

FOURTEEN **FORTY**

Don't Mow Let it Grow Year 3 Report

31.12.18



Branding & Marketing

No new physical collateral was created this year. Items such as pull-ups and signage; merchandise and printed material, were maintained where appropriate.

Our main focus of activity in Year 3 was:

- improving online engagement
- increasing the number of survey responses
- delivering a School's Engagement Programme
- managing an end of project Stakeholder Event.

Additionally, we have been making preparations for completing the project toolkit. The toolkit will be a lasting online resource for the project that will contain all the elements required for other land managers to develop their own "Don't Mow Let it Grow" project. The framework for the toolkit is complete and content will be added in January 2019.

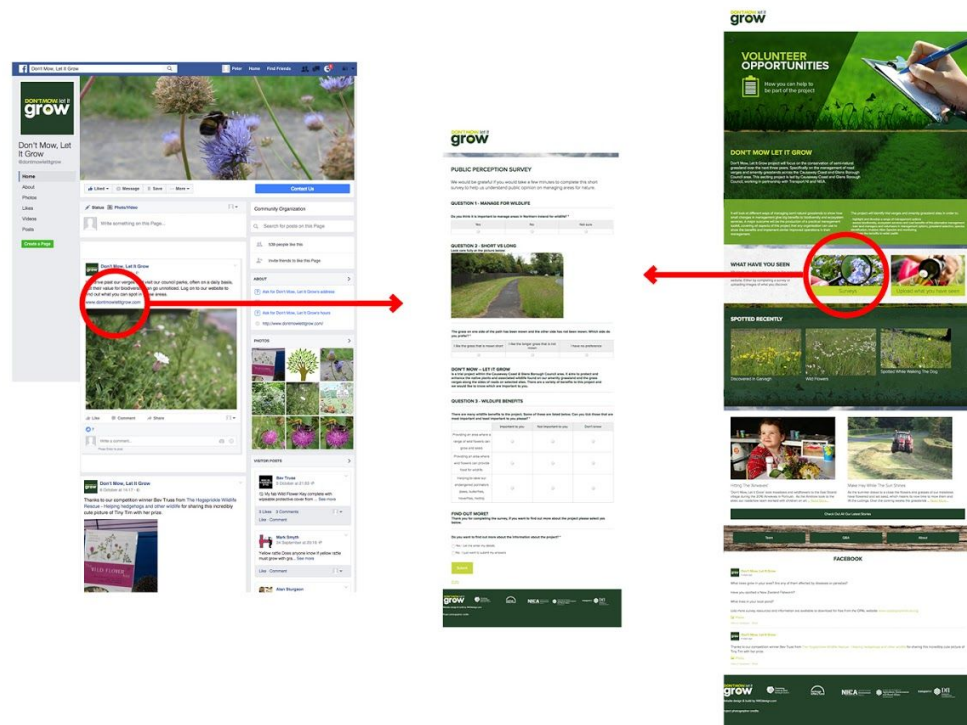
Online Engagement

Public Perception Survey

Increased digital promotion resulted in 590 respondents to the 2018 survey. This was 30% more entries than in the previous two years combined.

Bringing the total number of entries over the three years to 1043, a statistically significant number for EFTEC to use in their economic impact assessment.

Also providing further evidence that there is a growing and engaged audience for this type of approach to land management.



Project Website

The website continued to be enhanced with news and updates and, like the project, grew to reflect the audience engagement with 3,307 visitors to the website during the year. This represents a 79% year on year increase in website visitors.

The most popular pages viewed were:

- 1. Homepage
- 2. Public perception survey
- 3. Bizzy Flo
- 4. Surveys
- 5. Grassland Survey
- 6. The latest news

Page		Pageviews		Pageviews
		8,112		8,112
		% of Total: 100.00% (8,112)		% of Total: 100.00% (8,112)
1.	/	2,480	<div></div>	30.57%
2.	/public-perception-survey/	1,346	<div></div>	16.59%
3.	/busy-flo/	389	<div></div>	4.80%
4.	/surveys/	341	<div></div>	4.20%
5.	/grassland-survey/	230	<div></div>	2.84%
6.	/the-latest/	223	<div></div>	2.75%

The launch of the toolkit will provide more reasons for people to visit the site, thereby providing an ongoing legacy for the project.

33% of traffic to the website is being directed there from social media channels.

