their datasets and uploaded to their interactive map. A map of how our work is fitting into Buglife's developing [B-Roads project can be found here](#).

[[www.buglife.org.uk/campaigns-and-our-work/habitat-projects/helping-create-b-lines](http://www.buglife.org.uk/campaigns-and-our-work/habitat-projects/helping-create-b-lines)]

A visit to the Millennium Seed Bank in July 2015 has resulted in an exciting new partnership in the making. As well as storing the seeds of 20% of the plants on the planet, the project team are also developing a UK Wildflower Seed Hub, which hopes to provide seed for projects supporting rare and endangered UK plant species from stock plants which they have grown. Discussions are ongoing as to whether they will be able to help produce plug plants for species which are characteristic of our Bowland meadows but which we have struggled to propagate, such as Melancholy thistle, Wood crane's bill, Globeflower and Great burnet. We are hopeful that this new partnership will help us to continue to enhance these meadows in the future.



*Melancholy thistle down and seed*



*Globeflower heads and seed*

## Appendix 1: Nectar patch and mini-meadow schemes 2014 & 2015

Site	Description	Work undertaken	Date
Slaidburn YHA	Pollinator patches in courtyard garden	Gave advice on species selection and supplied cornfield seed mix for 2 patches	2014
Stone Cross, Slaidburn	Pollinator patches at self-catering cottage	Gave advice on existing patch management and supplied seed for additional 2 patches	2014
Snodworth	Mini meadow creation	Gave advice on meadow restoration	2014
Clerk Laithe, Newton	Pollinator patches at B&B	Gave advice on species selection	2014
Wolfen Mill, Chipping	Pollinator patches at self-catering cottage	Gave advice on management for woodland spring flower selection, management of mini-meadow and on additional species selection	2014
Town End Farm, Chipping	Pollinator patches at B&B	Gave advice on species selection and supplied meadow mix for 1 patch	2014
Bentham meadow	Mini meadow management	Gave advice on management and species selection	2014
Preston Guild Wheel	Pollinator patches	Gave advice on patch creation and management	2014
Dolphinholme Parish Council	Churchyard management and mini meadow creation	Gave advice on management and species selection for meadow creation.	2014
Brocklands Woodland Burial site	Mini meadow creation and management	Gave advice on creation and management and supplied cornfield annuals and meadow seed for 1 mini-meadow	2014
Dale House Barn, Dale Head	Pollinator patches at bunk house	Gave advice on existing patch management and supplied seed for 2 additional patches	2014
Hurst Green Churchyard	New churchyard site	Gave advice on management, helped out with mowing, supplied hand harvested seed to enhance 1 mini-meadow	2014 2015
Stirk House Hotel	Development of a pollinator garden	<b>See case study</b> 5 patches	2014 2015
Hackings Caravan Park	Pollinator garden around pond	Gave advice on species selection and supplied meadow mix and plug plants for 1 patch	2014 2015
Lanterns & Larks	Meadow patches around glamping site	Gave advice and provided yellow rattle seed and plug plants for 1 mini-meadow	2014 2015
Downham Hall	Pollinator patches	Gave management advice and supplied yellow rattle seed for 3 patches	2014 2015
Honeysuckle Cottage, Mewith	Mini meadow creation and management	Gave advice on management, species selection, supplied meadow seed and advised on plug plant production for 1 mini-meadow	2014 2015



