

Rowse Honey and Blenheim Estate to Create Over 50 Acres of Wildflower Meadows and 124 Miles of Hedgerows

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The Blenheim Estate is joining forces with Rowse Honey on a major conservation project to create a sustainable nectar source for local wild bees and other pollinators, as well as introducing new habitats for insects and birds, in and around the Oxfordshire estate.

The new five-year partnership will see the creation of at least 50 acres of pollinator-rich meadows on agricultural land within Blenheim Estate's pioneering regenerative farming project, as well as help fund new research into the role diverse mixes of pollinators have in farmed landscapes.

In addition to introducing over 70 different species of wildflowers – that have been native to Britain for centuries – to various areas on the land, the project will also see the planting of 200km of hedgerow.

All flora will be introduced to the landscape slowly, to ensure no damage is caused to the existing ecosystem, ultimately securing legacy for future generations.

Dozens of wild honey bee colonies have been discovered living in the ancient woodland of the Oxfordshire UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is hoped the wildflower meadows will enable Blenheim's existing population of bees, and other invertebrates, to expand and colonise surrounding areas, and in doing so become a catalyst to revive the health of the local countryside.

Reports conclude that approximately 97% of wildflower areas* and approximately 118,000 miles (c.50%) of hedgerows** have disappeared in the UK since World War II, largely due to intensive farming methods. This loss of habitat and forage supply, along with disease, have caused populations of pollinating insects to dwindle.

The project forms part of Blenheim Estate's wider land strategy, as well as Rowse's Hives for Lives programme.

"Enhancing habitats for pollinators is one of the key building blocks to a thriving countryside and a big part of our overall strategy to become carbon negative by 2027 across all scopes at Blenheim," said Blenheim's Estates Director, Roy Cox.

"In the World Heritage Site, we are fortunate to care for part of Oxfordshire which has remained relatively untouched for centuries. This makes it a haven for native pollinator species, which can forage on the estate's extensive natural flora and wildflowers.

"Working alongside Rowse's Hives for Lives programme, Blenheim Estate is seeking to expand this precious habitat by 'regenerating' a significant part of our landholding.

"The aim is to create a natural environment where the wildlife can not only survive, but thrive," he added.

Rowse's Managing Director, Ian Ainsworth added: "We are delighted to be working with the Blenheim Estate, close to our home in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, to help provide rich nectar sources, at scale, helping to secure the future of bees, raise awareness of their plight and highlight what we can all do to help protect them and other local pollinators."

"As well as significantly increasing the native wildlife diversity by connecting areas of forest and ancient woodland, the aim of this ground-breaking partnership is to engage consumers and visitors to the heritage site and wider Blenheim estate in the importance of nature, pollinators and sustainable land management.

"At Rowse, we understand the need to balance providing an abundance of nectar rich flowers from early spring right through to the end of the foraging season, and providing more nectar supply, for longer, for as many native pollinator species as we can.

"The ultimate goal is to use this project to demonstrate what's possible, to inspire and influence other landowners and the general public to support the creation of sustainable nectar sources for bees and other pollinators nationwide." she added.

Visitors to Blenheim will be able to learn more about the project by walking the network of grass routes across the Estate and at a specific exhibition in the World Heritage Site.

Issued on behalf of Blenheim Estate. For more information please contact Rachel Leach at RLeach@blenheimestate.com or Ollie Young at ollie@flamingo-marketing.co.uk .

About Blenheim Estate

At Blenheim Estate Land we know that our land is precious and finite, but cared for properly its benefits can be limitless. Yet today there are fresh challenges like climate change, an aging population and increasing urbanisation.

So our approach - spanning a number of projects - needs to be as sophisticated, enduring and holistic as those issues we face.

By adopting new methods of valuing our natural capital we can view our land resources as part of an ecosystem. An ecosystem whose benefits extend to the air we all breathe, the green transport solutions that connect our communities, the physical and mental health we enjoy, and the quality of the food we consume.

About Rowse Honey

Rowse Honey , the UK's favourite honey brand, was founded in Oxfordshire over 80 years ago – where it remains to the present day - and has been sharing a love of honey with the UK ever since. Today, Rowse is the UK's favourite honey brand.

For more than a decade, Rowse's mission for their Hives For Lives programme has been focussed on protecting bees and beekeepers. The initiatives to date include support into honeybee health and wellbeing research with Laboratory of Apiculture & Social Insects (LASI) at University of Sussex, training new generations of UK bee farmers through an apprenticeship scheme with the British Bee Farmer Association (BBFA), and working with global communities in the developing world to improve livelihoods through beekeeping, and reforestation, in conjunction with charity, Bees for Development (BFD).

*Wildflower decline in the UK

**Hedgerow decline in the UK