



ASSOCIATION OF
Local Government Ecologists

Association of Local Government Ecologists marks its silver year by celebrating the best of nature conservation at the local level

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The Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE), a voluntary association representing professional ecologists working in local government in the UK, has marked its 25 year anniversary with a series of awards recognising its members' and their partners' contributions to furthering nature conservation and the way it is delivered at the local level.

Announced at ALGE's Conference in London, and presented by Madeleine Moon, the award winners are as follows:

Local Government Biodiversity Project Award – Tayside Biodiversity Partnership for their Back from the Brink – Saving our Small Blue project. This landscape scale project to restore habitat and manage it for the benefit of the Small Blue Butterfly impressed the judges with its broad project partnership, extensive engagement with community groups, landowners and volunteers and the result of Small Blues restored at new sites within the project area. Special commendation was also given to Cody Levine, Worcestershire County Council for his bat lighting project.

Local Government Changing the Way We Work Award – Lichfield District Council for the Lichfield Biodiversity Net Gain Model. The panel recognised that Lichfield's work on biodiversity net gain has been instrumental in demonstrating that such gains could be delivered through development and has shown how local planning policy could be designed to enable this. And in doing so has played a significant role in influencing the introduction of a mandate for biodiversity net gain in England. Special commendation was also given to the South Hams SAC Greater Horseshoe Bats Steering Group for cross border working; and to Ceredigion County Council Highways Services for their highways ecologist.

Regional Champion Award – John Edwards, Surrey County Council. The panel considered that John is the definition of a regional champion, supporting and working with others across the south east to further nature conservation. John was involved in the formation of ALGE and has continued to champion local government ecology and the sharing of experience and expertise. Special commendation was also given to Matt Ellis, Natural Resources Wales for his work on Great Crested Newt conservation; and Dr Tim Duffy, Scottish Wildlife Trust for his nature conservation work across the Lothians.

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Unsung Local Hero Award – Annette Smith. The panel were struck by the longevity of Annette’s commitment to bats, spanning nearly 40 years. Annette has been instrumental in North Ceredigion Bat Group, running the group for 25 years. What is particularly notable about Annette’s contribution is that everything has been done in her own time, as her professional career is outside ecology. Special commendation was also given to Moor Meadows for their work on wildflower grasslands in Dartmoor; and Robyn Stewart for her work on water voles in Glasgow.

Collaborative Working Award – Bumblebee Conservation Trust for Making a Buzz for the Coast. The panel were particularly impressed with the extensive collaboration with both local government, stakeholders and landowners which has already delivered notable gains in respect of pollinator habitat and wider biodiversity benefits this brings, not to mention the return of bee species to previously unpopulated sites. Special commendation was also given to Pori Natur a Threftadaeth (PONT) for its grazing work and Scottish Wildlife Trust for Saving Scotland’s Red Squirrels.

Steve Moon Lifetime Achievement Award – Michael Oxford for his services to ALGE and local government ecology. Whether working as a local government ecologist or a consultant, Mike has worked tirelessly to protect and conserve nature and also champion improved practice in identifying and managing ecological impacts. He has produced a number of best practice guidance publications and was the chair and lead author for the first ever British Standard for biodiversity. Mike was a member of the Working Panel of Local Authority Ecologists, ALGE’s precursor, and has been on the committee as both ALGE’s secretary and project officer. In the latter role he has been the outward face of ALGE working with many other organisations and delivered countless reports, consultation responses and inputs to projects.

Liz Milne, ALGE’s Chair, said “the large number of excellent nominations, all of whom would have been worthy winners, illustrates the fantastic work and dedicated individuals working at, or with, the local government level and demonstrates how important local government is to nature conservation. The awards have been a wonderful opportunity to celebrate this contribution alongside ALGE’s 25th anniversary”.