Chipping in Bloom	Mini meadow and nectar patches	Gave advice on species selection and patch creation and management. Supplied plug plants and seed for 3 patches.	2014 2015
Ribblesdale Rotary Club	'Wildflowers into the Meadows' Schools project	<b>See case study</b>	2014 2015
Lancaster Bee Keepers	Pollinator patch creation at Caton village; Crook O' Lune car park; Millennium Cycle Way	<b>See case study</b> 3 patches	2014 2015
Pikefield Plantation allotment	Mini meadow creation and management	Provided cornflower annual seed and meadow brush harvested seed to site where the owners had stripped the topsoil and wanted to create a meadow, 1 mini-meadow	2014 2015
Beacon Fell Country Park	Mini meadow creation and management	Gave advice on creation and management and supplied cornfield annuals and meadow seed. Gave advice on plug plant production and supplied seed for 1 mini-meadow	2015
Life for a Life site, Crook O'Lune	Mini meadow creation and management	Gave advice on cutting management for meadows and seed addition advice to increase diversity for 1 mini-meadow. Advised on woodland spring flower species selection.	2015
Northcote Manor	Mini-meadow as part of the kitchen garden	Gave advice on species selection for meadows, cornfield annuals and edible nectar-rich plants for 3 patches. Supplied meadow seed and cornfield annual mix.	2015

## Appendix 2: Copy of N4N information sheet

### How to create and manage mini-meadows and nectar patches

Creating and managing wild flowers areas is a great way to support pollinating insects, vital for our fruit and vegetable crops, as well as lots of other wildlife.

Mini-meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be established in existing grassland or on bare ground</li> <li>• Need to have a soil low in nutrients</li> <li>• Need to be cut at the end of every summer and the cuttings removed</li> <li>• Contain wild flowers native to meadows in Bowland</li> </ul>
Cornfield patches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contain species native to corn fields (eg poppies)</li> <li>• Need to be established every year in bare ground from fresh seed</li> <li>• Can be used as a 'nurse' to meadow species</li> </ul>
Nectar rich gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contain plant species rich in nectar</li> <li>• 'bee friendly'</li> <li>• Can contain both native and cultivated species</li> <li>• Can contain perennial shrubs and fruit trees</li> </ul>

There is lots of information available on the internet, here I have just tried to provide the basics here, and have added in links to sites which we regularly use.

**Mini-meadows** – can be established in existing grassland or on prepared bare ground. Adding yellow rattle seed before Christmas to a tightly mown and raked existing lawn will allow this important species to establish the following spring. Leave the lawn area unmown from the beginning of the year through till the end of the summer and then cut and rake up all the cuttings. If possible leave the grass to dry before raking up. The following year repeat the process but this time add wildflower seed instead of the yellow rattle. You can also add in plug plants of particular species, it is best to do this in the autumn after you have cut and raked the site.

On a pre-prepared seed bed, sow a **native** wildflower and grass seed mix either in the autumn or the early spring. It is a good idea to also sow a cornfield mix at the same time as a 'nurse' crop to the wildflowers. The cornfield annuals grow and flower in the first summer, whilst the meadow species take longer to establish and are protected by the annuals. As above, leave the area unmown until the end of the summer, then cut and remove the cuttings, keep mown until the end of the year and then let the site grow. Your meadow will not be successful on fertile soil. You will need to remove top soil before preparing the seed bed.

[http://www.plantlife.org.uk/wildflower\\_garden/how\\_to\\_grow\\_a\\_wildflower\\_meadow/](http://www.plantlife.org.uk/wildflower_garden/how_to_grow_a_wildflower_meadow/)

<http://wildseed.co.uk/>

**Cornfield patches** – produce a spectacular display of wildflowers usually found in arable fields. Sow a mix of cornfield annuals in the late autumn or spring onto a pre-prepared seedbed. Leave to grow throughout the spring and summer. Cut back once all the flowers have finished, and remove the cuttings. The seeds can be collected for the following year. In order to have cornfield annuals on the same site each year, repeat the process of sowing into pre-prepared bare soil.

