

**Monmouthshire County Council Press Release –  
Council praises Usk in Bloom pollinator award**

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

Monmouthshire County Council has congratulated the *Usk in Bloom* charity following recent news that it has received the Welsh Government's *Caru Gwenyn* (Bee Friendly) award. Usk in Bloom is the first organisation to achieve this status which forms part of the government's pollinator strategy. The Caru Gwenyn scheme is backed by Friends of The Earth Cymru and its award is offered to organisations like schools, public bodies, councils, businesses and places of worship that encourage the protection of bees and other pollinators in Wales.

Achieving the award rests on satisfying four goals – food, five star accommodation, freedom from pesticides or herbicides, and fun. While pollinator-friendly food sources and suitable habitats must be provided, harmful pesticides and herbicides are forbidden. In addition, community involvement should involve an element of enjoyment as well as a sense of attainment.

Usk in Bloom Chairman, Tony Kear said: All our volunteers at Usk in Bloom are very proud of this award. We have worked exceptionally hard over the past three years to balance the need to present Usk as a tourist welcoming community by ensuring that the town is litter and weed-free where possible as well as significantly reducing the need to use herbicides. We have sown over 250 square metres of pollinators in 2016 and a further 100 square metres is planned for St Mary's Churchyard this year. Close liaison with Monmouthshire County Council will again ensure a spectacular colourful bee-friendly entrance into Usk which will I'm sure be appreciated by so many. The council's additional support has been invaluable. Removing more weeds by hand is, of course, hard work but the results when combined with our pollinator policies are both rewarding and award winning!

Monmouthshire's Commercial & Operations Manager Nigel Leaworthy was delighted with the accolade earned by Usk in Bloom. He said: "This award is richly deserved for the hard work and impressive actions carried out by Usk in Bloom with the local community over many years to make the town an exemplary habitat for pollinators. The council is proud to have been involved by offering advice on wild flower areas, ensuring streets are weeded by hand and tending to shrub beds. I recently gave a talk to Usk Town Council in relation to this award and our work to promote sustainability while we've also engaged with both the town council and Usk in Bloom on planting areas in the Maryport Street Car Park with herbs and edible plants."

Monmouthshire's Chief Executive Paul Matthews added: "Receiving the Cara Gwenyn award recognises the excellent work of Usk in Bloom which is very much in line with Monmouthshire's pollinator policy agreed in 2014. We're pleased to have supported the organisation, not only in its care for pollinators but also its remarkably successful involvement with the *Wales in Bloom* and *Britain in Bloom* competitions."