

CHERINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

BACKGROUND

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, CHERINGTON 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 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 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.
- ensure contractors engaged in council operations are aware of the Council's Biodiversity Duty and encourage the adoption of low impact / nature positive practices.
- encourage businesses within the Parish, to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- support resident and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

ACTIONS

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 a neighbourhood plan, should the Council create one.

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 contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use

LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Council will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and local Whatsapp groups
- engage with local businesses, farmers 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 and preserving wildflower margins.

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, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies in respect of local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

MONITORING

This policy was adopted on *3rd September 2024* Minute Ref: *6.1*
and will be reviewed in two years or sooner should legislation dictate.

A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published after each review, 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	Social media, website
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity Install and maintain bird boxes as required.	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	Mapping
Cemetery/Churchyard	Liaise with PCC re mowing/additional plantings Adopt a plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience quiet and calm remembrance. Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates.	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources Increased cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees.	Ongoing	
Common / other open spaces	Allotments: Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.	Sustain and enhance natural habitats. Protecting habitats Protecting/enhancing habitats Regular attention		
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the CDC Biodiversity Policy, CDC Local Plan, and Neighbourhood Plan where there is one.	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	

	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries	Extending habitats.		
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the parish magazine. Encourage local farmers to contribute. Discourage floodlighting.	Promote Biodiversity Promote Biodiversity Promote Biodiversity Protect nocturnal animals		
Contractors	Ensure that all Contractors employed by the Parish Council are aware of the Parish Council's Biodiversity Duty			

Adopted at Parish Council Meeting

3.9.24

M. Arnold. minute Ref 6.1.