

# Skills for Bees: Cymru

## Newsletter July 2021



### Welcome to our first newsletter!

I hope this finds you well and thank you for showing an interest in Skills for Bees Cymru. It has been a very busy first few months, despite Coronavirus restrictions still being in place. It seems that people's love and respect for nature continues unabated! I am delighted to have been met with so much enthusiasm as our project begins!

### What is Skills for Bees Cymru?

Skills for Bees Cymru (S4BC) is a 3 year project delivered by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust with generous funding from the Moondance Foundation. Our vision is to improve distribution and abundance data of bumblebees in Wales.

We plan to achieve this by:

- ◆ Training staff and volunteers throughout the conservation sector and recording community, in bumblebee identification.
- ◆ Building a network of BeeWalk transects across Wales
- ◆ Filling knowledge gaps, particularly in areas with few BeeWalks and bumblebee records.



*Partnership with Buglife to deliver bumblebee ID training to volunteers in Neath Port Talbot*



*Pembrokeshire Coast National Park volunteers and staff*

### The story so far...

Since starting the project in February, I quickly got to grips with presenting online training courses which was quite a challenge at first but proved useful in reaching larger audiences. Over 100 people attended identification and BeeWalk training through our Welsh Local Environmental Records Centres, followed up with field days in Powys and north Wales where we have particular gaps in bumblebee data. We've also completed online training for Natural Resources Wales and the Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales. We worked in partnership with the Living Levels project and with Buglife in Neath Port Talbot, training groups of dedicated volunteers in bumblebee ID and monitoring. This has been hugely enjoyable and we hope the volunteers involved can employ their skills to make fantastic contributions to bumblebee recording in those specific areas. Thanks to all involved!

A team of keen staff and volunteers from Pembrokeshire Coast National Park enjoyed a series of online training sessions and field days. We established a number of new BeeWalks within the Park and hope to roll this out to Brecon Beacons National Park next year.

## Next steps...

As we head into August, we will be delivering field days for the groups we have worked with during the spring and summer – including trips to Powys, Conwy, Neath Port Talbot and two final days on the Gwent Levels to complete our partnership with the Living Levels project. We will be working with Bex Cartwright, the Shrill Carder Recovery manager, in the three key areas where this species remains in Wales – Castlemartin (Pembrokeshire), Bridgend and the Gwent Levels. We have found both shrill carder and brown banded carder this year during our field days and will be continuing to look for some of Wales' rarest species as well as training volunteers to identify the most common ones!

The winter will be spent evaluating our first season and making plans for 2022. The main focus for recording will be mid and north Wales so if you are in these areas and know of any volunteer groups or organisations that would like to get involved in bumblebee recording or setting up a Beewalk, do let me know!



Heath bumblebee (*Bombus jonellus*) male, north Wales. Richard Gallon

I'd like to thank everyone who has taken an interest in our project and the many people who have contacted me to get involved or find out more! Unfortunately I've not been able to follow up all of these individual requests as I would have liked. The nature of the project means I'm often working with organisations or established volunteer groups. To try and redress this balance I would like to offer a series of online talks over the winter, specifically for my growing contact list of individual enthusiasts, and community groups. I hope to be able to follow up with regional field days.



Outdoor studies in Radnorshire with the Biodiversity Information Service for Powys & Brecon Beacons (BIS)

## Dates for winter bumblebee talks:

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (6.30pm-8pm)** 'The Bumblebee Conservation Trust - our work in Wales'

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 (6.30pm-8pm)** 'Introduction to bumblebees' (what they are, what they do and why they're special!)

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 (6.30pm-8pm)** 'Introduction to bumblebee identification: the common 8 species'

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 (6.30pm-8pm)** 'Introduction to bumblebee recording and setting up a Bee Walk'

**Note: Zoom links will be sent out to the whole contact list a week before the meeting. No booking required!**



Shrill carder (*Bombus sylvarum*) on everlasting pea, Newport Wetlands

**Clare Flynn, Skills for Bees Cymru Project Officer-**  
[Clare.Flynn@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:Clare.Flynn@bumblebeeconservation.org)