

# ***Ditchling Parish Council Biodiversity Policy.***

## **A Background**

### *1 Legal framework*

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, Ditchling Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as the council) **must** consider what action it can take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the **conservation and enhancement of biodiversity**.

### *2 Council areas of responsibility*

The council owns and is directly responsible for the recreation ground, the burial ground, car park in Keymer Road, land around the war memorial, 1-3 Ditchling Gardens (formerly the Scout Hut) and street lighting. It also leases land from UK Power Networks, west of The Drove.

### *3 Definition of biodiversity*

According to DEFRA (2020a), 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 and pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

## **B Aims and objectives**

The aim of this policy is to work towards **conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the parish**.

The council and any committees and working parties 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 by:

1. Considering the potential impact on biodiversity represented by **planning applications**.
2. **Managing its land** using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
3. **Supporting local businesses, other organisations and residents** in promoting biodiversity within their areas of responsibility.

4. Supporting other, wider **partner organisations'** activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

## **C Actions**

### *1 Planning applications*

The council will, when commenting on planning applications:

- support site and building designs that benefit biodiversity through the conservation and integration of **existing habitats** or **provision of new habitats**
- consider any **adverse effects** on biodiversity
- support **protection of sensitive habitats** from development
- check whether the development would mean the **loss of important habitats** for wildlife
- examine what each proposed development might make in terms of **biodiversity net gain**.

### *2 Land management*

The council will:

- conserve and enhance biodiversity in the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices such as:
  - careful cutting and recycling of vegetation (green waste)
  - minimising application of natural or synthetic fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, molluscicides, rodenticides or other species-damaging chemicals.
  - minimising application of fertilisers, especially in synthetic forms
  - timing of maintenance work to maximise species' reproduction (eg flowering, nesting)
  - allowing uncut areas of grassland to aid the above
  - leaving leaf litter and dead vegetation for species' habitat
  - avoiding burning of unwanted plant or other materials
  - removal of invasive non-native species
  - partial rewilding of land where appropriate
  - adopting related policies on eg single-use plastics
  - paying attention to the regulations for plant protection products (DEFRA 2020b)
- take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, while reaching acceptable standards, minimises all harms to the natural environment
- consider potential contractors' biodiversity policies as part of the scoring matrix during procurement and tender processes
- endeavour to source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the council's use.

### *3 Local community*

The council will:

- help to raise public awareness of biodiversity issues
- engage with local businesses, residents and organisations to encourage and support them to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind
- where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land eg tree planting, wildflower sowing.

#### *4 Partners*

The council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity. These will include:

- Sussex Nature Recovery ([sussexnaturerecovery.org.uk](https://sussexnaturerecovery.org.uk))

and its listed partners.

## **D Monitoring**

This policy was adopted on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 (Minute reference 117.1) 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 to show progress.

## **References**

DEFRA (2020a) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services) (accessed 26 October 2024).

(DEFRA 2020b) The official controls (plant protection products) regulations 2020. Available at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-official-controls-plant-protection-products-regulations-2020-policy-statement/the-official-controls-plant-protection-products-regulations-2020-policy-statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-official-controls-plant-protection-products-regulations-2020-policy-statement/the-official-controls-plant-protection-products-regulations-2020-policy-statement) (accessed 29 October 2024)