<http://wildseed.co.uk/page/sowing-and-aftercare>

**Nectar rich gardening** – if possible grow plants which, together, produce as long a flowering period as possible, as this will ensure a steady supply of nectar and pollen. Match species to the local ground conditions and aspect. Areas can be established by seed, plug plants as well as larger shrubs and trees. Fruit trees and soft fruit bushes are a fantastic addition.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/encourage-wildlife-to-your-garden/plants-for-pollinators>

<http://bumblebeeconservation.org/get-involved/gardening-for-bees>

<https://www.buglife.org.uk/advice-and-publications/publications/gardening>

The '**Networks for Nectar**' project is helping to create a living network of nectar hubs for bees and other vital pollinating insects across the Forest of Bowland AONB. Delivered by the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust in partnership with the Forest of Bowland AONB and funded by the Lancashire Environmental Fund, this project aims to restore and conserve a network of small patches of species-rich grasslands, such as field corners, road verges, churchyards, school grounds, orchards, village greens and farmland.



<http://forestofbowland.com/Networks-4-Nectar-N4N>

<http://forestofbowland.com/Hay-Time-Project-0>

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# Appendix 3: Stirk House Interpretation panel



**STIRK HOUSE**  
HOTEL  
*16th Century Manor House*

Stirk House Hotel & Restaurant,  
Gisburn, Clitheroe, Lancashire  
BB7 4LJ

...  
Tel: 01200 445581 Fax: 01200 445744  
www.stirkhouse.co.uk

**IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS WE DO THAT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE...**



## ...STIRK HOUSE HOTEL WILDLIFE AREA AND POLLINATOR GARDEN

Here at Stirk House Hotel we have been managing our grounds for many years for the benefit of wildlife. In this area, we have been working in partnership with the 'Networks for Nectar' project to provide pollen and nectar for pollinating insects throughout the spring and summer months.

Each area you can see here provides pollen and nectar at a slightly different time in the year, so helping to ensure a constant supply of food throughout the spring and summer.

**1** **Bowland Mini-Meadow**  
This area has been seeded with a mixture of cornfield annuals and traditional meadow wild flowers and grasses. The cornfield annuals protect the seedlings of the wildflowers in the first year, and will now reduce in number over time, as the meadow develops. The area is left to flower throughout the summer, providing nectar, pollen and nesting sites for insects from June through to September. It is cut once all the flowers have set seed.

**2** **Traditional Fruit Orchard**  
We have planted traditional fruit trees in this area, providing pollen and nectar in the spring time, before the meadow flowers

**3** **Buddleia Collection**  
Buddleias are a well known favourite of once common-place species of butterflies such as the Red Admiral and the Tortoiseshell. This area includes a wide variety of buddleias which flower at different times, giving an extended supply of food for the butterflies. It also helps us to keep the balance between the 'wild habitat' and 'planned garden' feel of this area.

**4** **Soft Fruit Orchard**  
This is one of the newer parts of the garden, and contains raspberry varieties (early, summer and autumn), gooseberries and blackcurrants. More nectar and pollen for the bees and other pollinators here, as well as fabulous fresh produce for the hotel, and for foraging small mammals and birds also.

**5** **Wet Grassland**  
This is the newest development within the garden, and makes the most of the wettest part of the site. It has been developed in a similar way to the mini-meadow, but with native species adapted to growing in damp conditions.

Working here with Stirk House Hotel, Networks for Nectar will create stepping stones in the rural landscape, linking habitats to help create a network of nectar-rich areas for bees and other vital pollinating insects across the Forest of Bowland.

Networks for Nectar is a partnership with the Forest of Bowland AONB and funded by the Lancashire Environment Fund. This is a £1.5 million project creating a network of vital patches of nectar-rich grasslands, such as field corners, road verges, churchyards, school grounds, orchards, village greens and farms.



