



# Sherston Parish Council

## **MODEL BIODIVERSITY POLICY**

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Sherston Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council) which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

### **DEFINITION**

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet. Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value.

A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. Biodiversity is the building block of our 'ecosystems' that in turn provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area. The Full Council and any committees of the Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required. In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.

- support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact / nature positive practices.
- encourage and support other organisations within the parish / town to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

## **ACTIONS**

An initial action plan to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the parish is presented in Appendix A.

### **Planning applications**

The Council will:

- when commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.
- consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- include policies in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan. Land and property management.

The Council will:

- carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces.

This will include adopting beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work, paying attention to the Government's regulations for plant protection products.

- take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment [see a case study example from Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council at Appendix A].

- source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use.
- consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

### **Local community**

The Council will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

### **Partners**

The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area. It will review any local nature recovery strategies and species conservation strategies, and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

### **MONITORING**

This policy should be reviewed every two years or sooner should legislation require. .

A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually, with reference to the original biodiversity audit to show progress.

## ACTION PLAN

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species.	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Recreation ground	<p>Carry out a biodiversity audit including recommendations to enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>Sympathetically maintain boundaries.</p> <p>Leave some areas unmown.</p> <p>Only use environment friendly herbicide / pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.</p>	<p>Food sources and cover.</p> <p>Encourages insects.</p> <p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p>	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Sports Field	<p>Carry out a biodiversity audit including recommendations to enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>Sympathetically maintain boundaries.</p> <p>Encourage residents not to access the sports field with their dogs.</p> <p>Work with the county council on verge management on Knockdown Road, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety.</p> <p>Only use herbicides / pesticides when strictly required, only in limited quantities and only when approved at PC meeting.</p>	<p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p> <p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p>	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	<p>Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the importance of gardens and allotments as habitats for wildlife and discourage lighting with possible actions highlighted in the Cliff Hanger.</p>	Promote biodiversity.	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Support Community Projects	<p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the school to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.</p> <p>Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.</p>	<p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p>	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website

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