



Parish Council Office- The Pavilion- New Barn Close – Prestbury – Cheltenham – GL52 3LP

Prestbury Parish Council Biodiversity Policy

Date of policy: December 2023

Approving committee: Full Council

Reviewed every 2 years

Review date: December 2025

A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually, with reference to the original biodiversity audit to show progress.

Policy version reference: Version 1 23/24

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, Prestbury Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as PPC) which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action it 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 and plants – everything that is alive on our planet. Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. Several 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 PPC’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.

PPC 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 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 regarding the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regard 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 PPC'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

PPC 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.

Site/objective	Action	Outcome	Target (years)	Reporting/publicity
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity	Gain local support for action	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing. Wildflower meadow Modica	Mapping, audit.
Recreation ground inc. Barley Field	<p>Additional planting.</p> <p>Maintain and renew bird boxes as required.</p> <p>Adopt a plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience quiet and clam remembrance.</p> <p>Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates.</p> <p>Sympathetically maintain hedging.</p> <p>Leave some areas alone.</p> <p>Only use environmentally friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal conditions.</p>	<p>Increased diversity of habitats and food sources.</p> <p>Increased cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals, encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees.</p> <p>Food sources and cover</p> <p>Encourages insects.</p> <p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats</p>	<p>In operation</p> <p>Barley Road Field Modica meadow planting. Parts of field left unmown.</p> <p>Bug hotel</p>	
Common/other open spaces eg Robson's Field	<p>Adopt a management plan.</p> <p>Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.</p>	<p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p> <p>Protecting habitats.</p> <p>Protecting/enhancing habitats.</p>	<p>In operation</p> <p>Recycled bottles containing environmentally friendly poo bags</p>	

	<p>Work with the county council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety.</p> <p>Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after, making it clear what is expected eg peat free compost and no chemicals.</p>	Regular attention		
The built landscape	<p>Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of biodiversity.</p> <p>Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries.</p>	<p>Protecting/enhancing habitats.</p> <p>Extending habitats</p>	Parish plan	
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	<p>Ask residents for their views on how to conserve biodiversity within the parish.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife.</p> <p>Create a page on the parish council website for photographs/information/links.</p> <p>Encourage local farmers to contribute.</p> <p>Provide seed bombs, bulbs etc for residents use.</p> <p>Discourage floodlighting.</p>	<p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Protect nocturnal animals.</p>	<p>Liaise with church.</p> <p>Modica Bat boxes</p>	

<p>Support community projects</p>	<p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate area.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the school to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.</p> <p>Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.</p>	<p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity</p>	<p>Bat/bird boxes.</p> <p>CH liaise - school projects.</p> <p>Litter picking. Scouts etc. Church. WI Rotary Sponsorship</p>	
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