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



YORKSHIRE DALES  
MILLENNIUM TRUST



LANCASHIRE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
FUND





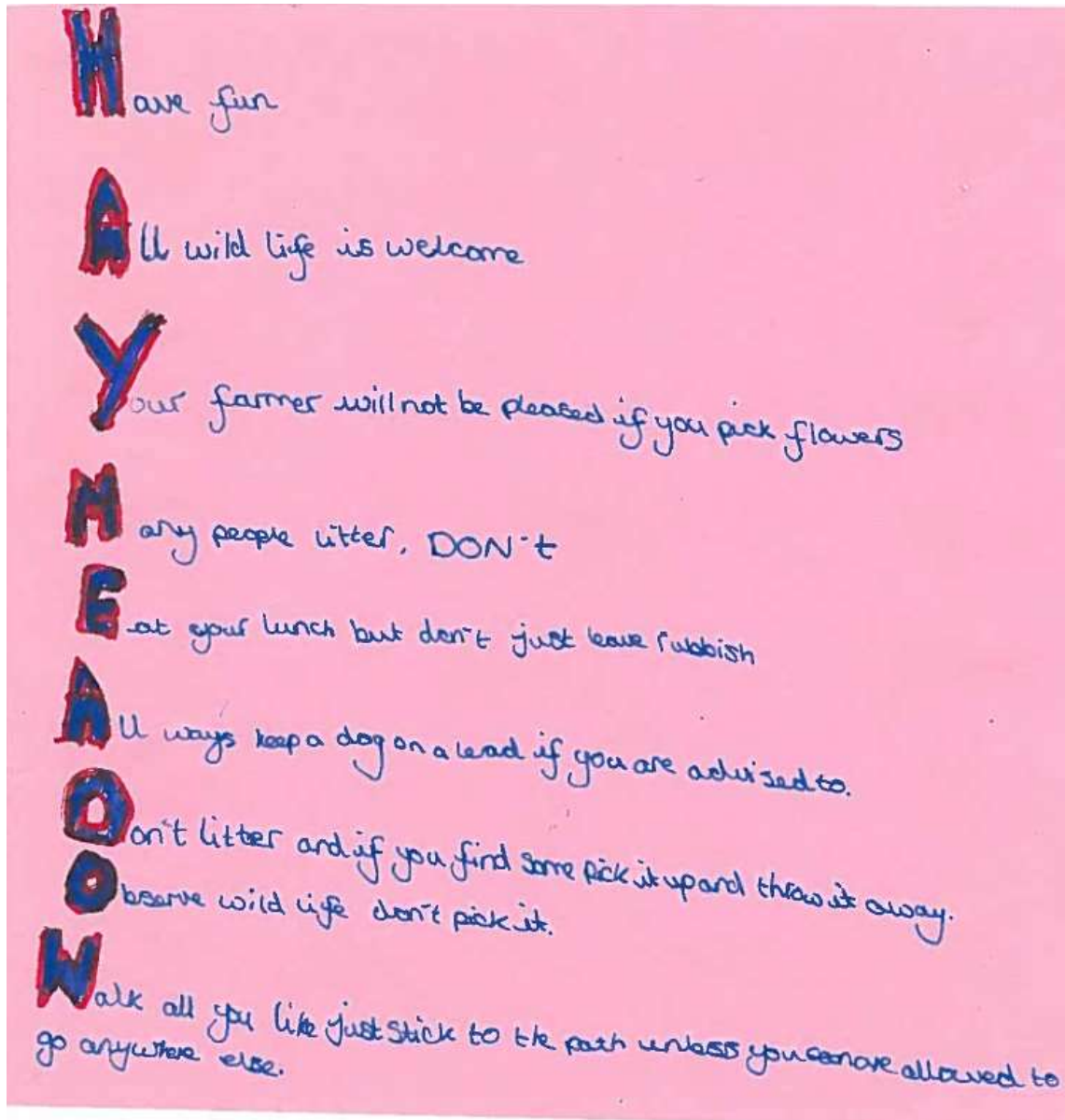
Green  
Tourism  
GOLD



MANCHESTER  
BUSINESS  
AWARD

18

Appendix 4: A Selection of work from the 'Wildflowers into the Meadows' project





JUNE '15



White tailed bumblebee

Robberfly



Green spider



Millipede



Baby earring (ECA)

Zebra spider

Slug



Green Beetle (ZF)



# OUR HAY MEADOW CODE!

Litter  
Leave no trace of your visit.

