

# Bierton Parish Council

## (DRAFT) Biodiversity Policy

June 2024

### 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, **Bierton 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 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 Bierton 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.
- 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

This (DRAFT) policy was adopted on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Minute reference 2024/2025/08) and will be reviewed in two years 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

DRAFT MODEL ACTION PLAN for Bierton Parish

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	Review date TARGET (Years)
Whole Parish area	<p>Ensure biodiversity concerns are addressed when commenting on planning applications.</p> <p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.</p> <p>To maintain, retain and develop 'green corridors' where possible, to try and join up wildlife habitats.</p>	To protect, enhance and extend wildlife habitats.	
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	<p>Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve and enhance the natural environment within the parish.</p> <p>Raise local awareness of biodiversity and how residents can help individually and communally.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the importance of gardens on wildlife habits and promote and encourage <b>'No Mow May'</b> using the Bierton village newsletter and the Bierton Families Facebook Page.</p> <p>Create a page on biodiversity on the Birtton Parish Council Website with information / photographs /links to relevant I information</p> <p>Involve the community in biodiversity projects including for example tree planting, wild flower meadows, birdbox / bug hotel making.</p> <p>Consider inviting local experts to</p>	<p>Gain local support for action, by engagement and ownership of the importance of biodiversity</p> <p>To protect and enhance wildlife habitats</p>	

	give talks on biodiversity.		
Protect and support biodiversity	<p>Encourage suitable planting and maintaining hedgerows to support biodiversity within council owned land such as Bierton Recreation Ground.</p> <p>Install, ,maintain and renew bird boxes.</p> <p>Encourage installation of swift boxes and hedgehog / small animal highways with permeable boundaries</p> <p>Discourage flood lights / very bright security lights</p> <p>Engage with local farmers and local landowners to contribute to supporting and enhancing biodiversity, if not already doing so, such as maintaining hedgerows and ponds.</p>	<p>To support and encourage wildlife and insects such as butterflies and bees</p> <p>To protect nocturnal animals</p>	
St James Church Cemetery / churchyard	<p>Liaise with St James' Church about adopting a plan to support and encourage biodiversity (insects and wildflowers). This may include additional planting and leaving some areas unmown. Consider getting advice on possible actions in support of biodiversity from organisations such as Caring for God's Acre and Eco-Church</p>	<p>To increase diversity of habitats and food sources, to encourage insects particularly butterflies and bees</p>	
Bierton Recreation ground and other council owned property	<p>Sympathetically maintain hedging, taking into account bird nesting times.</p> <p>Leave some areas unmown.</p> <p>Minimise use of harmful pesticides.</p>		

<p>Common / other open spaces</p>	<p>Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.</p> <p>To support the management of St Osyth's Well that protects and enhances biodiversity and the special nature of the area.</p> <p>Work with the county / town council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety, whilst promoting No Mow May</p>	<p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p> <p>Protecting habitats</p> <p>Some verges are left uncut to protect and encourage wild flowers and insect habitats.</p>	