



HEMINGFORD ABBOTS PARISH COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

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, Hemingford Abbots Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council) which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

This duty also means that town and 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.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council'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.

In particular, the Council will aim to support, where it is reasonable and appropriate, to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage land that it is responsible for using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support 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's 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.

Land management

The Council will:

- consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of open spaces it is responsible for. 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

The Council will:

- where feasible, support the community in biodiversity projects, for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

Partners

The parish council will work, where appropriate, 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.

MONITORING

This policy was adopted on 20th November 2024 (Minute reference 119) and will be reviewed at the Annual Meeting every two years (beginning in 2026), or sooner should legislation dictate.

DRAFT MODEL ACTION PLAN

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Playing Field	<p>Sympathetically maintain hedging.</p> <p>Leave some areas unmown.</p> <p>Only use environment friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.</p> <p>Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs</p>	<p>Food sources and cover</p> <p>Encourages insects.</p> <p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p>		
Common / other open spaces	<p>Work with the county council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety.</p>	<p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p> <p>Protecting habitats</p> <p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p>		
SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
The Built Landscape	<p>Ensure that planning consultations include consideration of how the application supports or injures biodiversity.</p>	<p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p>	Ongoing	
Support Community Projects	<p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.</p> <p>Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.</p>	<p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p>		