

Great Warford Parish Council

Biodiversity Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Environment Act 2021, public authorities (including Parish Councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- 1.2 Government guidance clarifies that Parish Councils must:
 - consider what they 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
- 1.3 A review of this policy and objectives must be undertaken at least every five years.

2 Definition

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.

3 Aims and objectives

- 3.1 The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area.
- 3.2 Great Warford Parish Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.
- 3.3 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
 - 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.

4 Actions

- 4.1 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.

4.2 Local community

- The Council will:
 - where appropriate, raise local awareness of biodiversity issues
 - where appropriate, engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.

5 Monitoring

5.1 This policy was adopted on 16th July, 2025 and will be reviewed each year at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

5.2 The action plan associated with this policy will also be reviewed on an annual basis.

Action Plan

Site / Objective	Action	Outcome	Target	Reporting/publicity
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity	Gain local support for action	Ongoing	Website, newsletter
Public spaces	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs	Protecting habitats	Ongoing	Website, newsletter
The built landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against biodiversity considerations	Protecting and enhancing habitats	Ongoing	Website and Cheshire East Council planning portal

Other example actions for consideration at a future date (this list is not exhaustive):

- Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity to connect and diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species
- Identify opportunities to leave leaf litter and dead vegetation as a habitat for invertebrates
- Identify opportunities to leave areas unmown to encourage insects
- Consider opportunities to encourage minimising verge management (other than in areas which may need cutting for highway safety) to protect/enhance habitats
- Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries
- Survey residents to identify biodiversity conservation priorities within the parish
- Discourage the use of floodlights to protect nocturnal animals
- Consider opportunities for seed bombs / bulbs etc to extend habitats
- Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife
- Consider raising local awareness of volunteering opportunities which support biodiversity.