

## ‘My Wild Road Verges’ – A41, West Bromwich



Staff from The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country (WTBBC) identified areas of roadside grassland along the A41 near West Bromwich which support an interesting and diverse mix of wildflowers including hundreds of rare bee-orchids. As a result of the area’s industrial past, the soils here are poor in nutrients giving wildflowers that are normally outcompeted by aggressive nutrient demanding grasses space to grow. Until recently the grassland was regularly mown preventing the wildflowers from seeding and removing food sources for pollinators.

The Wildlife Trust and Sandwell Council are now working together to change the cutting regime to allow wildlife to thrive. The diverse and flower-rich grasslands now attract bees, butterflies and other pollinators.



The project provides changes in management regime to areas of road verge and central reservation to provide pollinator habitat and to enable the wildflower species to flower and set seed. In total, the project improved 1.828 ha of habitat across 8 habitat blocks.

*“It’s great to see how a small change to when we mow the verges can have such a magnificent impact on flowers and wildlife. By holding off on mowing during late spring and summer, we’re giving these flowers – some of them rare like the bee orchid – the chance to flourish”*

Cllr. David Hosell, cabinet member for highways, Sandwell Council

### **Nature Improvement Area (NIA)**

WTBBC played a pivotal role in Birmingham and the Black Country being designated as one of twelve, and the only urban, Nature Improvement Areas in 2012. The Trust leads more than 60 partners in delivering the NIA vision and in 2015 secured continuation funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.



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