Don't tread on the flowers because you have them killed a long time that helps you and animals 50 keep it and help plant it back!

Don't pick flowers because they are important

Build a path and follow signs so you don't kill wildlife

Don't feed animals because they are wild

For safety and health  
Don't eat or drink and get because you can damage them and really hurt yourself. Also don't drink on the walk because it might not be safe and might have dangerous things in it.



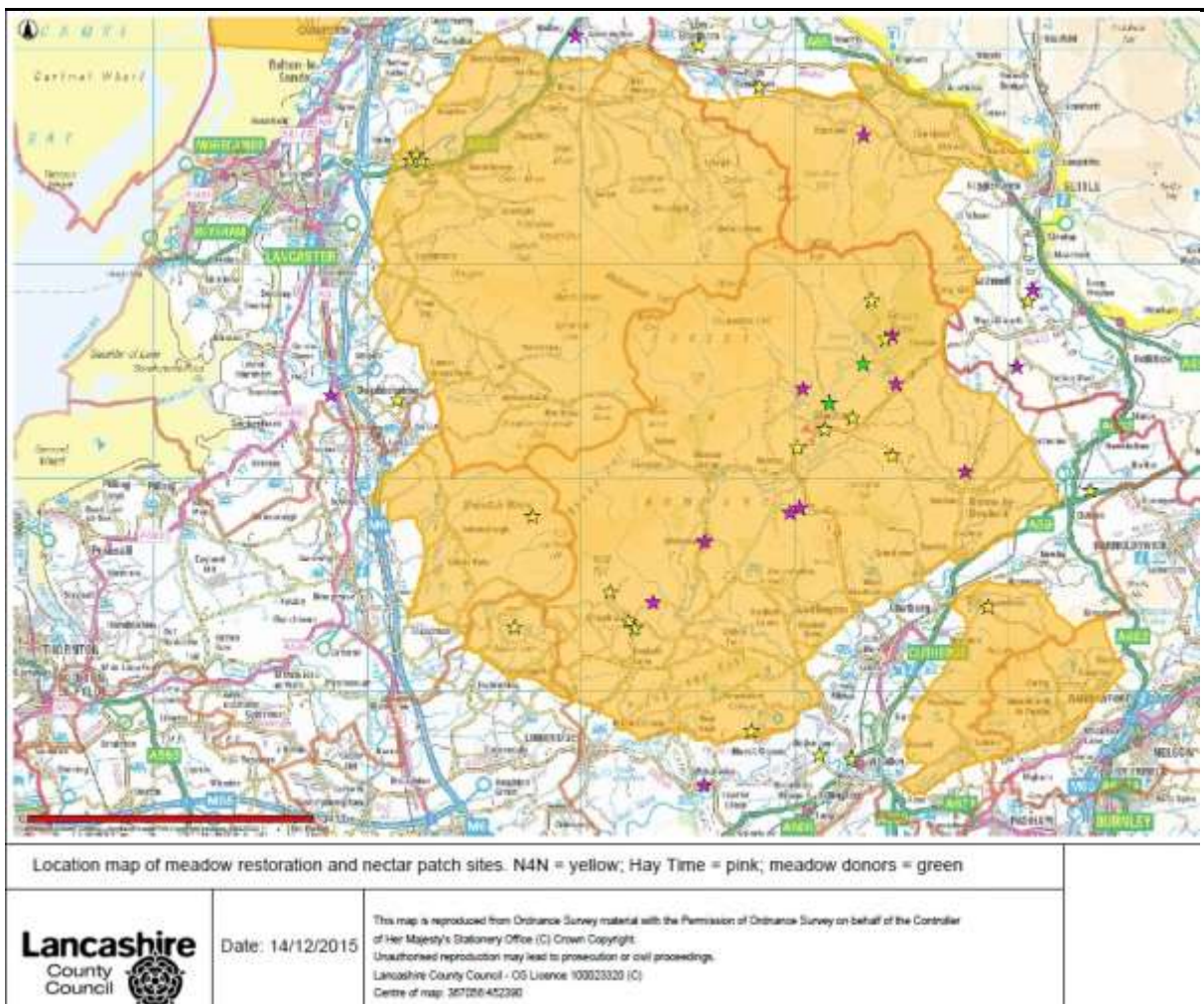
No Smoking  
Don't smoke in the meadow because it can hurt the animals and the plants.