	Acquisition		
	Users	New Users	Sessions
	3,307	3,296	4,075
1 Social	1,079	<div></div>	
2 Direct	869	<div></div>	
3 Organic Search	777	<div></div>	
4 Referral	617	<div></div>	

Social Media - Facebook

The Don't Mow Let it Grow Facebook audience has now reached 1526 likes, which compares very favourably with other similar projects. For example Magnificent Meadows, a UK wide project has an audience of 1638 likes.

The rate of growth in Facebook would have been expected to stay at a similar level if not slow slightly, as most people in the Council area had already been aware of the project following the first 2 years. Through the help of Donna managing the organic Facebook content and being on the ground at most events, combined with a strategically placed small advertising spend we were actually able to grow the page at a faster rate in year 3.

A Facebook audience of 1526 likes provides a real platform for continued communication with an engaged audience, providing a significant legacy opportunity. Continued involvement of volunteers such as Donna will be key to making this a success.

We will also be running another paid campaign in the lead up to Spring 2019 to lookalike audiences and friends of friends to provide an additional impetus for the project's online community legacy. We will also use this opportunity to publicize the launch of the online toolkit to other land managers.

	1 January 2017 - 1 December 2017	1 January 2018 - 1 December 2018	% change
Increase in Facebook likes	406	562	38.4%
Posts published	144	172	19.5%
Total Reach	157,670	271,403	72%
Engaged Users	19,560	22,915	17%

Reach - The number of people for whom your Page's post entered their screen.

Engaged Users - The number of unique people who engaged in certain ways with your Page post. For example, by commenting on, liking, sharing or clicking on particular elements of the post

Twitter

Don't Mow, Let It Grow does not have its own Twitter account. However, it was able to feature significantly during the year, including:

Chris Packham's 271,000 followers saw Donna Rainey talking about DMLIG as part of his BioBlitz2018 and the video had 10,200 views. Donna also has 3600 followers



Barra Best's 77,900 followers know he liked DMLIG attending the Airwaves



In addition, Don't Mow Let it Grow had a significant impact thanks to posts by followers and partners including:

- Department for Infrastructure with 10,600 followers
- Heritage Lottery Fund NI with 2000 followers
- Causeway Council with 3000 followers
- Biodiversity Ireland with 10,300 followers



Public Engagement Events

Events attended by Rachel and supported where necessary, included:

- Airwaves International Air Show, Portrush
- Bushmills Salmon & Whiskey Festival
- Cairns Family Open Day, Cushendall
- Lark in the Park, Cushendall
- Ballymoney Spring Fair
- All Ireland Pollinator Plan conference, Athlone
- Ballynature Day, Ballynure
- Belfast Naturalists' Field Club, Ulster Museum
- Multiple walks, talks, and training across the Borough



Celebration / Stakeholder Event



Blue Planet cameraman and BBC presenter, Simon King OBE has congratulated the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council and partners, for the successes of the environmental project, Don't Mow, Let It Grow.

The natural history filmmaker and BAFTA award winner spoke at the celebration event held in the appropriately named Flowerfield Arts Centre in Portstewart, surrounded by local school children and representatives from Local Councils, environmental and countryside organizations along with volunteer groups.

The stakeholder event was professionally presented to reflect the DMLIG brand, with presentations, catering, multiple audiences and content designed to appropriately highlight the success of the project



The event was live streamed and attracted 1700 viewers during or after the event.

Addressing the audience, King said, “Congratulations on the changing of mindsets and terrific successes you have achieved with Don’t Mow, Let It Grow.



Schools Engagement Programme



School visits had taken place at the start of 2018 to:

- Kilrea Primary School in Coleraine
- Ballycastle Primary School
- St Brigid's Primary School in Ballymoney
- Ballykelly Primary School

A presentation was delivered, introducing the Bizzy Flo chapters. Children also took part in questions and answers, along with colouring in and naming Mr. H (the hoverfly) from the animation.

The team also visited Glencairg Primary School in Bangor to pilot the programme with a teacher and pupils, not in the Causeway Coast & Glens area. It also provided insight into the project to the local Ards & North Down Borough Council.



The Mr. H competition was also open to young people at local events and online, with hundreds of entries received.

Mr. H is now known as Harrison and the winners received their prizes from Simon King at the event.

