

**IDENTIFY:**

MANAGE OFF-PITCH GRASS FOR POLLINATORS

On areas outside of playing pitches, changing the frequency of mowing allows common wildflowers such as Clovers, Knapweed and Bird's-foot-trefoil to naturally grow amongst the longer grass.

This is the most cost-effective way to provide food for pollinators and other insects.

This is not a reduction in management effort, but a reallocation to provide additional benefits.

Create Short-Flowering '4 to 6-Week Meadows'

- Identify areas of grass where you can reduce mowing to cut on a 4 to 6-weekly rotation.
- If possible, don't mow until mid-April to allow Dandelions to flower.
- Grass cuttings should always be removed after mowing to reduce soil fertility and promote wildflower growth.
- This regime keeps grass at a manageable level, while increasing the growth of wildflowers as a food source for pollinators.
- Such areas could be beside pitches, paths or edging an annual meadow.
- Signage can be used to identify these areas as being managed for biodiversity. Consider using bilingual signage from <https://pollinators.ie/resources/>
- If necessary, cutting can be increased or decreased depending on the use of the area but if at all possible grass should not be cut from the beginning of March until mid-April (Dandelion peak) or from the end of May until mid-July (Clover peak).
- A path could also be cut through short-flowering meadows for jogging/ walking or as part of a nature trail for club members and the community.





Manage Some Areas as Natural Long-Flowering Meadows

Identify areas of grass that could be left uncut until September – one cut and lift per year.

- Larger land areas around edges of site, such as behind goals, may be suitable for these long-flowering wildflower meadows. Meadows managed in this way will allow wildflowers to bloom throughout the pollinator season and provide undisturbed areas for nesting.
- The annual cut in September should always be removed to reduce soil fertility over time, as wildflowers grow best in less fertile soils. Local farmers may be willing to cut and bale grass to use as fodder for livestock.
- Under this management, over a number of years, the meadow will naturally become more flower-rich with local species that are adapted to the site's conditions – all without spending money on wildflower seed. (Note: if necessary on your site, you can also mow in March to remove heavy winter growth).
- Consulting with club members and keeping them informed of plans can allay fears that changed mowing regimes are due to lack of management. Signage can also be used to identify areas as deliberate. See <https://pollinators.ie/resources/> for signage templates and consider using bilingual signage throughout your club.



See <https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs> for more tips, advice and examples of managing off-pitch grass in your club for pollinators.