

ETTON PARISH COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

Adopted, 25th September 2024

Minute: 24.67.1.d

Review date: Each year at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council or sooner should legislation dictate.

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, Etton 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.
- 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 / town 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.
- include policies in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.

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 regarding 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.
- 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 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 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

A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually, with reference to the original biodiversity audit to show progress.

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years) ACTION(S) REQUIRED	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole Parish area	Increase / raise local community awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Website, social media Village Tribune.
	Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the Parish.	Engagement and ownership of biodiversity.	May 2025 Publicity prior to the Annual Parish Meeting	Website, social media Village Tribune, Annual Parish meeting.
	Create a page on the parish council website for photographs / information / links.	Engagement and promotion of biodiversity; increased local community awareness of biodiversity.	December 2025 Clerk to create	Website
	Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.	Promotion and support biodiversity.	Ongoing Publicise as/when opportunities arise	Website, social media Village Tribune, noticeboard.
	Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife and suggest possible actions such as seed bombs.	Promotion and enhancement of biodiversity.	Ongoing	Website, social media Village Tribune.
	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries	Extending habitats.	Ongoing	Website, social media Village Tribune.
	Discourage floodlighting	Protection of nocturnal animals.	Ongoing	Website, social media Village Tribune.
	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Enhancement of biodiversity by connecting and diversifying habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	Website, social media Village Tribune.
	Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.	Creation of habitats	Ongoing	

Protect and support biodiversity	Support and work with Langdyke Countryside Trust and Peterborough City Environment Trust (PECT).	Increased biodiversity, increased knowledge and experience; protection and enhancement of biodiversity	Ongoing	Website, social media Village Tribune.
The Village Green	Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible.	Habitat creation for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals.	Ongoing Work with grounds maintenance contractor	
	Allow standing and fallen deadwood / tree branches to remain if safe to do so	Creation, protection and maintenance of habitats for invertebrates	As required	
	Consider areas of grass to be left unmown and then swathed in September	Enhancement of biodiversity, especially insects	Review annually – work with PCC (who are responsible for the grounds maintenance)	
	Preserve and maintain trees	Protection of habitats	As required – report to PCC as necessary	
	Remove invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental for native flora and fauna	Protection of biodiversity.	As required – report to PCC as necessary	
	Support Etton Nature Recovery Project, Northern Parish Cluster Group, Langdyke Countryside Trust and John Clare Countryside	Protecting and enhancing biodiversity	Ongoing	
	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.	Protection of habitats.	Ongoing – request sent to PCC for the installation of a dog waste bin on Main Street	Website, noticeboard.
	Only use environment friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.	Sustain and enhance natural habitats.	Ongoing – work with contractors.	

Village Planters	Use peat free soil, select plants with pollinators in mind.	Encourages insects particularly butterflies and bees.	Ongoing	
Other Common / Open Spaces	Maintain, and renew bird boxes in the Churchyard as required.	Sustaining habitats	On going, as required – waiting for decision from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fund for Nature grant application for bird boxes	
The Built Landscape	Ensure that the impact on biodiversity is considered when commenting on Planning Applications.	Protection of habitats and biodiversity.	Ongoing	
	When Planning Applications are to fell trees, ask that PCC be mindful of the impact on biodiversity and ask that they consider planting replacement tree(s) within the Parish	Protection of biodiversity	Ongoing	
Support Community Projects	Support and promote community projects	Promotion, protection and enhancement of biodiversity.	Ongoing	
	Consider applications for community grants in relation to biodiversity	Promotion, protection and enhancement of biodiversity.	As received	Grant Policy and application form available on the website or from the Clerk.