Don't pick flowers because they are important  
Don't feed animals because they are wild  
Don't drink on the walk because it might not be safe and might have dangerous things in it.

Is a bug on you? Are you  
going to squish it? STOP  
AND THINK! If you  
were a bug and you were  
lost, would you like to  
go home to your family, or  
would you like to be squished?  
Are you a villain? you'll become  
one. If you KILL a living  
thing, INCLUDING bugs.  
PUT IT BACK DOWN!  
Bring're home



## Appendix 5: Location map of meadow restoration and nectar patch sites



## Appendix 6: A selection of media cuttings

Wildlife in Bowland is benefiting from some 'girl power' thanks to a group of Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Senior Section (picture above). A group of 50 youngsters came together to learn about nature and to help construct a giant home for wildlife in the grounds of Stirk House hotel near Gisburn. Reclaimed, recycled and foraged materials were used to create a three-tier wildlife haven with lots of small holes, nooks and crannies that will offer cosy accommodation for a wide range of insects and small mammals. The girls, from the Clitheroe and Bowland District Girlguiding, also planted wildflowers that they had grown from seed to complement the hotel's existing dry and wet meadowland, woodland, soft fruit garden, orchard, and cottage gardens. All the girls received a specially designed cloth Environmental badge to add to their collections.

www.clitheroeadvertiser.co.uk Thursday, November 19, 2015

Project teaches children about wild flowers and meadow habitats



### Pupils busy planting as part of a meadows restoration project

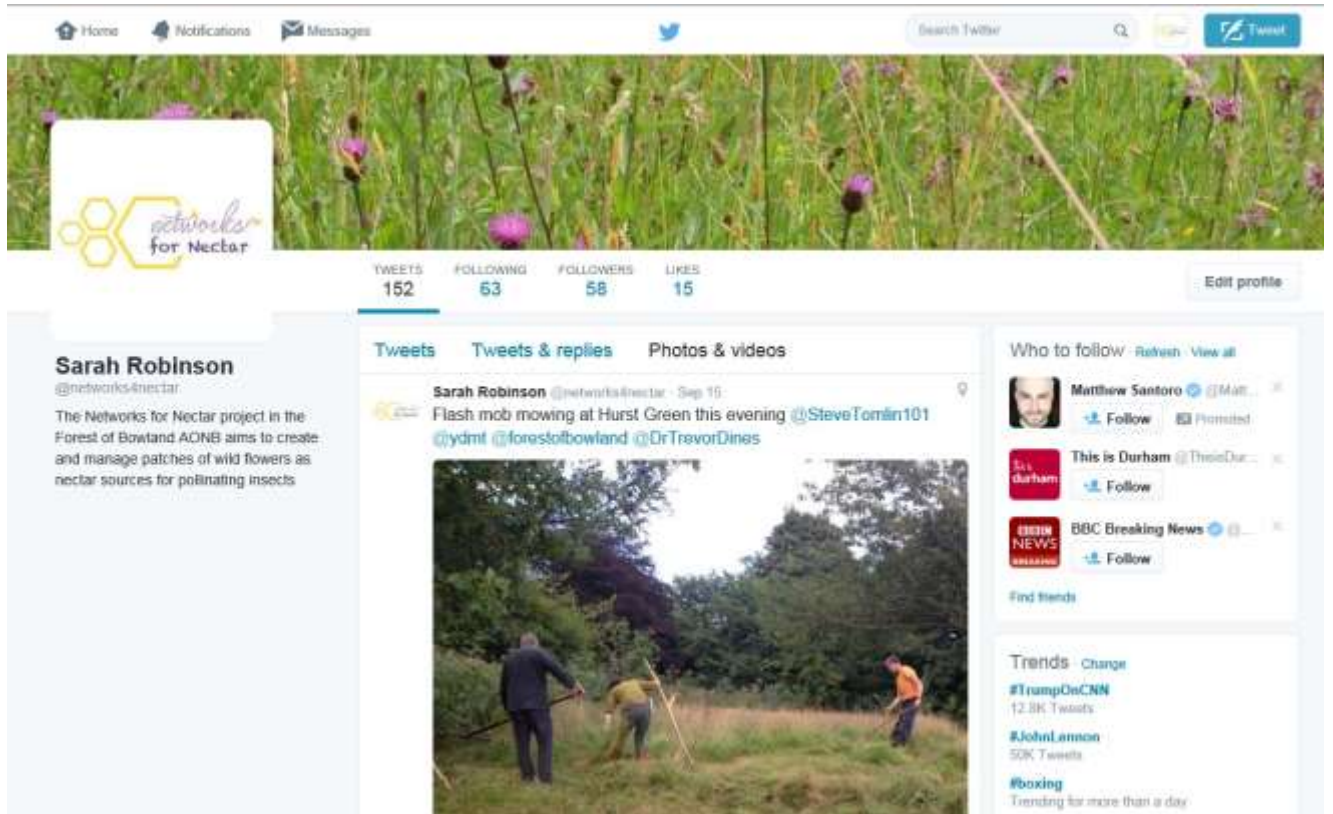
Ribble Valley pupils have been busy planting wild flowers, which they have grown from seed, at the meadow they are helping to restore at Stephen Park. The project has been organised through the Rotary Club of Ribblesdale in conjunction with the Hay Time and Networks for Nectar project in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Anne Pickup, who organised the project, said: "The children have all been very enthusiastic about the project and worked very hard plant-

