



CHESHAM BOIS 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, Chesham Bois 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 that biodiversity is the building block of ecosystems that provide a wide range of goods and services which support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essential requirements such as food, fresh water and clean air as well as protection from natural disasters, climate regulation, purification of water and pollination of crops. Biodiversity also provides an important cultural service by enriching our lives.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective 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; and
- support residents and local organization activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

ACTIONS

Planning applications

The Council will:

- when commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefit biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats;
- support the protection of sensitive habitats from development and consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications;
- consider the benefit of each proposed development in terms of biodiversity net gain; and
- 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, at least every 3 years;
- consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces, to include the adoption of beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, the application of chemicals and the timing of maintenance work, paying attention to Government regulations for plant protection products;
- take special care in the specification of ground 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; and
- 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, social media 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; and
- 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 and any protected site strategies in respect of local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and designated Priority Habitats (DEFRA) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing recommendations.

MONITORING

This policy was adopted on 13 May 2024 (Minute reference 102.13 (e) (i) and will be reviewed in two years or sooner should legislation dictate.

A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published in the Annual Report with reference to relevant audits or surveys to show progress.