

NEWS RELEASE

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Herts and  
Middlesex



For immediate use



## Roadside 'mini-meadows' will encourage wildlife to Stevenage

Grass will be encouraged to grow long on some roadside verges by Stevenage Borough Council and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust this summer, as part of a trial to help the town's wildlife to thrive. Longer grass will allow native wildflowers to bloom over the next few weeks and set their seeds. Insects such as butterflies and bees will be helped too, which in turn benefits birds that feed on them.

The Wildlife Trust's Stevenage People and Wildlife Officer, Amy Ellis says: "The line of vision for drivers will be unaffected, as the plan is to cut the grass short immediately next to the road to a width of two metres, but let grass further away from the edge grow long. Stevenage has some ideal places for establishing these 'mini-meadows'. The verges also act as corridors, enabling wildlife to move around the town more easily."

Some areas will be cut at the end of the summer, once the flowers have set seed. Other road verges will be left long throughout the year, as grasshoppers and crickets lay their eggs in the grass which hatch the following spring.

Amy continues: "A good example of what we're trying to achieve can already be seen in Fairlands Valley South Field, near an area called Shackledell Grassland, where there is a 10 metre wide strip of meadow. The place is alive with grasshoppers and crickets – and July is a great time to spot them! Take a look next time you are in the park.

"The Wildlife Trust wants to create a "living landscape" in Hertfordshire – this is about creating a green environment across towns and through the countryside where wildlife can move through, and where people can get closer to nature."

Cllr John Gardner, Deputy Leader of Stevenage Borough Council responsible for the Environment, welcomed the progress that has already been made by the partnership between SBC and Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust on the Wild Stevenage Project. John said: "The

creation of these urban meadows in our parks and alongside a number of our major roads, through a more managed approach to grass cutting, is already showing evidence of increased variety in both insects and wildflowers. It's true to say the butterflies, bees and crickets are returning to our green town to enhance our enjoyment of the natural world."

For more information on the project and the grassland trials contact Amy Ellis, People and Wildlife Officer, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust on 01438 242967 or [wildlifetrust@stevenage.gov.uk](mailto:wildlifetrust@stevenage.gov.uk)

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### **Notes for editors:**

#### **Wild Stevenage**

The Heritage Lottery Fund, SoStevenage and Stevenage Borough Council are supporting this two year project which aims to help connect people with wildlife. The project aims to encourage people to visit Monk's and Whomerley Woods and Shackledell Grassland through creating trails, leaflets and interpretation boards. There will also be an "Adopt a Pond" scheme set up to get residents involved with caring for their local pond. Educating the public about the importance of grasshoppers and swifts in the town will also be part of the project.

#### **Stevenage's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)**

Stevenage Borough Council commissioned Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust to help them create a Biodiversity Action Plan for the town, which was launched last summer. This is a plan to increase the diversity of wildlife in the town, and focuses on grasslands, woodlands, wetlands, ancient hedgerows and neighbourhood nature. Currently both Stevenage Borough Council and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife trust are working on the BAP to create a more biodiverse town.

#### **Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust** [www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk)

We are the leading voice for wildlife conservation in Hertfordshire and neighbouring areas. With 44 nature reserves spanning 1,900 acres, from beautiful woodlands and wetlands to rare patches of heath and orchard, we take practical action every day to help wildlife flourish. The Wildlife Trusts are unique in being the only organisations that work to protect the full range of UK habitats and species, at a local level. We are a membership organisation, relying on supporters for three quarters of our income.

#### **A living landscape**

[A Living Landscape](#) is The Wildlife Trusts' vision for the future of the UK. It is a new way of thinking about how we manage land to do more for wildlife, people and the economy.

In a living landscape:

- Wildlife is **abundant** and **flourishing**, both in the countryside and our towns and cities
- Whole landscapes and ecosystems have been **restored**
- Wildlife is able to move freely through these landscapes and **adapt** to the effects of climate change
- **Communities** are benefitting fully from the fundamental services that healthy ecosystems provide
- Everyone has access to wildlife-rich green spaces and can enjoy and **be inspired** by the natural world.

#### **The Wildlife Trusts (TWT)** [wildlifetrusts.org](http://wildlifetrusts.org)

There are 47 individual Wildlife Trusts covering the whole of the UK and the Isle of Man and Alderney. All are working for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. We have more than 800,000 members including 150,000 members of our junior branch [Wildlife Watch](#). We manage around 2,300 nature reserves and every year we advise thousands of landowners and organisations on how to manage their land for wildlife. We work with thousands of schools and our nature reserves and visitor centres receive millions of visitors.

#### **Contact for further information and high res images:**

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