



**Peacehaven
Community
School**

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BUTTERFLY AND BEE HAVEN PEACEHAVEN COMMUNITY SCHOOL



In 2025, students at Peacehaven Community School (PCS) began managing a steep bank in their school grounds in a new way. They wanted to increase biodiversity and turn an unusable piece of lawn into a thriving habitat for pollinators.

We hope that collating our experiences can help other schools hoping to do something similar.



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BENEFITS

Changing the management of turfed areas in school grounds brings many benefits to the school environment

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Nature provides many opportunities for learning. Biodiversity gains from introducing the right specimens attracts more species to the site. A species rich area in school grounds creates an on-site learning resource that can link to multiple curriculum topics

SOIL IMPROVEMENT

Deep roots can help soil to absorb water and stop soil erosion. Organic matter helps to create top soil. Healthy soil is a more efficient carbon sink

SAVE MONEY

Reducing mowing can reduce contractor maintenance costs

FLOOD DEFENCE

Long grass and plants can slow run off during rainfall and help replenish ground water supplies. Deep roots can help soil to absorb water.

AIR QUALITY

Grassland and plants absorb pollutants, reduce carbon dioxide and create oxygen

BIODIVERSITY GAINS

A native grassland habitat can support many more species. This helps to build eco systems, minimise species decline and support pollinators. We rely on pollination for ongoing food security.

CARBON REDUCTION

A healthy grassland habitat is an efficient carbon sink and can reduce your organisations carbon footprint by creating less emissions due to a lack of mowing.



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SIGNAGE

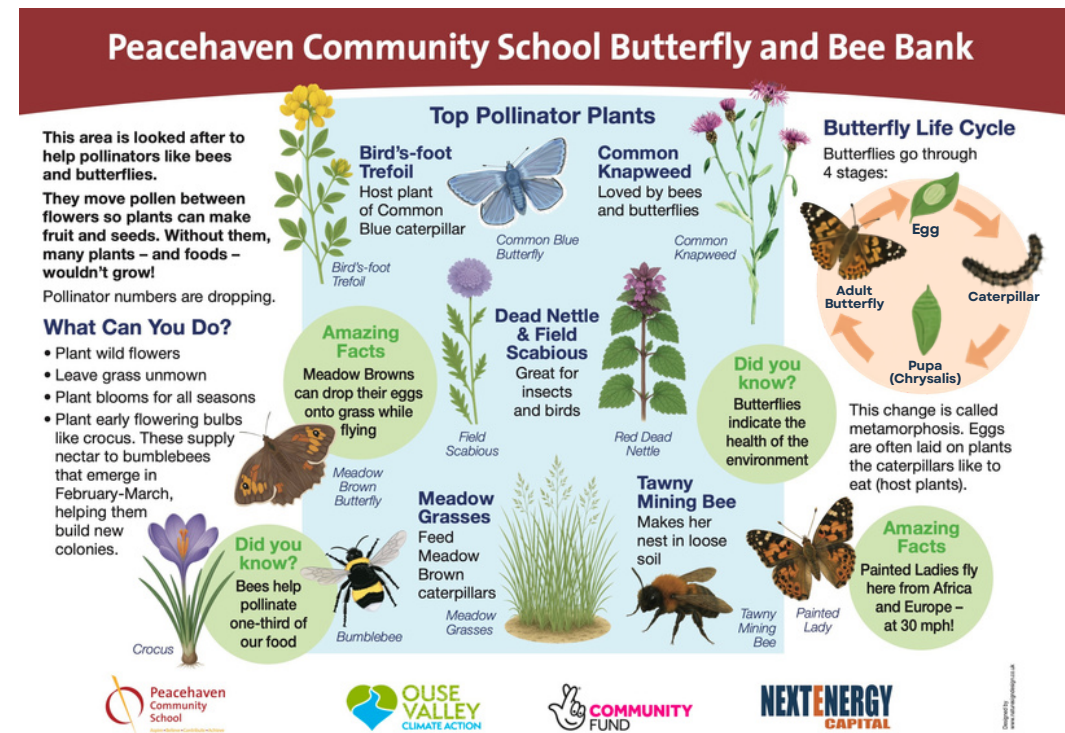
To maximise the long term learning impact of the butterfly bank we created a sign that has been erected on site. It is a lecturn style sign mounted on an oak pillar.

There is space on the sign for a QR code sticker which can be linked to specific resources (worksheets, ID guides etc)

We paid for the sign using grant funding from Next Energy via BizGive <https://www.bizgive.app/signup>

This artwork is available for others to use. Nature Sign Design have agreed to change the colours, logos and font free of charge to anyone who wishes to purchase a sign for their own project site.

