

WILBURTON PARISH COUNCIL
BIODIVERSITY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

There are two Acts of Parliament relevant to the duty of Parish Councils to conserve biodiversity:

1. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
2. The Environment Act 2021

The former (2006) states that ‘every public body must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity’ (section 40).

The latter (2021) states that Parish Councils must do the following:

1. Consider what you can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity
2. Agree policies and specific objectives based on your consideration

WILBURTON PARISH COUNCIL POLICY ON BIODIVERSITY

Wilburton Parish Council will protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the parish. It will incorporate its biodiversity policy into the care of its whole estate, in terms of wildlife, land and buildings, and in the exercise of all its powers, both statutory and non-statutory.

The need to protect and enhance biodiversity will be embedded in all areas in which the Parish Council is involved.

This includes the following:

1. Preparing the Parish Plan (or revising it)
2. Commenting on planning applications
3. Managing land owned or managed by the Council
4. Managing buildings owned or managed by the Council
5. Creating bylaws
6. Raise awareness of biodiversity in the village and advise how people might be able to contribute to it.

DEFINITION OF BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is the variety of life, including habitats, species and even genes. These support life, the landscape, the cultural heritage and the ecosystems on which healthy life of all kinds depends.

ACTION PLANS FOR THE WILDLIFE/BIODIVERSITY RESOURCES OF THE PARISH

1. AUDIT/SURVEY

A comprehensive audit or survey will be undertaken (we might need to call on expert help to complete this) of all land and buildings owned or managed by the Parish Council. This will act as a base-line for future action.

2. THREATS

It will be important to identify threats to the parish's wildlife/biodiversity and formulate an action plan to deal with these. This will include the source of the threat/s, the effect of the threats and how best to remove or mitigate them.

3. MAINTENANCE AND IMMEDIATE ACTION

Routine maintenance of buildings and land will be undertaken in accordance with the parish's biodiversity policy. Any action identified as helping to fulfil the parish's biodiversity aims, such as tree planting, bulb planting, seed sowing and putting up nest boxes, will be implemented with the agreement of the Parish Council.

4. ENHANCED CONSERVATION OF RARE WILDLIFE/BIODIVERSITY

A biodiversity audit will provide information on the most valuable and rare wildlife. This will enable policies to be put in place for their enhanced protection.

5. REGULAR INSPECTIONS

Inspections will be held at regular intervals to ensure that the parish is fulfilling its biodiversity commitments and that progress is being made on enhancement and dealing with threats.