

## Autumn 2021

The creation of flower-rich habitats is an important action to help promote biodiversity, capture carbon and connect people to nature. Many landowners, farmers and landowning businesses in the South West have been creating these new habitats for these reasons. This is the second newsletter for our wildflower collective project funded by the Halpin Trust, exploring the benefits of wildflowers to the environment, people and economy with a range of landowning businesses.

### Wildflowers for people

#### The Lost Gardens of Heligan wildflower meadow and visitor engagement survey

Over the summer, we aimed to understand the social value of wildflower displays at visitor facing attractions by auditing the types of activities visitors undertake in these wildflower displays and capturing visitors' feedback on their experience. We did this by running an anonymous **online engagement survey** where visitors could scan a QR code and provide feedback on their experience at the wildflower display. We also ran an **on-site observational survey** of activities displayed by participants visiting the wildflower display and their duration and location using the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities ([SOPARC](#)) method. This is a method designed to collect data on the use of greenspaces by the public.

We conducted the study in collaboration with the [Lost Gardens of Heligan](#) using their 4.65 hectare annual wildflower display of Cornflowers, Corn Camomile, Corn marigold and Poppy. This was established in 2019 with the multiple aims of providing habitat and forage for pollinators, connecting visitors to nature, and trialling a new business opportunity in local seed production.



Photo: 4.65 ha annual wildflower meadow at the Lost Gardens of Heligan. Photo by Alasdair Moore.

### RESULTS: Online engagement survey

We had 71 responses to the online engagement survey from August 15<sup>th</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup> 2021. We firstly asked four multiple-choice questions; the preliminary results of these are below;

Most respondents reported a **positive experience in the wildflower meadow** (96%), with 66% of respondents answering 'Really good' and 30% answering 'Good'. 4% answered 'Ok'. The majority of respondents (70%) answered 'No' that the meadow was not the specific reason they visited the Lost Gardens of Heligan on that occasion, but 30% answered that the meadow was 'partially' the reason. The majority of respondents (79%) answered **'Yes', they would visit again to see the wildflower meadow**, (20% answered 'Maybe' and 1% answered 'No'). The vast majority (90%) of respondents answered 'Yes', they would recommend visiting the wildflower display to someone else, and 10% answered 'No'. See Figure 1.

