



# Easy Read Version

## Draft Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council  
Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

# 1. Biodiversity - An Introduction

**Biodiversity** includes all plant and animal life on Earth as well as the habitat they live in.



Biodiversity is important to both people and the planet.



- It gives us food, water, timber and fibre.
- It helps to control flooding, climate and diseases.
- It provides us with beautiful places to enjoy and walk.
- It helps create healthy soils and provide food for bees.



## 2. Delivering on Our Existing Commitments

There are other documents which have an impact on this Strategy



**Fermanagh and Omagh  
2030**



**FODC Corporate  
Plan 2020 - 2024**



**Local Development  
Plan 2030**



**Climate Change and  
Sustainable Development  
Strategy 2020-2030**



**Climate Change and  
Sustainable Development  
Action Plan 2021 – 2024**

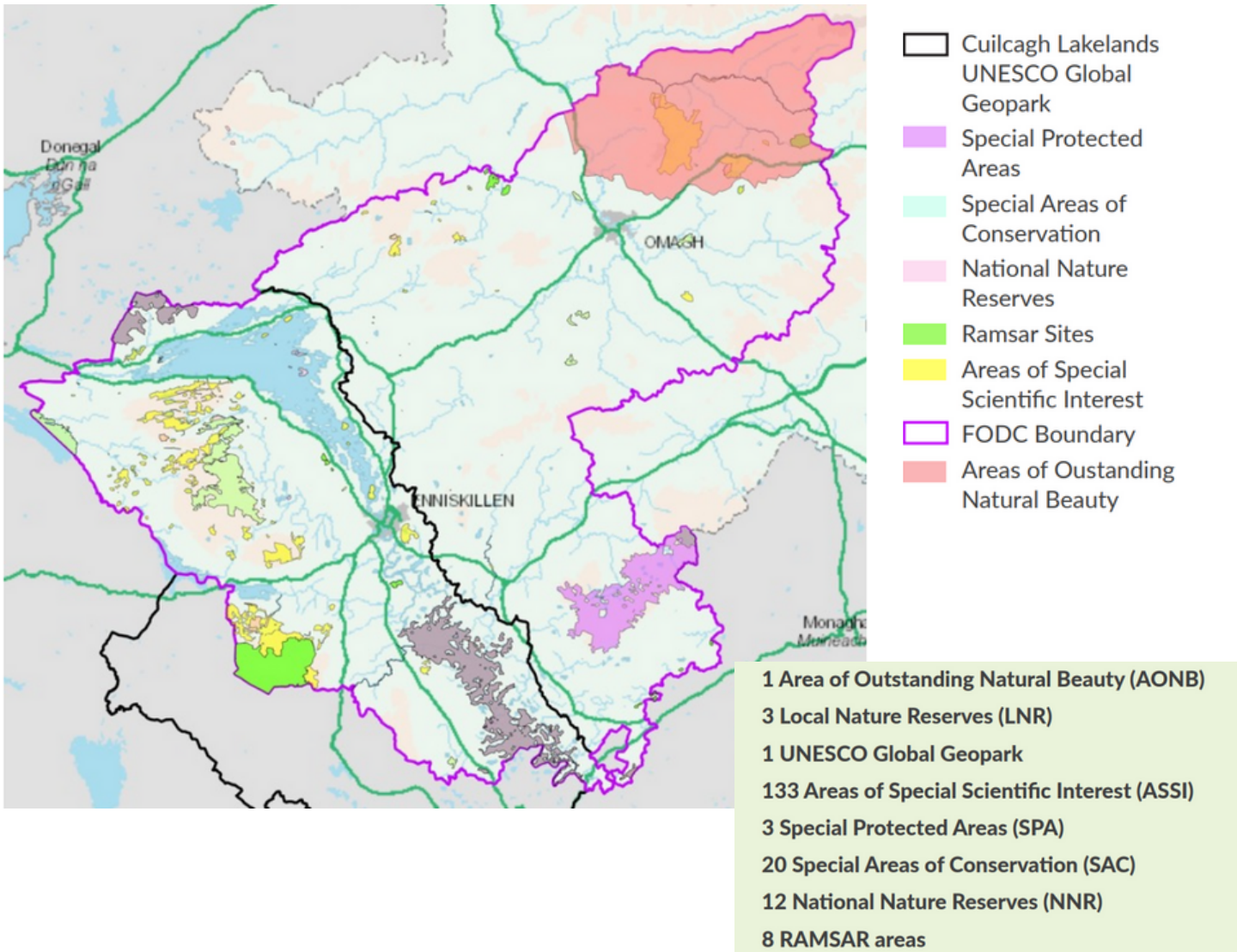
# 3. Our District's Biodiversity – At a Glance



There are lots of beautiful and wild places in the Fermanagh and Omagh District. From hills, lakes, rivers, woodlands and bogs to people's gardens and parks and open spaces.

