



Nomination form for BIG Biodiversity Champion 2023

Nominee Name	Melissa Ralph
Award category	Established professional (more than 5 years working on biodiversity-related projects)
How many years working on biodiversity-related projects/effort?	6
Project(s) person is nominated for	Cornwall's Making Space for Nature
Nominee Organisation	Cormac Solutions Ltd
Nominator name (can be same as above), organisation & email for contact	<p>Alan Ibbotson, Consultant Engineer, Cormac Solutions Ltd Alan.Ibbotson@cormacltd.co.uk</p> <p>Endorsed by Jon Mitchell, Public Space team leader, Cornwall Council</p>
Describe how the nominee best meets the following criteria (no more than 50 words each):	
Engaging	Melissa is naturally curious, always keen to listen to people's stories and help spark local nature connections. She brings 'sense of place' into meaningful community engagement – making wild garden models with school children, a quiet chat in a cemetery, doorstep surveys or a challenging question time with a town council.
Inspiring	Melissa recognises barriers to change, taking people with her to help create a wilder Cornwall. She helps transform 'difficult' urban greenspaces into beautiful, connected nature rich havens. Melissa encourages Cormac and others (NHS and Cornwall Housing Ltd) to <u>see</u> their work differently - as Cornwall's nature guardians. Plenty of experiments!
Enthusiastic	Melissa brings energy and positive communication to work every day. promotion of 'popular' hedgehogs and butterfly species, to explain nature corridors and build support for new habitats and management such as scrub and long grass. Melissa helped create a new Urban Ranger role, resulting in 1000+ hours of volunteer gardening.
Creative	Melissa works <u>with</u> nature: autumn to spring site works, including bare-root stock, small 2Litre pot grown stock and seed sown wildflower meadows. This minimised watering and plant losses. Soil health was a top priority, with minimal disturbance, high density planting and thick mulch. Dead hedges were created from ash die-back.

Knowledgeable	Melissa has a passion for knowledge exchange and has a sound knowledge of project management, ecology, design, SUDs and engagement. She is a 'Building with Nature' assessor and co-wrote the MS4N Strategy (Excellent Award) and 4 Site Awards. She organised Cormac training in meadow creation and management with industry experts.
Outcomes driven	Melissa led increased biodiversity and improved public contact with nature in 15 Cornish towns. Each site, delivered by Cormac Solutions Ltd, provides new habitats, offering food and shelter for wildlife. Delivery Partner University of Exeter has demonstrated that these sites host twice the number of pollinator species as 'control' sites.

In 100 words provide a summary of how this nominee has gone the extra mile to enrich and enhance biodiversity on this project

Melissa has managed the Making Space for Nature programme, delivering biodiversity enhancements in the heart of deprived communities across Cornwall. Showing leadership and political awareness, her knowledge, vision and experience has produced transformation. Bland and low value greenspaces have become rich diverse habitats, cherished by communities.

Melissa has led cultural change encouraging communities to take ownership of the management of land in a supportive manner. The results are breath-taking- wildflower meadows are flourishing; young trees are now bursting bud; native shrub and understorey are creating valuable habitat for birds. Melissa's drive and passion has been the catalyst for this transformation.

Please attach a photo

