

Washburn Parish Council

Biodiversity Policy

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, Washburn Parish Council will in exercising all its functions have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

DEFINITION

As defined by 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 few studies have shown this value also goes further. It is the building block of our 'ecosystems'. These 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 aim and objectives of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of the Washburn Valley. This Council will consider environmental sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions. In practice our ability to influence decisions affecting the environment, will mostly focus on biodiversity.

Washburn Parish Council will aim to protect, enrich and restore the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- assess the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmental best practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact practices.
- support residents and local organisations' undertaking activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

ACTIONS

Planning applications

- The council, when commenting on planning applications, will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- It will 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.
- It will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.

Land and Property Management

- The council will consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management and maintenance of land in the parish. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work.
- The council will consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

Local community

- The council will seek to raise public awareness of biodiversity issues.
- The council will engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- It will, where feasible, involve the community in supporting biodiversity projects including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

Partners

- Washburn Parish Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the Washburn Valley.

Policy adopted May 2024