These places provide homes for wildlife and places for them to breed.

**Figure 1.** Map of protected sites and landscapes in FODC area.





# 3. Our District's Biodiversity – At a Glance

Our District is home to lots of wildlife and the habitats or homes where they live.

## Famous Rivers and Lakes

Notable examples include (but not limited to) Lough Erne, Owenkillew River, River Strule, Erne River, Lough Melvin, Murrins NNR, Killyfole, Gortin Lakes and Loughmacrory.



## Precious Bogs & Heath

Notable examples of Lowland Raised Bog include Black Bog (SAC), Fairywater Bogs (SAC), Moninea; Blanket Bog in Bessy Bell, Sperrins, Pettigo Plateau & Cuilcagh Mountain; Upland Heathland in Mullaghcarn, Brougher Mountain, Slieve Beagh and Cuilcagh.



## Unique Geodiversity and Calcareous Habitat

Unique geodiversity (rocks, landforms and processes) including notable calcareous habitats and karst (limestone) formations dominate the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark.



## Urban Gardens

Examples such as our urban & rural gardens, public parks and open space & school grounds.



## Our Diverse Grasslands

Notable examples include lowland meadows, purple moor grass, rush pastures and roadside verges.



## Woodlands

Notable examples include oak woodland (e.g. Drumlea), wet woodland (e.g. fringes around Castle Caldwell Forest, Castle Archdale Country Park), parkland (e.g. Castle Coole), ashwoods (e.g. Hanging Rock, coniferous forests throughout the district and many species rich hedgerows.

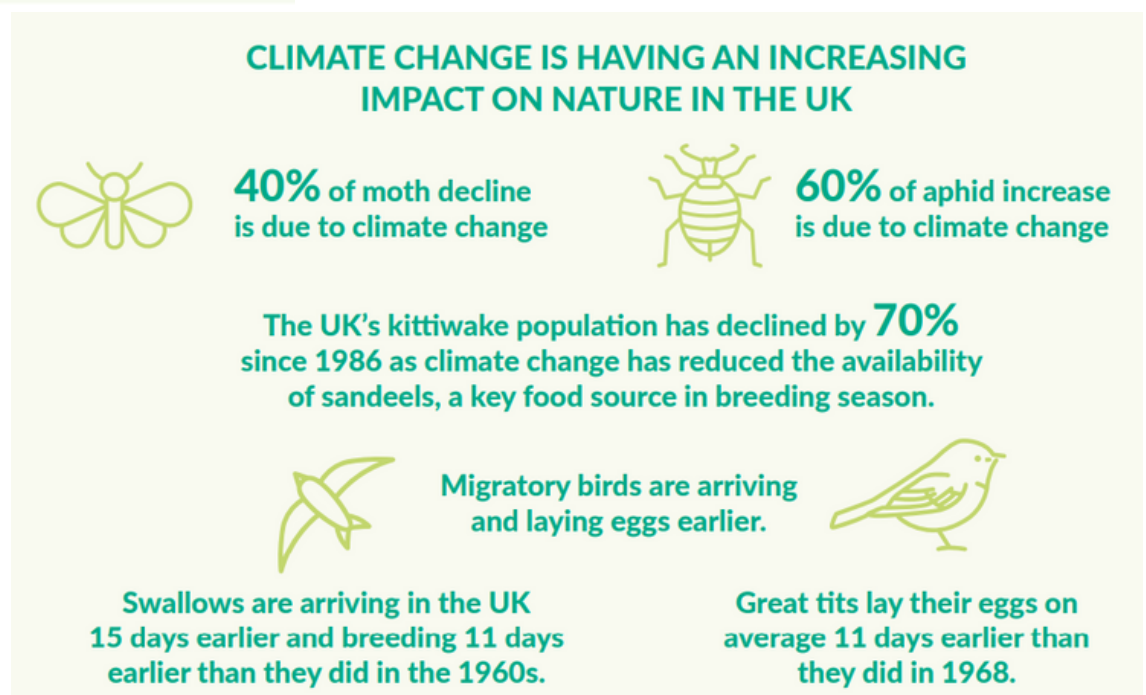
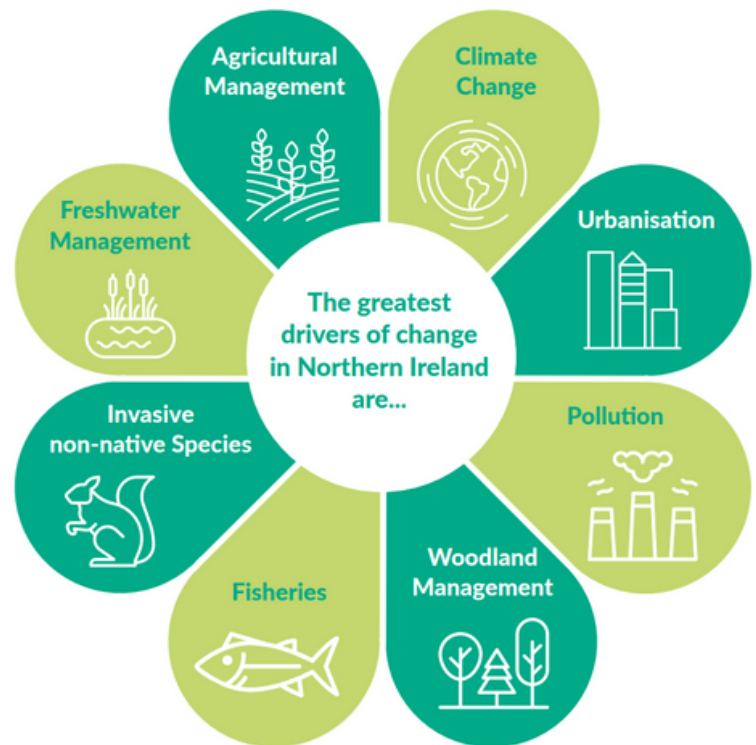