Traditional Media

News in year three included:

When Bizzy Flo visited schools the weekly paper coverage included:

Don't Mow, Let It Grow

Bizzy Flo the bumblebee plants ideas at St Brigid's PS

ENVIRONMENTAL Coast and Glens project Don't Mow, Let It Grow is helping educate the next generation of environmentalists in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Dill Roads and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

They were recently spreading the message at St Brigid's PS, Ballymoney with the help of an exciting new animated character.

To tell the story Don't Mow, Let It Grow to eager little minds was Bizzy Flo the Bumblebee, an exciting new animated character who leads kids on the important biodiversity journey.

The Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Councillor Joan Baird OBE said: "This is an interactive and engaging way of teaching children a very important lesson about our environment. By instilling this understanding from a young age, we are helping to encourage a life-long respect for the beauty of our natural world and the positive impact of schemes like 'Don't Mow, Let It Grow'."

Rachel Bain, Biodiversity Officer at Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, and a group of volunteers have been

visiting local schools to encourage the pupils to not only understand what the project is about, but to become an ambassador for Don't Mow, Let It Grow.

Rachel explains: "It is vital that the public understand the importance of what Don't Mow, Let It Grow can achieve in their local area. By explaining the environmental impact of cutting grassland and what a different type of management of these areas can do we are informing people how we conserve and grow important native wildflowers and grasses for populations of wildlife and pollinators."

The children at St Brigid's Primary School, Ballymoney, were

fascinated by the story of pollination, told by the Bizzy Flo the Bumblebee in a six part animation. In finding out how they can make a difference I know we now have a keen group of junior environmentalists to help spread the word."

Bizzy Flo explains to children that small changes in management of grasslands give big benefits to biodiversity and ecosystem services and provide much needed sites for our native wildflowers and pollinators who also play a key role in crop production. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology,

natural environment and cultural traditions, HLF invest in every part of our diverse heritage. Since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £192million to over 1,000 projects across Northern Ireland. Website: www.hlf.org.uk Twitter: @hlfni



Pupils from St Brigid's Primary School had a great time learning about Don't Mow, Let It Grow from Bizzy Flo the Bumblebee. SPB12-03

Don't Mow, Let It Grow

Working with the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Dill Roads, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and a group of volunteers, environmental project 'Don't Mow, Let It Grow' wants to educate the next generation of environmentalists in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough and beyond.

Telling the story of "Don't Mow, Let It Grow" to eager little minds in primary schools across the Borough is "Bizzy Flo the Bumblebee", an exciting new animated character who leads kids on the important biodiversity journey. The Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Councillor Joan Baird OBE said: "This is an interactive and engaging way of teaching children a very important lesson about our environment. By instilling this understanding from a young age, we are helping to encourage a life-long respect for the beauty of our natural world and the positive impact of schemes like 'Don't Mow, Let It Grow'."

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www.dontmowletitgrow.com. Children also have been given an opportunity to create a new friend for Bizzy Flo the bumblebee. A competition has been launched to find a name for Mr Flo the Honeyfly and bring a bit of colour to his life.

"Don't Mow, Let It Grow" has seen the development of 20 Department for Infrastructure verges and 18 Council park grassland areas, allowing native wildflowers, grasses and insects to flourish.

"Don't Mow, Let It Grow" is managed by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, working with the Department for Infrastructure and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. Further information on "Don't Mow, Let It Grow" can be found at www.dontmowletitgrow.com.



Kids from Ballykelly Primary School who took part in the programme.

When Donna Rainey and Rachel Conway from Pollination went to survey a meadow in Cambridge House Grammar School in Ballymena they found sixty rare orchids (Lady's Tresses) There are only 2,000 of the flowers to be found in Europe.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-45049655?fbclid=IwAR0Nu2KNUXPNoiYBRP8ZBiL0OpnVAyal3tmserGQLiLODprZcH4yMFZl4qY>

With 158,000 followers:



When Simon King visited for the celebration event and gave a candid interview for the Belfast Telegraph

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/life/health/blue-planet-cameraman-simon-king-i-dont-worry-about-getting-old-every-day-we-learn-more-37472378.html>

And the local papers found clever titles:

Grass fit for a king: the success story of Don't Mow, Let It Grow

Blue Planet presenter Simon King hails the trailblazing Coleraine environmental project during special visit

ENVIRONMENT

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Blue Planet cameraman and BBC presenter, Simon King OBE has congratulated Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and partners, for the successes of the environmental project, 'Don't Mow, Let It Grow'.

