



Dummer Parish Council

Biodiversity Policy

Document Control Details:

Date of policy: April 2026

Approved by: Full Council

Date of meeting: 13th April 2026

Policy effective from: April 2026

Date for next review: April 2028

1. Policy Statement

Dummer Parish Council ("the Council") recognises its duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as amended by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, to consider how, in carrying out its functions, it can conserve and enhance biodiversity.

In fulfilling this duty, the Council will from time to time consider what action it can properly take, consistent with the proper exercise of its responsibilities, to further the general biodiversity objective. This includes taking biodiversity into account in relevant decisions and activities of the Council where it is appropriate to do so.

The Council also recognises that it may use its funds, where appropriate, to support measures that conserve and enhance biodiversity. Through this policy, the Council confirms its commitment to protecting and improving biodiversity within the parish, where this can reasonably be achieved within the scope of its role and resources.

2. Definition of Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on Earth, including plants, animals and other living organisms, together with the habitats and natural systems that support them.

Biodiversity is important in its own right, but it also underpins healthy ecosystems, which provide essential benefits to people and communities. These include clean air and water, fertile soils, pollination, climate regulation and natural resilience to flooding and other environmental pressures.

At a local level, biodiversity contributes to the character, beauty and ecological health of the parish. It supports local wildlife and helps create and maintain a healthy natural environment for residents and future generations. Biodiversity also brings wider cultural, educational and recreational benefits, enriching daily life within the parish.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within the parish. In carrying out its functions, the Council will have regard to sustainability, environmental impact and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in its decision-making. The Council will also develop and implement such policies, practices and actions as it considers appropriate to support these aims.

In particular, the Council will seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity by:

- considering, where relevant, the potential impact of planning applications on biodiversity;

- managing any land and property within its control in a manner that supports and promotes biodiversity, using environmentally responsible practices where practicable;
- encouraging the adoption of low-impact and nature-positive practices in the Council's own operations and, where appropriate, among local businesses;
- encouraging and supporting other organisations within the parish to manage land and property with biodiversity in mind; and
- supporting residents and local organisations in activities that protect, enhance and promote biodiversity.

4. Actions

To support the aims of this policy, the Council will have regard to biodiversity in its planning responses, land and property management, procurement, and engagement with the local community.

Planning applications

When commenting on planning applications, the Council will, where relevant, support proposals that conserve, protect and enhance biodiversity. This will include encouraging site and building design that retains and integrates existing habitats or provides suitable new habitats. The Council will also seek to protect sensitive habitats from inappropriate development and will consider whether proposals may result in the loss of habitats that are important for wildlife. Where appropriate, the Council will also take account of the extent to which a development may deliver biodiversity net gain.

Land and property management

In managing any land and property under its control, the Council will seek to conserve and promote local biodiversity. This will include carrying out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings and considering how open spaces can be managed in ways that support wildlife and habitat quality. The Council will seek to adopt beneficial practices in relation to the cutting and removal of vegetation, the use of chemicals, and the timing of maintenance works, having regard to relevant Government guidance and regulations, including those relating to plant protection products.

The Council will also take proper account of biodiversity in the specification and management of grounds maintenance contracts, so that works are carried out to an appropriate standard without unnecessary harm to the natural environment. When procuring supplies for the Council's use, the Council will, where practicable, seek to source sustainable materials.

Local community

The Council will seek to promote awareness and understanding of biodiversity within the parish, including through its website, newsletters and other appropriate communications. It will also encourage engagement with residents,

local businesses and community organisations on biodiversity issues and on the practical steps that can be taken locally to protect and enhance the natural environment.

Where feasible and appropriate, the Council will support community involvement in biodiversity projects on land within its control. This may include activities such as tree planting, the creation of wildflower areas, and the provision of bird boxes or similar habitat measures.

5. Partnership Working

The Council will seek to work in partnership with other organisations, where appropriate, to protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity within the parish. This will include having regard to relevant local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, and protected site strategies, including those relating to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), where they affect the parish or surrounding area.

The Council will consider how it may, where appropriate and within the scope of its role and resources, support or contribute to the implementation of relevant recommendations and local biodiversity priorities.