

# **PEWSEY 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, Pewsey 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 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, plants, and fungi, including 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 across 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 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 Planning Committee 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 other communication channels;
- engage with local businesses, residents, and visitors 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, and 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**

This policy was adopted on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (and will be reviewed in two years or sooner should legislation dictate). A summary of what actions the Council has taken to implement this policy will be published annually, with reference to the original biodiversity audit to show progress.

## BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING/ PUBLICITY
Whole Council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity	Gain local support for action	Ongoing	Social media, website, & the Messenger
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	Mapping
Cemetery	Additional planting	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources	Ongoing	Website
	Maintain and renew bird boxes as required	More nesting birds	Ongoing	Website
	Adopt a plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience calm and remembrance	Increased cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals	Year 2 onwards	Website
	Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates	Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees	Year 2 onwards	Website
Recreation grounds	Sympathetically maintain hedging	Food sources and cover	Ongoing	Website
	Leave some areas unmown	Encourages insects	Ongoing	Website & social media
	Only use environment friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions	Sustain and enhance natural habitats	Ongoing	Website & social media

Common/other open spaces	Adopt a management plan	Sustain and enhance natural habitats	Ongoing	Website & social media
	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs	Better protecting habitats	Ongoing	Website & social media
	Work with Wilshire Council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety.	Better protected/enhanced habitats	Ongoing	Website
	Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after, making it clear what is expected e.g. peat free compost and no chemicals	Better regular attention	Ongoing	Website & social media
The built environment	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan	Better protected/enhanced habitats	Ongoing	Website
	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries	Extended habitats	Ongoing	Website & social media
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish	Better understanding of local views/ownership of biodiversity	Ongoing	Social media, website, & the Messenger
	Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted	Biodiversity better promoted	Ongoing	Social media, website, & the Messenger
	Create a page on the website for photographs / information / links	Biodiversity better promoted	Ongoing	Website

	Encourage local farmers to contribute	Biodiversity better promoted	Ongoing	Outreach
	Provide seed bombs / bulbs etc. for residents' use.	Extended habitats	Year 2 onwards	Social media, website, & the Messenger
	Discourage floodlighting	Nocturnal creatures better protected	Ongoing	Outreach
Support community projects	Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.	Extended habitats	Ongoing	Social media, website, & the Messenger
	Work in partnership with the school to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them	Biodiversity better promoted	Ongoing	Outreach
	Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations	Biodiversity better promoted	Ongoing	As appropriate