



THE IVERS
PARISH COUNCIL

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Biodiversity Policy

Date of Adoption	Review Cycle	Review Date
	Biennial	

Introduction

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England, including Parish Councils to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making.

This was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021 so public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This means a public authority must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver policies and achieve objectives.

Town and parish councils, unlike other authorities, are not obliged to publish a report on their actions, but the Government guidance requires all public authorities to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024.

They must agree their policies and objectives as soon as possible after this and must reconsider the selected actions within five years of completing their previous consideration, or more frequently if they choose.

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 everywhere, in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains rivers and the sea. 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.

Parish Council responsibilities

The Parish Council own and/or manages the following open spaces:

- Iver Allotments
- Iver Recreation Ground

- Outside space at 45B High Street
- Swan Meadow Nature Reserve
- St Peter's Church Burial Ground
- Iver Heath Allotment
- Iver Heath Recreation Ground
- Iver Heath Copse
- Hardings Row Nature Reserve
- Cottage in the Woods Footpath
- St Leonards Mound
- The Mud Wharf

The Parish Council also owns the following buildings:

- Iver Heath Pavilion
- Iver Pavilion
- 45B High Street (Parish Council Hub)

Aims

The aim of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area. The Parish Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

Objectives

The Parish Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area through the following objectives:

- Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made through the Parish Council, especially 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. They will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- Manage our land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity. 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 care in the specification of grounds maintenance tasks 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 our buildings.
- Seek opportunities to secure additional open spaces as part of community benefits

Monitoring of Progress

The Council will monitor the progress of the policy through the report of working practices to Council on a regular basis. It is recognised that we are unable to measure progress on a quantitative basis.

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 and 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.

Monitoring and Review

This policy was adopted on **INSERT DEADLINE** and will be reviewed in two years or sooner should legislation dictate.