



# Plan BEE



Prepared by your WI Public Affairs Committee FEWI January 2020



## **The Vision**

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The essential role bees play in pollinating the food we humans and animals eat is widely recognized.

Bees and Bee habitats are protected.

Bee populations thrive in the UK

## **The Mission**

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To encourage everyone to become Bee friends

To reach out into the Community to raise more awareness of the plight of Bees and what the public could do to tip the balance in their favour.

## **The Reason**

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In 2009 the WI recognised the risks and campaigned to save the Honey Bee. The campaign is relevant today as many different species of bee are now on the brink of extinction in parts of the UK.

Bees are disappearing globally at an alarming rate due to pesticides, parasites, disease and habitat loss.

These little creatures that help to provide so much of the food we eat still need help to survive.

## **The Plan**

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### **Step 1 Become a Bee Friend**

- i) Take the pledge to protect Bees
- ii) Encourage good Bee etiquette
- iii) Provide Food, Water and Shelter
- iv) Take action to fight any threats to the Bees

### **2) Step 2 Spread the Bee Word**

- i) Raise Awareness
- ii) Encourage the public to become a Bee Friend

## **Review. Review. Review**

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Please keep the Public Affairs Committee aware of your plans and actions and don't forget to let other WIs and members know what you are doing by submitting an article for Essex WI News or posting on Facebook.

## Step 1 Become a Bee Friend

### a) Take the pledge to protect Bees

*Pledge to do all that you can to protect the Bees, encourage good Bee etiquette, raise awareness of their plight and provide a Bee friendly habitat.*

It might be fun to provide members with their own certificate or get them to sign up to the pledge on a list.

### b) Encourage good Bee etiquette

Don't ever flap at or swat a Bee as you will hurt or frighten it and cause it to sting. Once a Bee stings it dies. Stand still and it will fly away. If a bee lands on you remain calm, wait a moment, and soon it will fly on. If you do not want to wait, gently brush the bee off with a piece of paper, or blow gently at it to encourage it to move on.

### c) Provide the three things Bees need to survive

#### FOOD

Bees forage nectar from flowers which contains the sugar they need for energy. **Plant bee friendly plants** in pots, window-boxes and gardens and think carefully before using chemicals which could harm them. If possible, plan your garden so as to provide different shaped flowers through all the seasons spring through to winter. (See Appendix A for a list of bee friendly plants)

#### WATER

Bees like water that's a bit green and slimy but keep it shallow and provide stepping stones or rafts.

#### SHELTER

Hollow stems and seed heads can be snug winter hideaways and seed heads can be an attractive addition to a winter garden. Just leave them where they are until spring!

Allow your lawn 'weeds' to flower by cutting less often and avoid using pesticides. If you must use them never spray on open flowers. Be careful when gardening, look out for mining bee and solitary bee holes in the ground and don't dig them up or cover them over.

Why not have a go at making a Bee Nest or a Bee Hotel see Appendix Bee. If you do create a bee house, you owe it to the bees to maintain the bee house as well. After each season, the different cells (or rooms) of your bee house should be cleaned out carefully to avoid contamination.

### d) Take action to fight any threats to the Bees

Take a look around your Community are Bee habitats being destroyed? Ask your local Council what their policy is on protecting the Bees and how they encourage bees to flourish. Do they use pesticides? Do they have any Bee havens? What are the local farmers doing, do they use pesticides or are they encouraging the bees perhaps by hosting bee hives or allowing wildflowers to flourish?

## Step 2 Spread the Bee Word

Bee as imaginative as you can to raise awareness and get the community engaged in this important mission to encourage the public to become Bee Friends. You could: -

### a) Set up an Information stall at a busy public place or at a Community Event

Aim to raise awareness of the issue, outline the consequences if this trend continues and show how we as individuals can help to reverse the decline of bees

Consider forming a partnership with your local branch of the Essex Beekeepers' Association (EBKA) They are more qualified than us to educate the public on all aspects of bee life and their importance to us all.

