

# **STOW BARDOLPH PARISH COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY POLICY**

## **BACKGROUND**

In accordance with the Duty imposed by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 as amended by the Section 102 Environment Act 2021, Stow Bardolph Parish Council will, in exercising all its functions, actively consider how it can conserve and enhance biodiversity.

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 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
- 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**

In relation to 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

In relation to land and property management, the Council will:

- consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regard to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work
- 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
- source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use

In relation to the 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 within the parish

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.

## **REVIEW**

This policy was adopted on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and will be reviewed every two years or sooner should legislation dictate.