

# WHADDON PARISH COUNCIL

## Biodiversity Policy

### 1. Background

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Sec. 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Sec. 102 of the Environment Act, 2021, Whaddon Parish Council (WPC) 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 this Council can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

### 2. 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.

### 3. 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:

- a. Consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- b. Manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- c. Support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact / nature positive practices.
- d. Encourage and support other organisations within the Parish to manage areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- e. Support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

### 4. Actions

#### a. Planning Applications

The Council will:

- I. When commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- II. 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.
- III. Consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- IV. Include policies in support of biodiversity within any neighbourhood plan.

b. Land and Property Management

The Council will:

- I. Carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- II. 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 Government's regulations for plant protection products.
- III. 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.
- IV. Source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use.
- V. Consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

c. Local Community

The Council will:

- I. Raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- II. Engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

d. 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 (SSSI's) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

**5. Monitoring**

This policy was adopted on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024, minute ref. 20/24 a. ii., and will be reviewed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting, or sooner should legislation dictate. A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually, with reference to the original biodiversity audit to show progress.

## 6. Action Plan

Site/Objective	Action	Outcome	Target Yrs	Reporting/Publicity
Parish	Raise awareness of biodiversity	Gain local support	Ongoing	Newsletters, social media, website
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting	Connect & diversify habitats for variety of wildlife	Ongoing	Mapping
Recreation Ground	<p>Manage hedgerows sympathetically</p> <p>Leave some areas un-mowed</p> <p>Encourage litter removal by users</p> <p>Minimise chemical use &amp; only deploy in ideal weather</p>	<p>Biodiverse food sources and cover for wildlife</p> <p>Encourage insects</p> <p>Sustain &amp; enhance habitats</p>	Ongoing	Newsletters, social media, website
Other Open Spaces	<p>Adopt a management plan</p> <p>Encourage litter and dog waste removal</p> <p>Manage verges &amp; green spaces favouring biodiversity</p> <p>Encourage residents to adopt areas.</p>	<p>Sustain &amp; enhance habitats</p> <p>Protect habitats</p>	Ongoing	Newsletters, social media, website
The Built Landscape	<p>Ensure planning consultations consider biodiversity</p> <p>Encourage small animals/hedgebogs with permeable boundaries</p>	<p>Sustain &amp; enhance habitats</p> <p>Protect habitats</p>	Ongoing	Newsletters, social media, website
Increase Community Awareness	<p>Ask residents their views</p> <p>Raise awareness of importance of gardens</p> <p>Create a website page and regular article in Parish Magazine</p>	<p>Engagement &amp; ownership</p> <p>Promote biodiversity</p> <p>Extend habitats</p>	Ongoing	Newsletters, social media, website

	<p>Provide seeds and bulbs for residents' use.</p> <p>Discourage floodlighting</p>			
Support Community Projects	<p>Support planting projects</p> <p>Work with school</p> <p>Consider events, volunteering, and work with local organisations.</p>	<p>Extend habitats</p> <p>Promote biodiversity</p>	Ongoing	Newsletters, social media, website