Give away the WI Bee Friendly Information sheet

Give away packets of bee friendly seeds

#### **SEED Packets**

*In 2019 many members collected seeds from their own plants or donated seed packets for our Plan Bee.*

*After sorting, mixing and filling these are now available for WIs to hand out to the public and spread the word about the Bees plight.*

*A quantity of Lavender seeds are also available if you plan to make scented sachets.*

*There will be a small charge to cover administration costs*

Have example window/balcony boxes, pots full of bee friendly plants to show you do not have to have a garden to help the bees.

Have examples of Bee habitat, bought and home made

Have a bee colouring station/ bee making station for the children or give away colouring sheets

Encourage individuals to sign the Bee Pledge

Make other giveaways e.g.: bee knitted finger puppets\*or lavender bags

If you are permitted to sell make honey cakes and cookies and sell your bee crafts

Make a Honey recipe leaflet to hand out. Collect recipes that include honey, don't forget to mention the Bees and what the public can do to protect them

Alternatively, what about a leaflet with homemade honey skin care recipes?

### b) Run a specific event for the community

Perhaps an information and crafting morning with a speaker from Essex Bee Keeping Association or a Bee Quiz night, a Waggle Dinner & Dance a Pamper Party making honey skin care products. This could incorporate some of the ideas listed above

### **c) Create a Community Bee Haven**

Can you identify an area of land in your community that could become a haven for bees? Perhaps there is an area of a local park, an unplanted roundabout or neglected flowerbed? Ask your local authority or the land owner to make it into a bee haven or allow you to get the Community together to do so.

## Appendix A

### Seasonal Food for Bees

#### Spring

Hellebore, Rosemary, Lungwort,  
Cranesbill geraniums,  
Apples & Pears,  
Winter Heath Heather,  
Sarcococca Confusa, Crocus, Aubretia,  
Bluebells, Bugle,  
Euphorbia, Honesty, Lamium,  
Grape Hyacinth, Primroses,  
Wallflowers

#### Autumn

Rosemary, Anise Hyssop,  
Ivy, Hibiscus, Salvias,  
Dahlias, Japanese anemones  
Michaelmas daisies

#### Summer

Rosemary, Chives, Thyme  
Marjoram, Anise Hyssop,  
Cranesbill geraniums,  
Rock Rose, Lavender,  
Raspberry, Honeysuckle,  
Globe Artichoke, Runner Beans,  
Sunflowers, Hebe,  
Alliums, Aquilegia, Bergamot,  
Poppy, Verbena

#### Winter

Hellebore, Mahonia  
Winter Heath Heather,  
Sarcococca Confusa, Crocus,  
Winter flowering cherry, Acacia,  
Snowdrops, Winter aconite

Download a more comprehensive list of garden plants for pollinators at  
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators>

## BEE NESTS

Honey bees nest collectively in hives and rarely take up residence in your garden. If you have concerns about a hive or a swarm contact the Essex Beekeepers Association at <https://ebka.org/>

There are however over 220 solitary bee species in the UK that make their own individual nests for their larvae. To make a home for solitary bees you could **simply drill some holes** in surrounding tree bark, dry logs, or blocks of wood. Just make sure that the holes are at least two millimetres in diameter and no greater than 10 millimetres. Be sure to check these drilled holes to ensure their smoothness, and double check for any splinters you created while you worked. Bees will not enter if the pathway isn't super clear, as they are afraid of messing up their wings and are wisely slow to trust a new environment. Plus, a smooth surface prevents wounding a bee.

Alternatively, you could build a Bee House

Take a wooden box and remove one side, or alternatively cut the top off a large plastic bottle. An old bit of piping would also be ideal. This will become the container for your bamboo shoots.

Cut the bamboo sticks to the same length as the depth of your container. Using different widths of bamboo is ideal, as bees can then choose between the sizes. Make sure the holes are clean and splinter-free, as bees won't use untidy holes.

Pack the bamboo sticks tightly into the box, plastic bottle or pipe. If your container doesn't have a back block the back ends of the sticks with modelling clay or ground nesting mix (see making a ground nest below)

Attach a hook to the back of your bee house. Hang or place in full sun, facing the south or south east. Your bee house must be at least a metre off the ground and free from surrounding foliage

Or a Bee Nest

Find a suitable structure a large plant pot, box or wooden frame will do. It needs to be strong enough to weather rain and wind. Place it at ground level in a south facing area close to flowering plants, tilt the structure at a slightly upwards angle to allow water to drain off

A mix of sand, gravel and top soil makes up the nesting material at a ratio of 2 trowel portions of sand, one trowel portion of gravel and half a portion of top soil. Slowly fill the container in levels with this ratio, periodically spraying the surface with water and tamping down to form a compact stratum. Keep spraying and adding light pressure for a few days after finishing the nesting material. The material should be hard enough to make holes in without crumbling.

