



Biodiversity Policy

Introduction - Statutory Duty

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities Shipton-on-Cherwell & Thrupp Parish Council operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

In accordance with Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Shipton-On-Cherwell & Thrupp Parish Council acknowledges its duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity in its area.

Government guidance published in May 2023 requires public authorities to:

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

While the Council is not required to publish a report, it is committed to regularly reviewing its actions to ensure biodiversity is prioritised. This policy outlines the Council's aims, objectives, and actions to fulfil this duty.

Definition of Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the variety of all life on Earth, including species of animals, plants, and microorganisms. It underpins ecosystems that provide essential goods and services, such as food, clean water, air, and climate regulation. It also enhances cultural and recreational experiences, enriching community life.

Aims and Objectives

The Council aims to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the parish by:

- Embedding sustainability and biodiversity considerations into all decisions.
- Supporting local initiatives and engaging the community in conservation efforts.
- Working collaboratively with local organisations and stakeholders to protect and improve the natural environment.

Policy Commitments

Planning Applications

The Council will:

- Assess planning applications for their impact on biodiversity and support those that conserve or enhance habitats.
- Promote biodiversity net gain by encouraging developers to incorporate measures such as green roofs, hedgerows, and wildlife corridors.
- Advocate for the protection of sensitive habitats and species in all planning considerations.

Land and Property Management

The Council will:

- Conduct a biodiversity audit of its landholdings to identify opportunities for enhancement.
- Manage open spaces using environmentally friendly practices, including reduced mowing schedules, the creation of wildflower meadows, and leaving deadwood for habitat creation.
- Specify biodiversity-friendly practices in all ground maintenance contracts.
- Review the management of areas like Thrupp Green, incorporating measures to improve habitat quality and support native species.

Community Engagement

The Council will:

- Raise public awareness about biodiversity through its website, newsletters, and local events.
- Involve residents in conservation projects, such as tree planting, birdbox installation, and wildlife monitoring.
- Encourage local businesses and organisations to adopt practices that support biodiversity.

Partnerships

The Council will:

- Collaborate with local and regional groups, including conservation organisations and nearby councils, to support biodiversity initiatives.
- Review and align with Local Nature Recovery Strategies and other relevant plans to maximise local impact.
-

Climate Change and Biodiversity

The Council recognises the link between biodiversity and climate resilience. It will:

- Prioritise actions that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, such as tree planting and wetland restoration.
- Support initiatives that enhance carbon sequestration and reduce habitat loss.

Actions

1. **Biodiversity Audit**
 - Conduct an audit of parish-owned land and significant local habitats
2. **Community Projects**
 - Organise at least one community-led biodiversity project annually, such as a tree planting day or wildlife survey.
3. **Policy Integration**
 - Ensure all Council policies and decisions explicitly consider biodiversity.
4. **Review Grounds Maintenance**

- Transition to biodiversity-friendly practices in all maintenance contracts
- 5. **Monitoring and Reporting**
 - Record and review biodiversity-related actions annually, publishing a summary of progress for residents.

Funding and Resources

The Council will seek funding opportunities from external sources, such as government grants, charitable organizations, and local businesses, to support biodiversity initiatives.

Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation. A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published as part of the Council's annual report.