



HOLYBROOK COUNCIL

Proudly serving the residents of Holybrook Parish since 2000

Biodiversity Policy

DEFINITIONS

'Council', 'Parish Council' and 'Authority' refers to Holybrook Parish Council.

Biodiversity: According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants; everything that is alive on our planet.

INTRODUCTION

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Town and parish councils, unlike other authorities, are not obliged to publish a report on their actions.

BACKGROUND

Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. However, several 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.

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, Holybrook Parish Council, that has functions exercisable in relation to England, must, from time-to-time, consider what action it can 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 on conserving biodiversity.

This policy is based on the model biodiversity published by SLCC.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area.

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.
- where possible, 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 regarding the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices 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 through its website, newsletters and social media outlets.
- 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, birdbox making.

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

Whilst biodiversity is the responsibility of the whole council and its committees, the Community and Environment Committee will monitor progress, create and implement action plans and have biodiversity as a rolling action on its agenda. The Committee will be responsible for bringing any relevant recommendations and actions to Full Council.

This policy was adopted on **xx (Minute reference yy)** and will be reviewed every two years by the Community and Environment Committee, 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.

Original Copy	Date of review approval	Version number	Date of next review
September 2024		V1	October 2026