

Northway Parish Council

Biodiversity Policy

Based on GAPTC's Model

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 Environmental Act 2021, Northway Parish Council, which has any functions exercisable in relation to England, must from time to time consider what actions it 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 economical 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 & OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this policy is to work towards conserving the biodiversity of the Northway 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 to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- Support residents 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.

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 regard 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.
- Where possible, 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 newsletter.

- 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, bird box making.

Partners – The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the Northway 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 (SSSI's) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

MONITORING:

This policy was adopted on 15th November 2023 (Minute Ref: GP/161/23 refers) and will be reviewed periodically (or as new legislation dictates).

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
	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect and diversify habitats.	Ongoing	Mapping
	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.	Protect habitats.	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website.
	Work with the county council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety.	Protect/enhance habitats.	Ongoing	

<p>Council owned areas (inc. Playing Field, Joan's Field, Platinum Park, Hub grounds).</p>	<p>Adopt a management plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which still enables use of it for its intended purpose.</p> <p>Additional planting.</p> <p>Maintain and renew bird boxes, as required.</p> <p>Leave some areas unmown. (This is done on Platinum Park).</p> <p>Only use environmentally friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and in ideal weather conditions.</p> <p>Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible.</p> <p>Sympathetically maintain hedges.</p>	<p>Protection and support of biodiversity.</p> <p>Increased diversity of habitats & food sources.</p> <p>Increased cover for variety of birds/ animals.</p> <p>Encourages insects.</p> <p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p> <p>Provides a habitat for invertebrates.</p> <p>Food sources and cover.</p>		
<p>The built landscape</p>	<p>Ensure that biodiversity is considered when consulted on planning applications.</p> <p>Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries.</p>	<p>Protecting or enhancing habitats.</p> <p>Extending habitats.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

<p>Increase community awareness of biodiversity</p>	<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 as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the parish newsletter.</p> <p>Create a page on the parish council website for photographs/information/links.</p> <p>Encourage local farmers to contribute.</p> <p>Provide seed bombs/bulbs for residents' use.</p> <p>Discourage floodlighting.</p>	<p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Protect nocturnal animals.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Newsletter, social media</p>
<p>Support community projects</p>	<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>		