

Great Tey 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, Great Tey 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 town and 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 regarding 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.

Great Tey Parish Council

- 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 any assets or 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.

ACTION PLAN

Site / Objective	Action	Expected Outcome	Target	Reporting / Publicity
Whole Council Area	Raise awareness of biodiversity and encourage residents and the wider community to support local biodiversity initiatives.	Increased awareness, understanding and community support for biodiversity action.	Ongoing	Parish newsletter, social media and Parish Council website.
Protect and Support Biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting and land management practices that support a wide range of wildlife and improve biodiversity. Identify opportunities to connect and diversify habitats across the parish.	Improved and better-connected habitats that meet the needs of a wider variety of wildlife species.	Ongoing	Habitat and biodiversity mapping, where appropriate.
Recreation Ground	Maintain hedgerows sympathetically, wherever safe and practical to do so. Leave selected areas unmown where appropriate to provide food sources and shelter for wildlife. Avoid the use of pesticides wherever possible and, where their use is essential, use the most environmentally responsible option and apply only in suitable weather conditions.	Increased food sources and shelter for wildlife, particularly insects and pollinators. Sustained and enhanced natural habitats.	Ongoing	Progress to be monitored as part of regular site maintenance and management.
Allotments	Maintain hedgerows sympathetically, wherever safe and practical. Leave suitable areas unmown to support wildlife. Encourage plot holders to adopt environmentally friendly gardening practices. Ensure tenancy	Increased food sources and shelter, improved habitat diversity and greater support for insects, particularly bees and butterflies.	Ongoing	Information provided to allotment holders and monitored through regular site inspections and communication.

Great Tey Parish Council

Site / Objective	Action	Expected Outcome	Target	Reporting / Publicity
	agreements clearly set out expectations regarding environmentally responsible maintenance and biodiversity.	Increased involvement of plot holders in supporting biodiversity.		
Common and Other Open Spaces	Develop and adopt appropriate management plans for open spaces. Encourage residents to remove litter and clean up after their dogs. Work with the County Council on verge management, promoting biodiversity while recognising the need for cutting in areas where this is required for highway safety. Encourage residents and community groups to help care for suitable areas, with clear guidance on environmentally friendly practices, such as using peat-free compost and avoiding unnecessary chemicals.	Sustained and enhanced natural habitats. Improved protection and management of open spaces and increased community involvement.	Ongoing	Progress reported through Parish Council communications and relevant community channels.
The Built Landscape	Consider planning consultations against the requirements and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan, including biodiversity considerations. Encourage the use of wildlife-friendly features, such as hedgehog and small-animal highways and permeable boundaries, where appropriate.	Protection and enhancement of existing habitats, together with improved connectivity between habitats.	Ongoing	Planning and Neighbourhood Plan consultations.
Increase Community Awareness of Biodiversity	Seek residents' views on biodiversity priorities and encourage participation at public meetings and community events. Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife through the village magazine and other Parish Council communications. Develop a dedicated biodiversity page on the Parish Council website containing information, photographs and useful links. Encourage local farmers and landowners to contribute to biodiversity initiatives. Consider providing seeds, bulbs or other suitable materials for residents to use. Encourage the reduction of unnecessary floodlighting to help protect nocturnal wildlife.	Greater community engagement, awareness and ownership of local biodiversity. Increased and extended wildlife habitats, including gardens and private land. Improved protection for nocturnal animals.	Ongoing	Village magazine, Parish Council website, social media, newsletters and public meetings.
Support Community Projects	Support appropriate hedge and tree planting projects. Work in partnership with the local school to increase young people's awareness	Extended and improved habitats. Increased awareness of biodiversity and greater	Ongoing	Parish Council communications, local organisations, community events

Great Tey Parish Council

Site / Objective	Action	Expected Outcome	Target	Reporting / Publicity
	and understanding of the natural environment. Consider biodiversity-focused events and volunteering opportunities, working with local organisations and community groups where possible.	community participation in local environmental projects.		and Neighbourhood Plan consultation.