

Great Ellingham Biodiversity Policy

Legislation

In accordance with the duty imposed by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as amended by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Great Ellingham Parish Council will, in exercising all its functions, consider and act upon, how it can conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Definition

Biodiversity comes from the words biological diversity and is the variety of life on Earth, including plants, animals, fungi, microorganisms and the natural systems that support them.

Aim

Through its work, Great Ellingham Parish Council will seek to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity across the parish, contributing to national and local biodiversity objectives whilst supporting a healthy, resilient and sustainable environment for current and future generations.

Objectives

The Council will seek to:

- Protect and enhance habitats and species within the parish.
- Improve biodiversity on land owned or managed by the Council.
- Consider biodiversity in all relevant Council decisions.
- Support sustainable development that protects and enhances the natural environment.
- Engage with residents, landowners, businesses and community groups to promote biodiversity.
- Raise awareness of biodiversity and encourage community participation in projects that benefit wildlife.
- Monitor progress through regular biodiversity audits and review of the Biodiversity Action Plan.

Delivering the Policy

As part of its commitment to conserving and enhancing biodiversity, the Council will undertake a biodiversity audit of land within its ownership or management, together with other areas and activities where appropriate, at least once every five years. The audit will consider habitats, species, land use and management practices. The findings of each audit will be considered by the Council and, where appropriate, a Biodiversity Action Plan will be agreed. The audit findings and Action Plan will be published on the Parish Council website. Progress against the Action Plan will be reviewed annually and a standing agenda item for biodiversity will be included.

To achieve the above aim and objectives, Great Ellingham Parish Council will, where appropriate and within its powers and available resources, seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity through its own activities, its management of Council land and assets, its role as a statutory consultee, and by working in partnership with residents, businesses, landowners and local organisations.

The Council will :-

- 1. Manage its land and buildings to enhance biodiversity through best practice (where practicable and appropriate) by:-**
 - planting indigenous trees and wildflowers;
 - reducing mowing to create wildlife habitats;
 - enhancing ponds and streams with suitable marginal planting;
 - installing bird and bat boxes and creating hedgehog-friendly habitats;
 - reducing reliance on pesticides and herbicides.
- 2. Include policies to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the Neighbourhood Plan by:**
 - mapping areas of biodiversity and enhancing green spaces;
 - protecting significant private green spaces where appropriate.
- 3. Consider biodiversity when commenting on planning applications by :**
 - supporting good design that helps improve the local environment, integrating existing habitats and mature trees within new developments;
 - encouraging development that delivers an overall gain for biodiversity where appropriate.

4. Educate, advise and raise awareness of public understanding of biodiversity by:

- engaging with the community through newsletters, the Parish Council website and other communications;
- actively encouraging the Community to participate in projects to enhance biodiversity through projects such as tree planting and installing bird and bat boxes;
- working with local enthusiasts and experts to help monitor biodiversity including undertaking surveys for birds, mammals and reptiles.

5. Encourage landowners and businesses to improve biodiversity by :

- promoting its importance and supporting opportunities to create connected habitats and wildlife corridors where possible.

6. Planning & Development

- In all consultations, advocate for biodiversity protection and enhancements.
- Expect developments to deliver **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** per Environment Act requirements (minimum 10%). [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk).
- Reference Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Species Conservation Plans, and protected site strategies when assessing applications.
- Reference Local Authority Environmental Policies when assessing applications.

NCC Environmental Policy: commits to environmental net gain, recovering nature, pollinator action planning, woodland focus, natural flood management, and connecting people with nature. The parish will align projects to these themes.

BDC Environmental Policy / Local Plan Environment Policies:

- ENV 01: ensure no net loss of green infrastructure; require compensatory provision and long-term management when development affects existing green infrastructure.
- ENV 02: clarify ecological assessments where designated sites/species may be affected (distinct from full Environmental Impact Assessment).
- ENV 03: buffer zones and a monitoring/mitigation framework for sensitive SPA/SAC areas to manage recreational pressure and urban effects.
- ENV 05/06: protect landscape character; restrict loss of veteran trees/hedgerows; require replacement by native species where loss is unavoidable.

7. Records & Reporting

- Maintain records of council biodiversity activities.
- Publish an annual summary of actions taken and progress made.

Monitoring and Review

The Biodiversity Action Plan will be reviewed annually to monitor progress, identify new opportunities and update priorities where necessary.

A biodiversity audit will be undertaken at least every five years to assess changes in habitats, species and management practices.

This Biodiversity Policy will be reviewed at least every five years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, guidance or local circumstances.

Document Control

Version: 1.0

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Next Review Date: August 2029