The natural history film maker and BAFTA award winner, was speaking at a celebration event held in the appropriately named Flow-erfield Arts Centre in Port-stewart, surrounded by local school children, representa-tives from other local councils, environmental and country-side organisations along with volunteer groups.

Addressing the audience, King said: 'Congratulations on the changing of mindsets and terrific successes you have achieved with 'Don't Mow, Let It Grow'. Reducing the amount of detrimental in-terference we have on the deli-cate reliance between native wild flowers and pollinators, can have a massive, tangible impact on our crops and our food chain.'

The three-year pilot project 'Don't Mow, Let It Grow' is the biggest of its type in Northern Ireland. It is funded by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and 38 grasslands have been man-aged by the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council project, in partnership with the Department for Infra-structure and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

The Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, councillor Brenda Chivers, added: 'I am very proud of what the Council

team, our partners and local community has achieved. It's not just the environment which benefits. Managed grasslands can also positive-ly impact tourism, economy and house prices. A key legacy of the three-year project is a management toolkit, which other councils and land own-ers can adopt. Partnership has been key to the success of this pilot project and will contin-ue to be vital to nurture biodi-versity and the preservation of

native wildlife and wildflow-ers.'

Project Manager, Rachel Bain, summarised the impact of 'Don't Mow, Let It Grow'.

'Small changes in man-agement of grasslands give big benefits to biodiver-sity and our ecosystem,' she said. 'Three years of managing these grass-lands as hay meadows has exceeded all our expectations

sites for our native wild flow-ers and pollinators.'

Sentiments agreed by all partners including Melina Quinn from the Northern Ireland Environment Agen-cy. 'The project has also in-creased local support year on year, with 90% of public survey respondents, agreeing that green spaces should be man-aged to benefit both humans and other species.'

'Allowing nature to flour-ish on publicly owned land is an extremely important and simple choice for our society.'

'This project sets an im-portant precedent for other land owners within the pub-lic and private sectors.'

Jim McGreevy, a member of the NI Committee of the Heritage Lottery Fund added, 'We are delighted that 'Don't Mow, Let It Grow' has achieved fantastic outcomes and we congratulate the team on all their hard work. The project demonstrated how returning to traditional care of the land can help safeguard the future. 'As well as being important for biodiversity, the sites looked so beautiful with their rich mix of species and they posi-tively buzzed with life.'

'When we funded this project, we were keen that the team could produce a man-agement technique that oth-ers could adopt and we hope that other land managers will look at what this project has achieved and see if they can replicate it on their land. It is thanks to players of the Na-tional Lottery that we have been able to invest over £49m into land and biodiversity

projects across NI.'

Gary Quinn from the De-partment for Infrastructure emphasised: 'The key word is management. It is not about

verge by the Department to just let everything grow wild. 'The sites are surveyed and the methodology carefully developed and tested.'

'Different management options including frequen-cy and timing of cutting and lifting are developed for each site to enhance its biodiver-sity, whilst not compromising road safety.'

'The project has not been about short term cost sav-ings for the Department, but crucially, it is hoped that the lessons learned from the pil-ot will better inform policy making on the Department's verge management over the longer term. The project also identified areas with Invasive Alien Species and has worked

to ensure they are not spread.'

The easy to use website www.dontmowletitgrow.com is home to everything land managers need to know about the management of public grasslands and improv-ing the fortunes of pollinators.

'Don't Mow, Let It Grow' al-so aimed to educate the next generation of environmental-ists in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough and beyond.

A pilot schools engage-ment programme was deliv-ered, with an animated video starring 'Bizzy Flo' educat-ing young people about nat-ural grasslands, pollinators and the environment. The programme is available on the website for everyone to use.

The 'Don't Mow, Let It Grow' message is simple. Small changes in manage-ment of grasslands, give large ben-efits to biodiversity and eco-system services.

'That helps all of us.'



Congratulations on changing the mindset

Simon King



BBC presenter Din King OBE with Project Manager, Rachel Bain.

Measuring the traditional press coverage, it is acceptable to say, the equivalent of £48,000 of advertising spend was achieved.

Future Plans

- Roll-out of the management toolkit, and an opportunity to highlight the public perception survey results as a hook for other land-owners to adopt DMLIG principles. Including Council areas, churches, schools, hospitals, and private landowners.
- The further promotion of the Bizzy Flo character and animation to schools, to further impact the next generation.