

MODEL 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, Mickleton 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.

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.

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 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 with regard to 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 the Council'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

The Council 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.

MONITORING

This policy was adopted on 28 February 2024 (minute reference 280224/17) and will be reviewed

each year at the Annual Meeting or sooner should legislation dictate. A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually, with reference to the original biodiversity audit to show progress.

DRAFT MODEL ACTION PLAN

SITE/ OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING/P UBLICITY
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	Mapping
Cemetery/ churchyard	Additional planting, limited to wilding in the churchyard, with agreement of the church. MPC is allowing the cemetery extension to be a wildlife area until it is needed as a cemetery. Maintain and renew bird boxes as required. Adopt a plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience quiet and calm remembrance. Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates.	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources Increased cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees.		
Recreation ground	Sympathetically maintain hedging. Leave boundary between Oak Grange and the junior playing field unmown. Only use environment friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.	Food sources and cover Encourages insects. Sustain and enhance natural habitats.		

SITE/ OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING/P UBLICITY
Common/ other open spaces	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.	Protecting habitats		
The Built Landscape	Ensure that biodiversity is considered in regard to planning applications	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	
	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries	Extending habitats.		
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish.	Engagement/ownership of biodiversity	Ongoing	Neighbourhood plan consultation
	Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the parish magazine.	Promote biodiversity.		
	Create a page on the parish council website for photographs/information/links	Promote biodiversity.		
Support Community Projects	Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.	Extending habitats.		
	Work in partnership with the school to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.	Promote biodiversity.		
	MPC is supporting the gardening club by providing funds to purchase plants etc for the planters in the village.			