## 4. The Biodiversity Crisis - Globally and Locally

The wildlife or Biodiversity that lives in Fermanagh and Omagh District Council are under threat.

The main causes of wildlife loss are;

- Loss of habitats or wild places
- Intensive farming
- Invasive Species
- Climate Change





## 5. Biodiversity: It's Our Duty & Our Responsibility

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There is a Statutory Duty called the 'Biodiversity Duty' in Northern Ireland that means all public bodies including Councils have to help biodiversity.



Public bodies, including councils must consider the following five areas:

- **Protection of biodiversity**
- **Maintenance of biodiversity**
- **Enhancing biodiversity**
- **Restoring biodiversity**
- **Promoting the understanding of biodiversity.**



# Our Biodiversity Story So Far

## This is not our starting point.

Council have been working with partners, communities and schools over many years to help protect wildlife in the District.



## Actions include;

- New tree and woodland planting
- Meadow management
- Habitat and species surveys
- Red squirrel conservation
- Bat roost protection
- Invasive species control.

## Read more in Appendix 2





## 6. Global and National Commitments to Biodiversity



### INTERNATIONAL

#### COP 15 - Biodiversity

Conference will happen in 2022 to discuss global level action for biodiversity

#### COP 26 - Climate Change

Conference delivered new commitments for Climate Action at a global level.

### NATIONAL (UK AND EUROPE)

Nature Positive 2030 Report - UK approach to achieve action for nature

2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy

### REGIONAL

Pending Biodiversity Strategy for NI 2022 + in Spring 2022

# 7. A Positive Plan for Biodiversity Our Next Steps



## The Council aims to:

- Protect and enhance biodiversity on Council managed estate
- Increase awareness and action for local biodiversity in the District
- Work in partnership with others to deliver biodiversity action in the District.



Figure 3: Themes, Outcomes and Principles of the The Council's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan



# Theme 1: Pollinators

**Pollinators** are insects such as bumblebees, solitary bees and hoverflies.

They help crops and wild plants **produce fruit and set seed.**

Pollinators need habitats like wildflower meadows and hedgerows to live.

But a lot of pollinators are under threat.



The Council have been taking action for pollinators;

- Planting apple 'Trees for Bees'
- Pollinator workshops for schools
- "Don't Mow, Let It Grow" initiative

We intend to do more of these Pollinator Actions with more people.

## Theme 2: Trees and Woodlands



**Trees** are important for people, wildlife and the environment.

They **produce oxygen, store carbon and provide homes and food for wildlife.**

But Northern Ireland is one of the Countries with the least number of trees and woodlands.