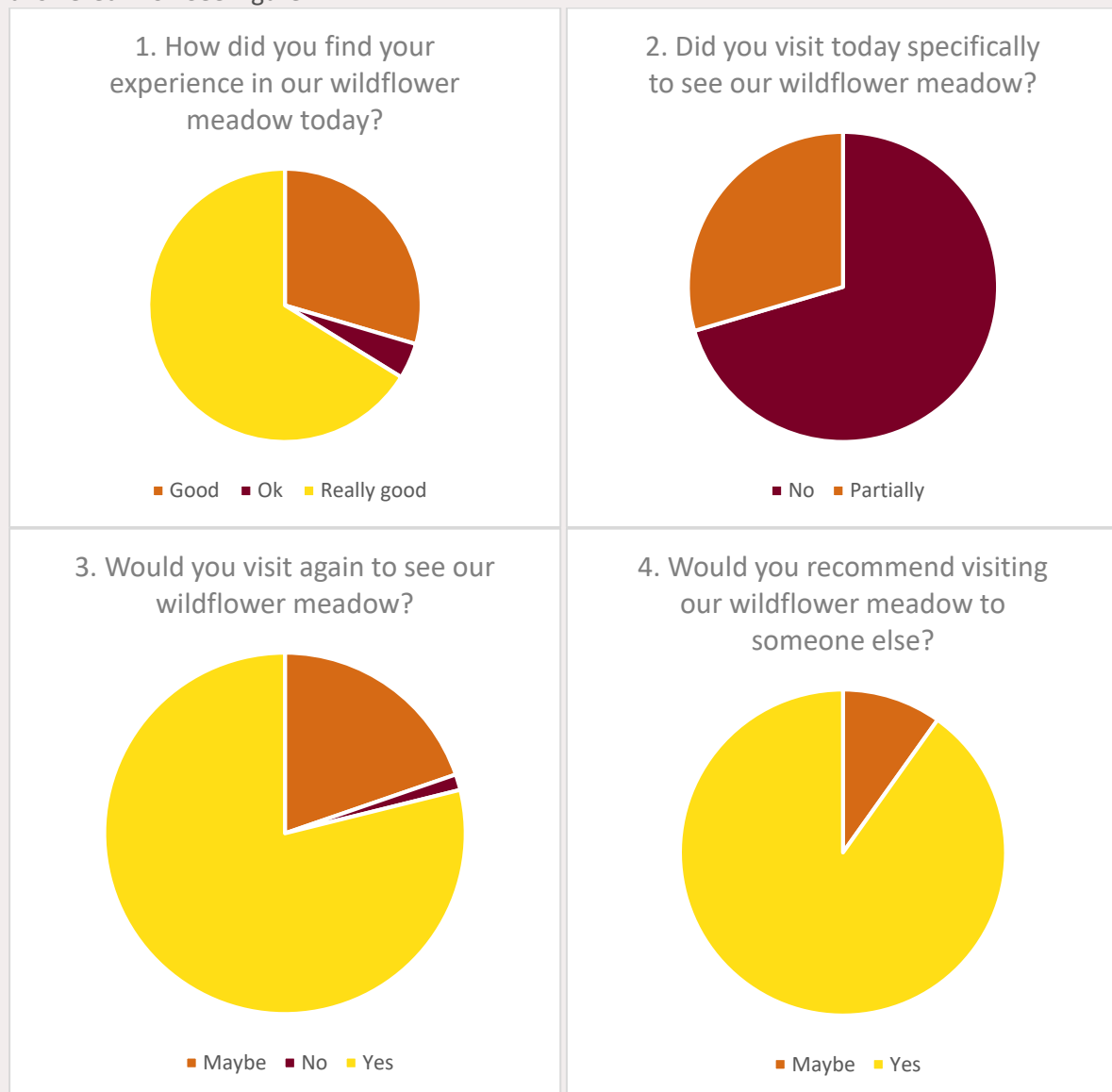
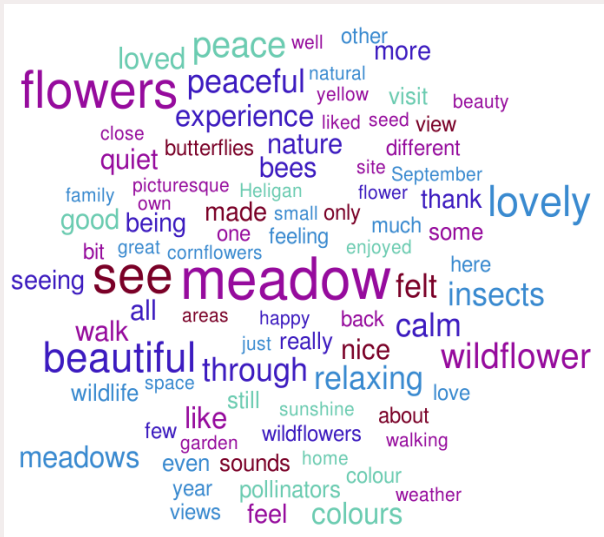


Figure 1. Responses to four of our online engagement survey questions to visitors to the wildflower display at the Lost Gardens of Heligan.

We then asked three open questions; the preliminary results of these are detailed below;

5. Tell us about your experience in our wildflower meadow today- including any benefits you felt you gained from it?



The majority of answers described how the meadow made the respondent feel (48%), followed by how it looked (20%). 13% of respondents mentioned doing something due to experiencing the wildflower display, either taking inspiration for their garden or purchasing seed. 7% mentioned learning something (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Word cloud of visitor responses to ‘Tell us about your experience in our wildflower meadow today- including any benefits you felt you gained from it?’

*“[I] Would love to make my own small meadow at home.”*  
*“I loved hearing all the sounds. I’m feeling a bit low today, and being here helped my heart.”*  
*“I loved seeing a safe space for pollinators. It made me happy and was so beautiful.”*

6. What did you enjoy most about your experience in our wildflower meadow today?

The majority (59%) referenced something visual - the ‘flowers’, the ‘colours’ and ‘view’ of the meadow. This was followed by how it made the respondent feel (29%), e.g. ‘peace’ and ‘calm’ (Figure 3). Other answers referred to taking action, connecting with others and learning (12%).

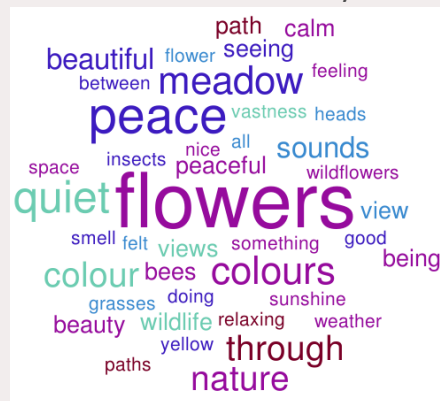


Figure 3. Word cloud of visitor responses to ‘What did you enjoy most about your experience in our wildflower meadow today?’

