

## Biodiversity Policy

POLICY REVIEW	Annually
signed	
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Date ratified	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
Date of next review	November 2024

### Biodiversity Policy Background

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England, including Parish Councils to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. This was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021 so public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This means a public authority must.

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

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth<sup>1</sup>. Biodiversity is everywhere: in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains Rivers and the sea.

### The Local Area

Durrington is a rural parish, with a considerable number of natural areas, including hedges, ditches, farmland, and the river Avon. In addition, the parish borders Salisbury Plain.

### Town Council responsibilities

The Council owns the Recreation Ground and River Park, the allotments, amenity land at Avon Fields and Durrington Cemetery.

The Town Council is also responsible for the cutting of some verges, along with the cutting of the Recreation Ground and the cemetery.

<sup>1</sup> As defined in 'Biodiversity 2020: a strategy of England's wildlife and ecosystems' by DEFRA

### What the Town Council will do

- Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made by the Town Council, especially when commenting on planning applications.
- It will reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides used on Town Council owned land.
- It will review how it manages the land at the River Park including: -
  - Leaving standing and fallen dead wood as a habitat for invertebrates
  - Leaving leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates
  - Removing invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna as required.
  - The Town Council will cut the grass at River Park every other year.
  - Cutting hedges as and when required as this is very much a balancing act, some of the Town Council hedges run alongside narrow, well used footpaths so require cutting.
  - All hedges are cut outside of the bird nesting season.
  - The Town Council will investigate purchasing and installing bird/owl/bat boxes in the Town Council owned trees.
  - The Town Council will look to promote biodiversity via the Town Council website.
  - The above list is not exhaustive and future developments or Partnerships may well prove an advantage to the Town Council. Attached is a list of organisations as potential Partnerships and Affiliations.

<sup>1</sup> As defined in 'Biodiversity 2020: a strategy of England's wildlife and ecosystems' by DEFRA

There are various partnership organisations that could support members and help them to improve their contribution to protecting, restoring, and enhancing biodiversity.

The list below provides a selection of such organisations.

**UK Business & Biodiversity Forum (UKBBF)** - A forum for businesses to connect on the theme of mainstreaming biodiversity, supporting the understanding of biodiversity, and integrating nature into their value chain.

**Get Nature Positive** - Nature Handbook for Business - a toolkit to understand your businesses impacts and actions to protect and restore nature.

**Natural England** - The Government's advisor for the natural environment in England.

**Environment Agency** - Regulator responsible for water quality and resources, fisheries, conservation, and ecology and for regulating major industry and waste.

**The Wildlife Trusts** - A purpose to bring wildlife back, to empower people to take meaningful action for nature. Comprise of 46 regional Wildlife Trusts.

**Rivers Trust (and local variations)** - Conservation experts with a vision to create wild, healthy, natural rivers, valued by all. Comprise of 65 regional member trusts.

**RSPB** - Protect habitats, save species, and help to end the nature and climate emergency through conservation.

**National Trust** - A charity looking after nature, beauty, and history – for everyone.

**Forestry Commission** - Aims to increase the value of woodlands to society and provide support to businesses regarding tree planting and the like.

**Scottish Forestry** - Scottish Government Agency responsible for forestry policy, support, and regulations.

**Woodland Trust** - The UK's largest woodland conservation charity

<sup>1</sup> As defined in 'Biodiversity 2020: a strategy of England's wildlife and ecosystems' by DEFRA