To reduce carbon in the air, we need to plant more trees, and protect the trees and woodlands we already have.

The Council have been planting trees on Council land with schools and communities.

We work with Woodland Trust and others to plant more native trees for wildlife.

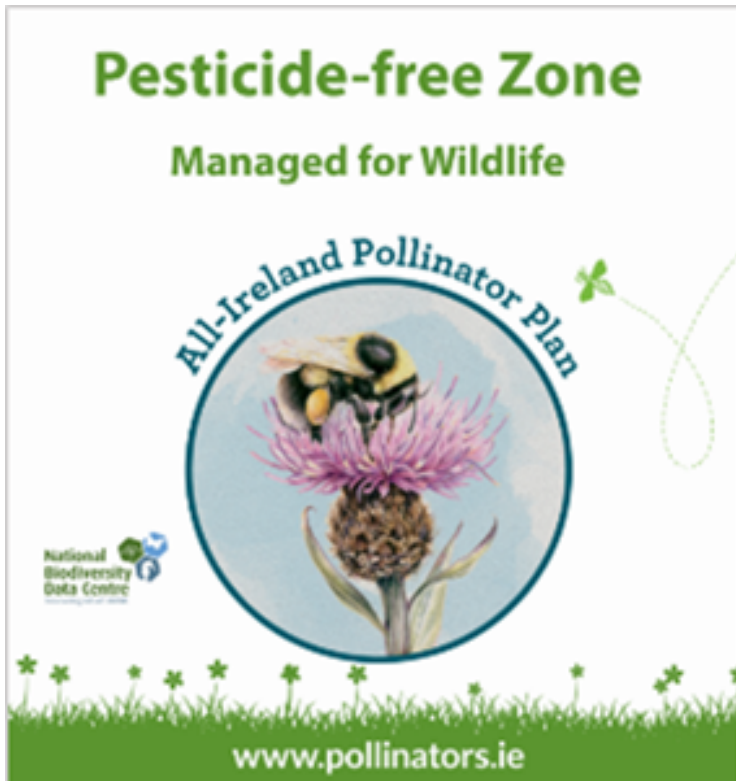
We aim to;

- keep planting more trees on Council estate
- protect the trees we have
- teach people about trees
- help others plant trees





# Theme 3: Pesticide Reduction



Council currently use pesticides to help control weeds in public areas.

The Council want to help protect the environment.

Reducing the amount of pesticides we use is one way to do this.

The Council aim to develop an Integrated Pesticide Control Management Plan (IPCMP).

This will;

- pick areas that will be pesticide free
- help change how and where pesticides are used
- find out new ways to control weeds
- help change peoples thoughts on weeds and seek to look after them in the right places.



# Theme 4: Invasive Alien Species

**Invasive Alien Species** are species that are introduced into an area.

They are normally bad for the environment, economy or for people.

It can cost a lot of money to treat or remove them.

So the best thing to do is try and prevent their spread.



- There is legislation in Northern Ireland that helps stop the spread of some Invasive Alien Species.
- The Council already follow these rules by treating Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed on Council managed estate.
- The Council will continue to survey, map and treat these IAS.
- We will continue to raise awareness about IAS.
- We also plan to run more training and volunteer days for people to help.

# Theme 5: Education and Outreach

**Learning about biodiversity and nature is important so people can understand and protect it.**

The Council offer a variety of education sessions to schools, communities and the public.

We want to deliver more education and outreach programmes such as;

- Pollinator and wildlife workshops
- Helping schools get their Green Flag award with Keep NI Beautiful
- Forest School Programme
- Citizen Science projects

We will work with others to deliver projects together so more people can benefit.





## Theme 6: Projects and Partnerships

The Council work with others to help protect and improve biodiversity in the District.

To help deliver the themes of this plan, we will keep working with other groups, communities and organisations.

The Council also do a range of other work for wildlife on our own estate.

Through Projects and Partnerships we will continue to protect, maintain, enhance, restore and promote biodiversity

We will;

- **Survey and map** biodiversity on Council managed estates
- Protect biodiversity through **Council projects**
- Protect and enhance biodiversity through **Park Management Plans**
- Protect and restore Peatlands through funding and partnership projects
- Take action for **important species**



# Theme 7: Governance, Implementation and Resourcing

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This Strategy will be supported by detailed Action Plans.

