

Pollinating the Peak project launched with giant-sized Bilberry bumblebee and buzzing family fun

Tuesday 8 May, 2018

Bumblebee Conservation Trust's Pollinating the Peak project, which aims to transform the Peak District and Derbyshire into a haven for bumblebees, was formally launched at a Spring Celebration event attended by dozens of local families at Chesterfield's Eastwood Park on Saturday 5 May.

There were art workshops, a bumblebee safari and bumblebee treasure hunt, and a Buzzing Bumblebee Parade. Drumming or 'Drumblebee' sessions were led by percussionist and social worker Biant Singh-Suwali.

Guests helped create a giant land-art picture of the Bilberry bumblebee – one of Britain's rarest bumblebees, now only found in the Peak District and a few other areas. The artwork used natural and re-used materials, and was led by Donna Booth and Natalie Peace from local community interest company Growth Activities.

Bee-friendly flower were planted in a corner of Eastwood Park to create a new pollinator-friendly garden. Families were also able to take a bee-friendly plant and so help create a big local network of bee foraging habitat.

Special guests at the event – which was organised with Chesterfield Borough Council – included Chesterfield Mayor Councillor Maureen Davenport, and local councillors Mick Brady and Kate Sarvent.

"Huge thanks to everyone who attended this special event and made it such a buzzing success! It was a wonderful way to celebrate the beginning of our National Lottery backed Pollinating the Peak project, which is all about saving the sound of summer by taking positive action for bumblebees," said Sally Cuckney, Pollinating the Peak Project Manager.

Bumblebee Conservation Trust is running Pollinating the Peak with its partners Chatsworth, Chesterfield Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Little Green Space, Moors for the Future Partnership, National Trust and Peak District National Park. The project has been made possible thanks to National Lottery players, after it received a grant of more than £700,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Over the next three years, the Pollinating the Peak team will work with local people and communities to protect and boost wild bee populations by providing flower-rich habitats, monitoring bumblebees, and creating buzzing communities and schools.

An important part of the project will be action to protect the Bilberry bumblebee, which inhabits Peakland moors. The bee plays a key role in supporting moorland plants – including by pollinating bilberries, a plant it has helped keep alive for centuries.

Bumblebee Conservation Trust is a charity that was established because of serious concerns about the 'plight of the bumblebee'. In the last 80 years, bumblebee populations have crashed, and two species have already become extinct in the UK. See bumblebeeconservation.org.

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Company Contact:

Bumblebee Conservation Trust

E. richardbuntingpr@gmail.com

W. <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org>

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