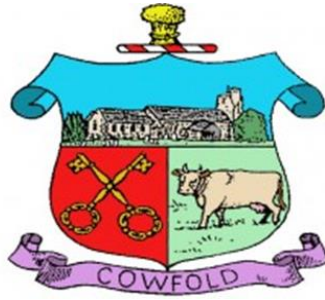




# **COWFOLD PARISH COUNCIL**

## **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, Cowfold 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:

- Prioritise the impact upon biodiversity in the decisions made by the Parish Council and when commenting on planning applications, supporting site and building design that

benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new.

- Ensure that biodiversity is prioritised as part of Neighbourhood Plan reviews.
- Optimise policies for biodiversity
- Review its grass cutting and hedge cutting requirements, giving consideration to allowing areas of uncut grass around hedges to allow longer grasses to grow.
- Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as habitat.
- Seek opportunities for “rewilding” areas on land owned by the parish council.
- Consider potential contractors’ biodiversity policies as part of the scoring matrix during procurement and tender processes where appropriate.
- Encourage and support other organisations within the parish / town to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- Support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.
- Raise public awareness of biodiversity issues by any means, including its website, social media and community events. through its website.
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- Engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.

## **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 xx (Minute reference yy) and will be reviewed in two years 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.