They will help Council delivery on the Biodiversity Duty;

- Protection of biodiversity
- Maintenance of biodiversity
- Enhancing biodiversity
- Restoring biodiversity
- Promoting the understanding of biodiversity.



A progress report will be presented to the Council and Biodiversity Steering Group every year.



This report will also be placed on the Council website.

# **Biodiversity in Fermanagh and Omagh**





# Appendix 1: Biodiversity in Fermanagh and Omagh

## Wetlands

Wetlands are a widespread and important habitat in the Fermanagh and Omagh landscape

**Lakes and Ponds:** There are many wonderful examples of loughs in our Council area, such as the infamous Upper and Lower Lough Erne



**Rivers and Streams:** From mammals to birds and insects to plants, rivers and streams are vital places for all wildlife. Examples include River Strule and Colebrooke River.

## Calcareous Habitats

The underlying limestone of Fermanagh gives rise to several interesting habitats, many of which are unique to Northern Ireland, including Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark

**Geodiversity:** This is the different types of rocks, minerals and landforms found in an area which can link people, landscape and their culture.



# Appendix 1: Biodiversity in Fermanagh and Omagh

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## Bogs and Heath

**Bogs and heath** are one of most important habitats in our District, as well as being vital carbon sinks and helping to mitigate flooding.

**Lowland raised bogs** occur in low-lying areas, usually in river valleys or old lake basins, and are largely fed by rainfall. Examples include Fairywater Bogs SAC and Tonnagh Beg Bog.



**Blanket bogs** are found on higher ground as a layer of peat and vegetation covering the hillsides like a blanket. Examples include Bessy Bell and Cuilcagh Mountain.

**Upland heathland** often forms a mosaic with other habitats including blanket bog and acid grasslands. This means that upland heath can be very rich in species diversity. Examples include Brougher Mountain and Slieve Beagh.





# Appendix 1: Biodiversity in Fermanagh and Omagh

## Grassland and Roadside Verges

Grasslands are naturally diverse ecosystems, and many different types of grassland can be found in the District.

**Lowland meadow:** These meadows are important habitats for many wildflowers which in turn, support butterflies and bees.



**Purple moor-grass and rush pasture** often occur as a patchwork with other habitat types, such as floodplains, grazing marsh and lowland raised bog, which increases their value for biodiversity. A great example is Moneendogue ASSI.

**Roadside verges** extend the value of hedgerows and farmland by acting as wildlife corridors between fields.





# Appendix 1: Biodiversity in Fermanagh and Omagh

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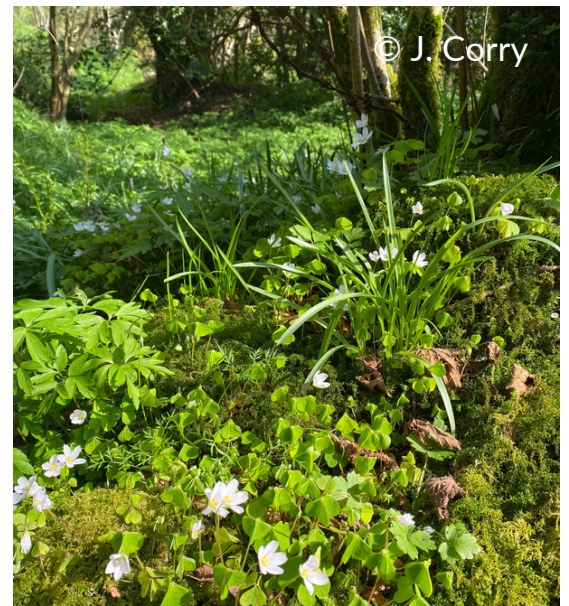
## Woodlands and Hedges

Woodland is the climax vegetation for our area, meaning that if most habitats were left to progress with no human involvement, some form of woodland would develop.



**Coniferous forests** are normally found in the upland areas and consist largely of non-native species. Examples include Ely Lodge Forest, Castle Caldwell Forest and Gortin Glen Forest Park.

**Oak woodlands** are mainly dominated by oak trees, but they also contain a diverse mix of other native tree species, such as downy birch, hazel, holly and rowan. Examples include Owenkillew and Glenelly Woods.



**Wet woodlands** like Castle Archdale Country Park are normally located around lake shores or streams, where the soils are poorly drained or waterlogged.



