Sedgeford Parish Council

Serving the Community

Biodiversity Policy

1. 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, Council must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistent with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective. This duty also means that Council 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 Council's area. Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, 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 organisations in activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

ACTIONS

Planning applications

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 including policies in support of biodiversity when the neighbourhood plan is revised.

Land and property management

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.

Local community

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.
- Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within Council's area.

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Newsletter
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	Newsletter
Recreation ground	Sympathetically maintain hedging. Only use environment friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.	Food sources and cover Sustain and enhance natural habitats.	Ongoing	
Open spaces	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs. Work with the County Council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety. Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after, making it clear what is expected e.g. peat free compost and no chemicals.	Protecting habitats Protecting/enhancing habitats Regular attention.	Ongoing	Newsletter

The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries	Protecting/enhancing habitats Extending habitats.	Ongoing	

Increase community awareness of biodiversity	Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife.	Promote biodiversity.	Ongoing	Newsletter
	Discourage floodlighting.	Protect nocturnal animals.		
Support Community Projects	Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas. Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.	Extending habitats. Promote biodiversity.	Ongoing	Newsletter

Adopted: May 2026
Review: May 2027