



Biodiversity Policy

STATUTORY DUTY

Under the 2021 Environment Act¹, public authorities (including town and parish councils) who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

Government guidance published on 17th May 2023² clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration
- Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives

Town and parish councils, unlike other authorities, are not obliged to publish a report on their actions, but the Government guidance requires all public authorities to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024.

They must agree their policies and objectives as soon as possible after this and may reconsider the selected actions within 5 years of completing their previous consideration, or more frequently if they choose.

To comply with the guidance, the parish council has as a minimum:

- Had biodiversity as an agenda item for a meeting before the end of 2023.
- Is in the process of noting what action in respect of biodiversity is already taking place locally.
- Will agree what further steps to take at this stage.

Such steps will include:

- Reviewing what biodiversity or nature recovery plans are already in place from other local authorities.
- Making contact with local voluntary groups working on nature conservation.
- Carrying out a biodiversity audit of council landholdings and/or the whole council area
- Gathering expert advice on possible actions in support of biodiversity.
- Drafting an action plan that covers action that the council will take itself as well as support for the actions of other local bodies.

PREAMBLE

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006³, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Brantham 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.

¹ [Environment Act 2021](#)

² [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK](#)

³ [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#)

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. 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 objective of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of Brantham. The Parish Council and its Committees will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and update its policies and strategies as required.

In particular, Brantham Parish Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- Note what action in respect of biodiversity that is already taking place locally.
- Agree what further steps can be taken and review these at least annually for biodiversity
- Establish links with local voluntary groups working on nature conservation. E.g. The Dedham Vale National Landscape (formerly known as AONB – Area of Outstanding National Beauty). Manningtree Mermaids Against Sewerage, and PACE (Practical Actions for Climate and Environment) Manningtree Area.
- Ensure, as statutory consultee to the LPA (Local Planning Authority) that it addresses biodiversity concerns (as appropriate), when commenting on planning applications.
- Consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- Manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- Support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

ACTIONS

Planning Applications

When commenting on planning applications the Council will:

- 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 application
- will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- Will include policies in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood development planning process.

Land and property management

In respect of the management of its land and property 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.
- 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.
- 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, Facebook page, and via The Bugle.
- involve the community (where feasible) in biodiversity projects on its land including, for example; tree planting, wildflower meadows, and community orchards
- will engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.

Partners

Brantham Parish Council will:

- work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of Brantham. These include East Bergholt Parish Council, Manningtree Town Council, Babergh District Council and Suffolk County Council (this is not an exhaustive list)
- 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.

This policy will be reviewed annually, together with a summary of how the policy has been implemented in the previous twelve months.



Biodiversity Action Plan

SITE/ OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING/ PUBLICITY
Council land area	Carry out audit of existing land	Gain a wider knowledge and understanding of existing biodiversity habitats and species present in the area.		Website, Facebook, Bugle & Meeting Minutes
Protect and Support biodiversity	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Website, Facebook, Bugle & Meeting Minutes
	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species.	Ongoing	Website, Facebook, Bugle & Meeting Minutes
Cemetery/ churchyard	Work with the PCC to adopt a plan and work closely with our grounds maintenance contractor to support wildlife & diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience quiet and calm remembrance. (The Cemetery is a highly sensitive area).	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources.	Ongoing	Meeting Minutes
		Encouraging insects, particularly butterflies & bees.	Ongoing	Meeting Minutes
Lower Playing field	Where appropriate sympathetically maintain trees and consider new planting.	Food sources & shade/cover.	Ongoing	Meeting Minutes
	Leave some areas unmown.	Encourage insects.	Ongoing	Meeting Minutes
	Only use environment friendly pesticides/chemicals where absolutely necessary, and only in ideal weather conditions.	Sustain & enhance natural habitats.	Ongoing	Meeting Minutes
Common/ Other open Spaces/Play areas inc.?	Tree management plan.	Sustain & enhance natural habitats.	Ongoing	Website, Facebook, Bugle, F2F
	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick-up after their dogs.	Protect/enhancing habitats.	Ongoing	interactions with residents and users Meeting Minutes
SITE/ OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING/ PUBLICITY
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the Local Development Plan and National Planning Policy.	Protection/enhancement of habitats.	Ongoing	Website. Meeting Minutes

	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries.	Extending existing habitats.	TBC	Website, Facebook, Bugle. Meeting Minutes
Increase Community Awareness of biodiversity	Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish. E.g. tree planting and Community Orchards etc.	Engagement/ownership of biodiversity. Promote biodiversity.	TBC	Website, Facebook, Bugle. F2F interactions with residents/users & Meeting Minutes
Support Community	Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas. E.g. - to be identified.	Extension of habitats.	TBC	Website, Facebook, Bugle. F2F interactions with residents/users & Meeting Minutes
Projects	Allotments – identify potential sites and engage with Landowners. Orchards – identify potential sites and formulate next steps. Work in partnership with the school/scouts/guides to develop young people’s awareness of their environment. Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations. E.g. Tree planting and Community Orchard planting.	Establish valuable community assets, boosting health & wellbeing, providing sustainable growing spaces and creating biodiverse green corridors. Promote biodiversity. Promote biodiversity.	TBC	Interactions with residents/users & Meeting Minutes

Other thoughts/ideas/possible actions:

- Could include something about working with BOS – making sure their activities align with our policy?
- Native bulb planting projects?
- Increase wood piles and standing dead wood
- Encourage areas of rough grassland, to be allowed to overwinter uncut, adjacent to bramble scrub and along hedgerows and trees.
- Bird boxes/bee houses installation