# Appendix 1: Biodiversity in Fermanagh and Omagh

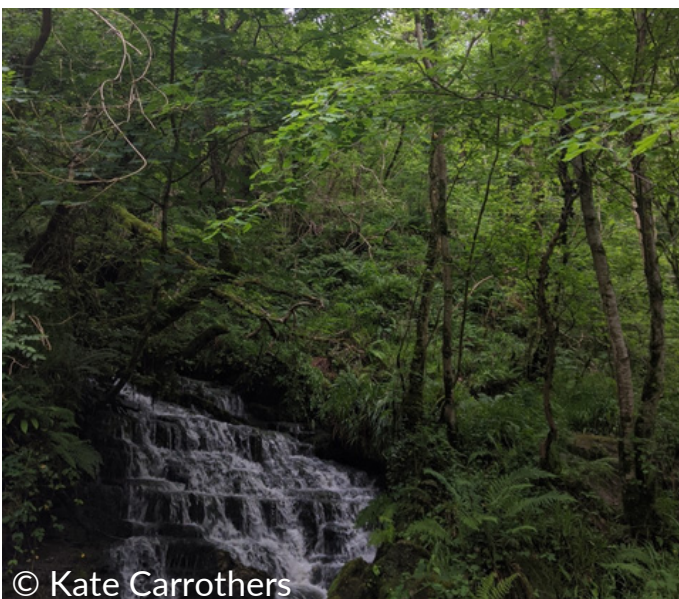
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**Parklands** are important for the mature trees, both native and non-native, as well as deciduous and coniferous, that grow there and the unique wildlife such as bats and owls they support.

Examples include Ecclesville Demesne and Castle Coole.

**Hedgerows** are defined as boundaries made up of planted shrubs, which are vital wildlife corridors.



**Ashwoods:** These habitats are distinguished by the dominance of ash trees in the woodland canopy.

Examples include Hanging Rock and Cladagh Glen.

# Appendix 1: Biodiversity in Fermanagh and Omagh

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## Urban

Urban habitats are vitally important for a wide range of wildlife and serve to introduce people to biodiversity.



**Gardens** are where most people first experience wildlife. Whether it is a ladybird, a bumblebee or a robin, gardens are essential feeding points and homes for lots of wildlife.

**Public parks and open spaces** provide an opportunity for biodiversity to flourish in urban areas that would otherwise struggle to support wildlife.



**School grounds** have the potential to be a biodiversity hotspot and valuable educational resource.

**More information on different habitat types in our District is found in the FODC Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027.**



# Appendix 2 - Our Biodiversity Story so far...



Over 5000 IAS ID booklets and leaflets were created



Carried out surveys to guide our work including red squirrel and otter surveys



Kept an Invasive Alien Species map updated each year



Native wildflowers were encouraged to grow by changing cutting times



We have championed the 'Don't Mow Let It Grow!' initiative



Completed projects including Sloughan Glen ASSI path works and Ecclesville Pond management

# Appendix 2 - Our Biodiversity Story so far...



Created signage and cutting regimes for key roadside verges



Delivered a Trees for Bees Art competition which was used to create signage for planting heritage apple trees

Maintaining, Enhancing and Restoring Biodiversity



Funded projects were applied for and delivered across many themes



Pollinator workshops were delivered to 400 children annually



Planted trees and woodlands on Council land, with community groups and schools



In 2020, over 5000 packets of wildflower seeds were given to the public



# Appendix 2 - Our Biodiversity Story so far...



Produced interpretation panels at key sites across the District



Issued regular social media and press releases, reaching over 430,000 people



The Biodiversity Team visited local schools to promote and teach biodiversity

Promoting the understanding of biodiversity



Assisted annually with 'Ulster in Bloom' developments and Green Flag awards



Coordinated Biodiversity themed events throughout the District



Delivered Forest Schools



# Bibliography

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**Biodiversity** – The variety of plant and animal life in the world or within a habitat.

**Calcareous** – Containing calcium carbonate, lime or being 'chalky.'

**Climate change** – A change in the conditions, for example temperature and rainfall, attributed largely to the increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

**Coniferous** – A tree that bears cones and needle-like or scale-like leaves that are typically evergreen.

**Conservation** – The preservation, protection or restoration of the natural environment and of wildlife.

**Deciduous** – Broadleaved trees and shrubs which shed their leaves seasonally, usually in autumn.

**Habitat** – The natural home of an animal, plant or other organism.

**Invasive species** – A species of plant or animal that has been introduced into an area and is likely to cause economic or environmental harm to human, animal or plant health.

**Restoration** – The action of returning a habitat to its former condition.



# References

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