Take pencil or screwdriver and make a variety of holes between 8 -13mm in diameter leaving 2 cm between holes. The deeper the hole the better



## Appendix C

### Bee Friendly Garden Planning

There are many plants and trees that the Bees love a comprehensive list can be found at :  
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators>

Just to give you inspiration here is a proposal submitted to Great Baddow Council to convert a small patch of land near St. Mary's Church into a Bee Haven.

#### Overview

Envision, if you will, a theatre style view of the patch.

In the wings (to the sides) are existing holly trees (possibly also hawthorn?) pruned to shape. (Other existing shrubs reviewed and removed as needed)

Along the fence at the back the blue flowers of Ceanothus entwined with an evergreen honeysuckle and a native dog rose.

In front strategically placed for visual impact specimen flowering trees: Crab Apple (Spring), Rowan (Mountain Ash Summer) and Viburnum Bodnantense (flowers in winter)

Curving around in front of the fence and nestling at the feet of the specimen trees, some shrubs such as Hebe, Lavender, Rosemary, Mahonia, Sarcococca and Buddleia Buzz. Possibly sprinkled around with bee friendly flowers.

In front, on remaining ground imagine it planted up with bluebells, grape hyacinth, crocus, primrose, snow drops, winter aconite and hellebores. Providing flowers from autumn through to spring.

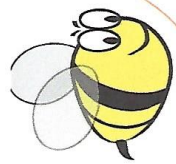
Then a whole raft of ox eye daises flowering in the summer (other bee friendly annuals and wild flowers may be added)

Perhaps fronted if there is room with thymes and trailing ivy over the bricks.

This would ensure flowers throughout the year to provide food for Bees and other pollinators.

Bees need water (they actually prefer slimy green water) so it would be nice to have some sort of shallow bowl or scrape to collect water with a few pebbles to keep the Bees feet dry.

It might also be possible to tuck in a small log pile, some pots with bee nesting material and even maybe a Bee Hotel.



# WI BEE PLEDGE

*I pledge to advocate for the Bees who do not have a voice of their own.*

I will protect honey bees and other bees by practicing good Bee etiquette, spreading the word about their plight, providing protection, food, water and shelter for bees.



Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix E

### You will need :

- Seeds – a collection of bee friendly flower seeds of your choice
- Paper torn into pieces – 4-6 pages
- 2 cups of water
- Mixing bowls
- Strainer



### Directions:

1. After you've torn up all your paper, put the pieces into the blender.
2. Add 2 cups of water to blender and blend everything until pulverized.
3. Place a strainer over a small bowl and pour the entire contents from the blender into the strainer. Allow to sit for about 5 minutes so the water can drain out of the pulp.
4. Scoop a handful of paper pulp out of the strainer and add a small spoonful of seeds to your pulp.
5. Gently mix up the pulp and seeds and squeeze out any excess water over a bowl until the seed bomb is fairly compact.
6. Press the mixture into a small ball, squeezing out any excess water Continue making seed balls until you've used up all the pulp.
7. Finally, using a paper towel, press down on each seed bomb to soak up any left over moisture
8. Allow seed bombs to dry thoroughly 24 – 48 hours

## Useful links:

RHS <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators>

Buglife [www.buglife.org.uk](http://www.buglife.org.uk)

Friends of the Earth <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/bees>

People's trust for endangered species <https://ptes.org/>

Essex Bee Keepers Association <https://ebka.org/>

<https://beesabroad.org.uk/>

WWF Report on the Status of Bees in the East of England [https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/EofE%20bee%20report%202019%20FINAL\\_17MAY2019.pdf](https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/EofE%20bee%20report%202019%20FINAL_17MAY2019.pdf)

<https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/>

<https://www.naturalbeekeepingtrust.org/>

<https://beefarmers.co.uk/>