

NEWS RELEASE – January 2014

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Hills create new home for bees in North Swindon

Wiltshire wildlife Trust and Hills Waste Solutions have joined forces to give declining bee populations a helping hand with the creation of a crucial new diverse habitat for wildlife on a closed section of a landfill site in North Swindon.

Part of the Chapel Farm landfill site is undergoing works to transform the area into a haven for bees, insects, small mammals, ground nesting birds and reptiles.

Mike Webster, group director Hills Waste Solutions, said: “The landfill operations at Chapel Farm are due to end in 2014 and Hills will remain responsible for the long-term aftercare of the site. As part of our restoration planning we have been working with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust on this project to create a bee-friendly habitat that will also become a haven for other wildlife.”



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An area measuring 18.5 hectares will be transformed into wild flower meadows with a small orchard both of which will provide an important source of food and pollen for a range of invertebrates including queen and worker bumblebees. Some areas of bare ground will remain as these provide suitable nesting sites for solitary bees and wasps.

Stephen Davis, Head of Conservation Policy at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust said: “Having lost 97% of our wild flower meadows its fantastic news to see the closed section of the landfill site being restored to a wildflower habitat, for bees and other insects. Over time this area will continually improve to support a great diversity of wildlife. It is also the perfect complement to the plans for a nature park being developed adjacent to the River Ray just to the South”.

The project is being delivered in a number of phases. Pipework and cables, which are a necessary part of the environmental management of the landfill site, have been buried and the soil surface prepared in readiness for the planting of a hay meadow next summer. The next phase will be to erect stock proof fencing to protect the young trees in the orchard and log piles that provide shelter for terrestrial invertebrates, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians and nesting sites for solitary bees will be created.

Hedgerows of willow, wild cherry, hawthorn and blackthorn will also be planted to provide wildlife corridors for a range of species such as nesting birds, small mammals, badgers, foraging and commuting bats, and terrestrial invertebrates. This variety provides valuable nectar and pollen for foraging bees from early spring until late summer.

The area will provide a good quality habitat for small mammals and naturally excellent foraging for raptors such as barn owls and kestrels. Raptor perching posts will be installed to make up for the initial lack of mature trees and hedgerows in the area.

The final phase of the project will begin in spring 2014 with the installation of bee hives and following that, in early summer, the area will be lightly ploughed and green hay, rich in meadow plant seeds and harvested from a local donor site, will be spread onto the surface. **ENDS**

Notes:

1. Hills Waste Solutions operates Chapel Farm landfill site near Blunsdon and has overall responsibility for the site and holds the permit to operate. The landfill site is scheduled to close in 2014 subject to waste tonnages remaining at current levels and will be handed back to Swindon Council in 2016. Hills remains responsible for the environmental management of the site under the permit. During this aftercare period the site will continue to be regulated by the Environment Agency. The aftercare period will only cease once the Environment Agency is satisfied that environmental management of the site is no longer required. This is estimated to be in around 60 years' time.
2. The Hills Group has been supporting the work of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust for over 22 years. Read about this unique partnership at <http://www.hills-group.co.uk/media-centre/publications/>
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