ing the flowers they have been growing from seeds. Through doing the project they have learnt about wild flowers and meadow habitats and they have done a very important job helping to restore the meadow by adding to the variety of species which are already established. The children are hoping to see the results of their efforts next summer when the flowers will be in full bloom. "97% of our flower-rich hay meadows have been lost since the 1950s, and since 2012 we have been working across the AONB to restore as many as we can,

both large meadows and small nectar patches. The children have done a great job growing and planting out these flowers, and I hope they have enjoyed the experience of being out in the meadow. It's great that they will be able to come and bring their families to see them in bloom next summer, we are very grateful for their help." said Sarah Robinson, the Bowland Hay Time and Networks for Nectar project officer. The meadow is near the Gisburn Forest Hub car park and is accessible to members of the public.





A link to the N4N twitter feed can be found [here](#) [@networks4nectar]

## Appendix 7: Project performance indicators

Indicator	Project performance
restore 15 hectares of grassland, distributed over at least 20 individual sites	The field-scale part of the project delivered 35.2 ha of meadow restoration and enhancement distributed over 13 sites. In addition, 32 nectar patches and mini-meadow sites were created and managed.
work with 6 community and interest groups and involve and train 20 individual volunteers	The project worked directly with 10 community groups and 12 volunteers within those groups. In addition the plug plants were produced by Offshoots, a social enterprise, by 15 volunteers working on their substance recovery programme.
work with 15 landowners/managers	The project worked with 19 private landowners, plus 10 businesses and 5 schools.
run 10 events for 100 members of the public	12 public events were run over the two years of the project, with 170 people attending
produce interpretation for self-guided meadow walks and activities	Interpretation panels were produced for the Stirk House Hotel, Inn at Whitewell and Stephen Park sites. A bug hunting activity sheet is being produced for Stirk House Hotel for spring 2015.
write a project blog to record and inspire activity	The Networks 4 Nectar twitter feed was used as a news blog for the project. A N4N page on the Forest of Bowland AONB website is used as a project update page <a href="#">here</a> .