

Homersfield 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, Homersfield 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.
- whenever practical and within budget, 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.

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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:

- whenever practical, consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regards 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 and within budget, source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use

Local community

The Council will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues whenever publishing any relevant information
- respond to and 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 maintenance/improvement of the community wood.

Partners

The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area.

MONITORING

This policy was adopted on 2nd January 2024 (Minute reference – item 6) and will be reviewed in two years or sooner should legislation dictate.

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ACTION PLAN

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Any relevant written publications and verbally through events such as wood working parties.
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity. Litter picking twice a year and reporting of fly tipping.	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species Maintain habitats – protecting wildlife from digesting inappropriate materials	Ongoing	Publicise whenever reporting about the wood/daffodil planting/litter picking etc
Community Wood	Maintain and renew bird/bat boxes (consider installing more, working with the tree warden) Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation as a habitat for invertebrates etc Additional planting of trees etc Additional planting of a hedge alongside the new churchyard to create a habitat and a boundary. Maintenance of different areas to support/encourage a variety of birds, invertebrates, reptiles, small mammals etc Encourage people to enjoy and appreciate the wood and treat it with respect.	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources Increased cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. People enjoying and appreciating the natural world.	Ongoing	Any relevant written publications and verbally

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SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Common / other open spaces	<p>Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.</p> <p>Work with the county council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety.</p> <p>Daffodil Planting for early pollinators</p>	<p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p> <p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p> <p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p>		
The Built Landscape	<p>Ensure that planning consultations are considered with aims that include the needs of biodiversity.</p> <p>Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries</p>	<p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p> <p>Extending habitats.</p>	Ongoing	
Support Community Projects	<p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.</p> <p>.</p>	Extending habitats.		