*“It was so beautiful it made even my children feel peaceful.”*  
*“... what was particularly good was seeing the wildlife interacting with the meadow....”*

7. How could our wildflower meadow be made better?

Answers related to increasing the diversity of the site (28%), specifically about the colours and pollinators present, closely followed by having more information (25%) and increasing access and the route (23%). Other answers (25%) included extending the meadows size and seasonal flowering, and having activities.

### RESULTS: On-site observational survey

Observations of activities in the wildflower display were made from 25<sup>th</sup> August- 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (531 observations in total). Activities were categorised by theme to correspond with three of the five steps to mental wellbeing; 'Take notice', 'Physical Activity' and 'Connect with Others'. We also included 'Stand or Sit' as a category. Results showed the **benefit of the meadow for both physical activity and engagement**. The majority of activities (Figure 4) were 'Physical Activity' of walking or running (47%), followed by 'Take Notice' (27%) activities of reading information boards, looking around the site or taking photos, followed by 'Stand or Sit' (23%) and 'Connect with Others' (4%).

We further separated the 'Take Notice' theme to determine what aspects of the meadow display participants were 'taking notice' of. The majority of 'Take Notice' actions were 'Reading' (38%), followed by looking across the landscape (Looking 'landscape', 24%) and looking at something close up, e.g. a flower or insect (Looking 'macro', 15%). A smaller proportion interacted with the 'Shepherds hut' (10%) on-site and were taking photos (macro and landscape) (14%).

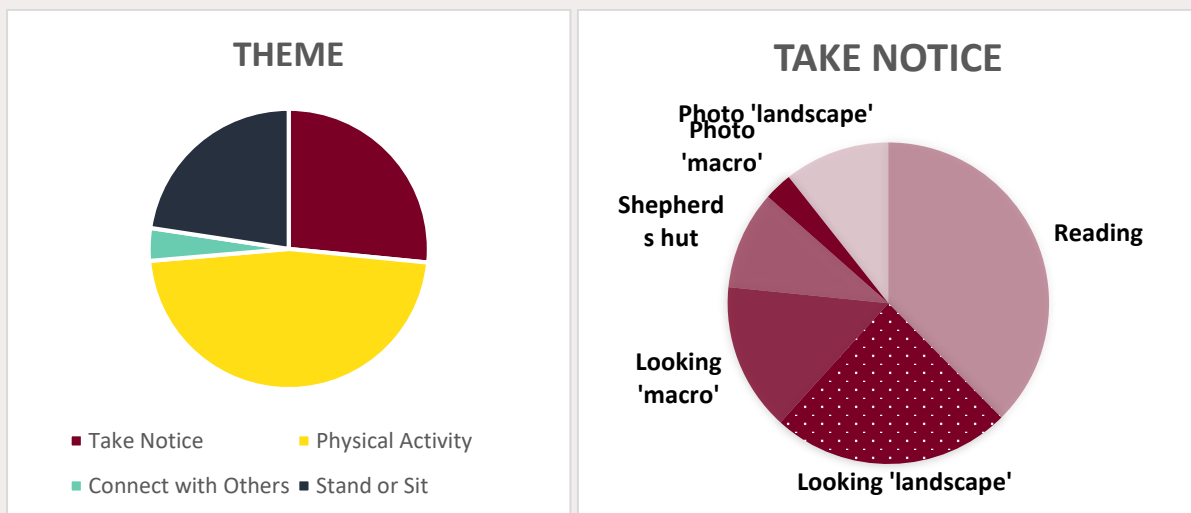


Figure 4. Activity theme and specific activities categorised as 'Take Notice' for participants in the wildflower display at the Lost Gardens of Heligan.

### Wildflowers for business

#### Footfall monitors

We used **footfall monitors** at the entrance of a wildflower display to record the number of people visiting the meadow between 25<sup>th</sup> August and 25<sup>th</sup> September. The Tevi project provided these TeviNET: Is your business Tevi-ready? - Tevi. We recorded **3312** incidences of footfall during visitor opening hours (10 am-6 pm). The highest recorded footfall dates were the 31<sup>st</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> September (296 and 301, respectively) and steadily decreased after that. It is difficult to estimate the value of the wildflower display to ticket sales at the Lost Gardens of Heligan. Still, with an Adult and Senior entry fee of £17.50 and 30% of respondents saying the meadow was 'partially' the reason they visited (Figure 1), the meadow could be valuable in attracting initial visits, in repeat visits and customer recommendations. We will be doing more work on valuing this in early 2022.

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