



Three Saints South Elmham Parish Council

All Saints & St. Nicholas, St. Michael and St. Peter South Elmham

BIODIVERSITY DUTY

Statutory Duty

Under the 2021 Environment Act, the council, as a public authority operating in England, must consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. As a minimum, biodiversity concerns should be considered when commenting on planning applications: the council will include Biodiversity concerns as a Planning Agenda Standing Item. The council notes that funds can be spent in conserving biodiversity.

Next steps: Scoping study/ statement → Policy → Action and Engagement Plan

Following the Government Guidance published on 17 May 2023, the next steps would be:

- considering what the council can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity- outcome would be a short Scoping Study and statement
- agreeing policies and specific objectives based on this scoping- outcome would be the council Biodiversity Policy and objectives (SMART Specific-Measurable-Achievable-Relevant-Timebound). A policy follows, which is based on the model in the Guidance but would be informed further by scoping and PC discussions.
- acting to deliver the biodiversity policy and achieve the objectives- outcome would be the Action and Engagement plan. A plan is in the following Biodiversity Policy.

The timeline in the Government Guidance is to i) complete our first consideration of what action might be taken for biodiversity by January 2024, ii) agree policies and objectives as soon as possible after this and iii) revisit the selected actions over the next five years.

Scoping

In its scoping work, the council will take into account the possible activities described in the Guidance, whilst bearing in mind the unique context of the area and the engagement of its inhabitants, with their range of expertise, experience and interests. The possible scoping activities include:

- reviewing Guidance for councils on developing a [local nature action plan](#) such as that published by South Gloucestershire Council, as well as the introductory [field guide](#).
- reviewing what biodiversity or nature recovery plans are already in place from other local authorities, e.g. potential for jointly-supported wildlife corridors.
- making contact with groups working on nature conservation; e.g. Suffolk Wildlife Trust.
- carrying out a biodiversity audit of the area. We could seek advice Suffolk Wild Life Trust.
- noting actions that the council could take itself, as well as identifying actions of other local bodies, which the Council could support.



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BIODIVERSITY POLICY

BACKGROUND - STATUTORY DUTY

Under the 2021 Environment Act, the Three Saints Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as the council) as a public authority operating in England, must consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. This is 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, that any public authority 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 area.

The Full Council and any Council committees 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 any council 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 area to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.



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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.

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](#).
- 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 its buildings.

Local Community

The council will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletter contributions.¹
- 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 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 10th January 2024 (Minute reference 6) and will be monitored by review in two years or sooner should legislation dictate / each year at the Annual Meeting. A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually, with reference to the baselines in the original scoping, including biodiversity audit to show progress.



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Annex I ACTION PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING January 2024-25

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION and audience	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing presence 'Walking the Saints' map leaflet published 2024 in hardcopy, poster and digital media	Newsletter, social media, TSSE website 1250 Walks leaflet distributed via VIPs, churches and local organisations and QR code
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	Considered with planning applications
Common land/ other open spaces/ verges ²	<p>Consider feasibility of adopting a plan relevant to the different categories of space, most of which TSPC does not own.</p> <p>Encourage sympathetic maintenance of hedging.</p> <p>Encourage some areas to be unmown or less frequently to avoid 'green deserts'.</p> <p>Discourage pesticides/ encourage environment friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.</p> <p>Encourage users to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.</p> <p>Work with the county council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas</p>	<p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p> <p>Protecting habitats</p> <p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p> <p>Regular attention.</p>		<p>Newsletter, social media, website</p> <p>The Three Saints Walks leaflet</p> <p>March 2024 Litter pick publicity</p> <p>Consider in future: a new TSPC encroachment letter with mowing and planting advice</p> <p>Ongoing effort to mitigate encroachment</p>



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	<p>may need cutting for highway safety.</p> <p>Discourage encroachment on common land and raise awareness of habitat</p>			on St Michael's Common
The Built Landscape	<p>Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements relevant district and county plans³</p> <p>Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries</p>	<p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p> <p>Extending habitats.</p>	Ongoing	Planning applications reviewed.
Support Community Projects	<p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.</p> <p>Consider events for biodiversity, working with local organisations.⁴</p>	<p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p>	ongoing	Habitat improvement on All Saints Common with bramble and scrub control