<https://www.naturesigndesign.co.uk/>



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PLANNER



SEPTEMBER- OCTOBER

Remove areas of turf and sow wildflower seeds into the bare soil. You can do fairly large areas or quite small patches.

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

Plant crocus bulbs (we planted Vernus and Tommasinianus varieties) as they are early flowering and really helpful for early emerging bumblebees.



SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

Plant wild flower seeds in to seed trays (or old fruit containers). These can be left outdoors until early spring when they needed splitting and repotting into larger pots.



MARCH - MAY

Remove areas of turf and sow wildflower seeds into the bare soil. You can do fairly large areas or quite small patches.

APRIL-MAY

Plant out plug plants sown in autumn last year. Water into the hole before planting.



SEPTEMBER- OCTOBER

Mow the grass. Remove the cuttings and try to leave at the base of trees somewhere else on your school site. A cut really only needs doing once per year.



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SPECIES INFORMATION

We purchased seed mixes to suit our location, these were:

- Dual Purpose Wildflower seed Mix 100%
- Chalk and Limestone soil seed mix
- Coastal Areas seed mix

Dr Dan Danahar referenced these particular species, so look out for seed mixes containing these:

Scabious
Knapweeds
Ladies Bedstraw
Birds Foot Trefoil
Kidney Vetch
Horseshoe Vetch
Yellow Rattle

PLANTS AND PLANTING

Work on the butterfly bank was completed by members of the school Gardening Club, PCS Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteers and in conjunction with the SEND department who arranged for very small groups of students to benefit from gardening interventions throughout the year.

We planted crocus bulbs so that early emerging bumblebees can find a food source when there is little else available.

We purchased wildflower seeds from Landlife Wildflowers:
<https://www.wildflower.co.uk/products/wildflower-seed-mixtures/>

We removed patches of the turf on the bank to sow seeds into. This is a fairly easy way to introduce new species into the area. It is possible to turn the turf upside down and chop it up to break up the soil underneath if the area will be walked on and an even surface is required.

Some of our wildflower plug plants were planted directly into the bank by small gardening groups during the spring. However, the majority of the plug planting was undertaken by our Duke of Edinburgh (D of E) students. The bank is now a D of E legacy project.

Incorporating sustainability projects into other school programs is a great way of connecting with a larger number of students in your school community.

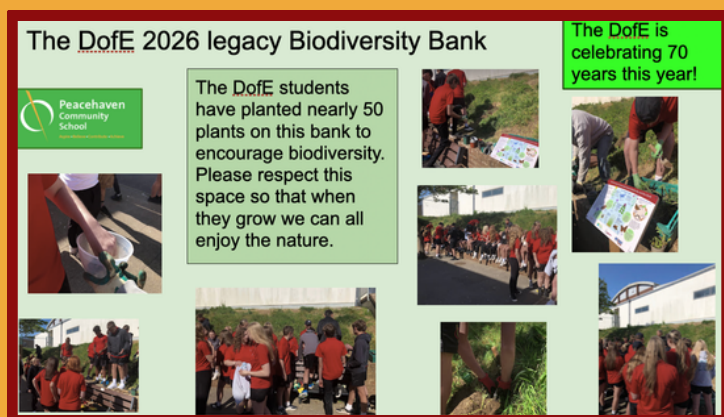


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PLANTS AND PLANTING



We have had some problems with the outsourced site management and mowing of this area. Ideally the area should have only one cut per year and this would be in September or October. The cuttings should be removed in order to allow light to the wildflower plants, but also to reduce the fertility of the soil below. This will ultimately weaken the grass species and support the wildflowers (which thrive in nutrient poor environments). Our contractors have mown too regularly this year. We eventually added some bee and butterfly stakes to the area to help define it as an area that needed leaving alone.

It is worth noting, we were lucky to benefit from a visit from Dr Dan Danahar (funded by Ouse Valley Climate Action and the National Lottery). Dr Danahar created a bespoke report for us making recommendations on how to improve the grounds for both biodiversity and the learning opportunities linked to this. He has created a huge butterfly bank at Dorothy Stringer school. Full details and best practice is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gj1maHn1Hio>

We are aware that most schools will be unable to achieve a project to the scale and success of the bank at Dorothy Stringer. We hope that this vastly scaled down approach will be helpful if you are looking to re-nature a smaller area in your grounds.