

# Council 28 November 2024

Meeting recording: [(1) Cambridge City Council - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/@camcitco/streams)

## Motion 6f. Butterfly friendly motion

This council notes;

* Wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation has declared a national ‘Butterfly Emergency’, with results of this summer’s Big Butterfly Count showing a marked and hugely concerning decline in numbers.
* Overall, participants spotted just seven butterflies on average per 15-minute Count, a reduction of almost 50% on last year’s average of 12, and the lowest in the 14-year history of the Big Butterfly Count. The majority of species (81%) showed declines in the number seen this year compared with 2023.
* Butterflies are increasingly being recognised as valuable environmental indicators, both for their rapid and sensitive responses to subtle habitat or climatic changes and as representatives for the diversity and responses of other wildlife.
* Insects are the largest proportion of terrestrial wildlife (more than 50% of species), so it is crucial that we assess the fate of insect groups to monitor the overall state of biodiversity. Being typical insects, the responses seen in butterflies are more likely to reflect changes amongst other insect groups, and thus the majority of biodiversity, than established indicators such as those based on birds.
* The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world (ranked 189 out of
* 218) and Cambridgeshire is one of the most nature depleted counties in the UK. Almost 15% of all species in the UK are at risk from extinction.
* The Council declared a Biodiversity Emergency in 2019.
* The Cambridge [Biodiversity Strategy](https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/biodiversity-strategy#:~:text=The%20strategy%20outlines%20plans%20to%3A%201%20protect%20and,4%20promote%20greater%20awareness%20and%20understanding%20of%20biodiversity) and associated [Park Biodiversity Tool Kit](https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/9761/parks-and-open-spaces-biodiversity-toolkit.pdf) contain many actions that benefit butterflies, moths and other invertebrates in formal and informal parks and open spaces. Different species have diverse lifestyles and habitat requirements, and it is important to consider all of these, not solely nectar sources, when promoting their conservation.
* The Cambridge City Herbicide Reduction Plan has discontinued herbicide use on all our soft surfaces across all council owned sites, including parks, car parks and housing areas.
* The use of butterfly and bee killing neonicotinoid pesticides were repeatedly approved for emergency use under the previous government, so this council welcomes the new government’s pledge to ban them in the Countryside Protection Plan and thanks the Cambridge MP Daniel Zeichner for his vital work on this.

This council will;

* Review the council’s Biodiversity Strategy in 2025 aligning with the emerging Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
* Work with our partners on the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy steering group to ensure the maps and priorities align with the existing Cambridge Nature Network.
* Create Butterfly friendly Areas by providing a range of butterfly food sources and habitats in our open spaces, with planting and leaving areas uncut or with reduced cutting.
* Establish The Cambridge Butterfly Trail, by signposting to the Butterfly Areas and register these ‘Wild Places’ on the Butterfly Conservation Wild Spaces website [Let's Create Wild Spaces - Wild Spaces](https://wild-spaces.co.uk/) , aligning with the Cambridge Nature Network.
* Invite Cambridge residents to join the Butterfly Conservation Wild Spaces network with their own Butterfly friendly Areas, which can be as small as a flowerpot or window ledge.

[Butterfly Square — Biophilic Cities](https://www.biophiliccities.org/butterfly-square)

[Butterfly Emergency | Butterfly Conservation](https://butterfly-conservation.org/emergency)

[Butterfly as indicators | UKBMS](https://ukbms.org/butterfly-indicators)