



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

Date of Approval:	16 th March 2026
Date of Review:	
Date of Re-approval Town Council	

1. 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, Houghton Regis Town 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 on conserving biodiversity.

2. 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 essential for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown that 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, as well as less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, purification of our water, and pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides critical cultural services, enriching our lives.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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

Town 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 Houghton Regis 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 the provision of new habitats.
- support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of critical habitats for wildlife with respect to 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 Land and property management

The Council will:

- carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity in the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices regarding vegetation cutting and removal, chemical application, and maintenance timing, and paying attention to the Government's [regulations for plant protection products](#).
- source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use
- consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

4.2 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, and birdbox making.

4.3 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, species conservation, or protected site strategies with respect to local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

5. MONITORING

This policy will be reviewed by the Environment and Leisure Committee every two years, or sooner if required by legislation.