

Adopted: March 2025

Amended: July 2026

Next Review: July 3031 or in line with legislative updates.

Aldborough and Thurgarton Parish Council Biodiversity Policy

Background

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, Aldborough and Thurgarton Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council) 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 the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (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 objective of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area. Aldborough and Thurgarton is fortunate to be surrounded by countryside, much of which is looked after by landowners in a way that prioritises what is best for nature and the environment, and this impacts positively on the areas looked after by the Council.

The Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required. The Council's commitment to this aim can be evidenced by the management of the Village Pond and its surrounding wildflower area, conducted by the residents and assisted by the parish council. Considerable care is taken to consider biodiversity throughout this work.

In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of its area of responsibility in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.

- manage its 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.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

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.

Green and property management:

The Council will:

- develop a 'Biodiversity Action Plan' which will detail the ways in which the Green, Pond and Wildflower area will be managed. (Later in this document)
- consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regard 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 particular 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 whenever possible when procuring supplies for the Council's use.

Local community:**The Council will:**

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues through its website and other communications.
- where relevant, engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- where there is opportunity, involve the community in biodiversity projects within the Parish including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

Partners:

Where there is opportunity, the Council will work in partnership with other local organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area.

Monitoring:

This policy was adopted on ***** (Minute reference *****) and will be reviewed in five years or sooner should legislation dictate.

Biodiversity Action Plan

The Parish Council is responsible for the land management of the following areas within the Parish: -

- The Village Green including the Pond and surrounding Wildflower area and Trees.
- The Children's Playground

Site	Consideration	Outcome	Status
Village Green	Sympathetically maintain trees, hedges. Leave margins near hedges unmown and leave leaf litter and small tree branches on ground to provide a wildlife corridor. Only use environmentally friendly pesticides. Grass cuttings to be mulched. Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.	Provides food sources and cover for small animals, invertebrates and plants. Protecting habitats.	Ongoing

Policies & Procedures

Aim	Consideration	Outcome	Status
Review policies & procedures	The Council will look to make changes, where necessary and appropriate, to ensure its policies and internal processes support biodiversity, which may include, but is not limited to: - • Procurement – buy sustainable materials and supplies to reduce the demand on natural resources. • Support community projects which promote biodiversity.		Ongoing
The Built Landscape	Specific consideration of biodiversity when commenting on planning applications e.g., regard for direct loss of habitats and commuting / foraging wildlife paths; light pollution.		Ongoing

Promote & encourage biodiversity within the community	The Council will raise awareness and support the community to understand biodiversity and why it's important to conserve and enhance it. The Council will: - • Include the public & community partners in projects to improve biodiversity. Ongoing • Feature biodiversity in public communications. • Raise public awareness of how their gardens can support biodiversity.		
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COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL ACT 2021 – our Bio-Diversity Duty

1. The Parish Council has registered with Norfolk Ponds Project CIC which will enable the parish to receive training through pond ambassadors, to monitor record and protect our parish's pond, an important habitat for bio-diversity.
2. The Parish Council has applied for a Grant to plant boundary hedging around the childrens' playground to enhance opportunities to support wildlife and improve bio-diversity in this area of the Green. The Parish Council continues to look for opportunities to access grant funding to improve the natural environment.
3. The Wildlife. & Pond working group which reports to the PC continues to maintain the Pond and Wildlife area to create a wildlife friendly environment by planting and encouraging a wide range of wildflowers and grasses to support insects and small mammals. The area is managed by volunteers cutting and clearing on an annual basis to ensure the sustainability of this area to promote and enhance bio-diversity.
4. The Parish Council have chosen not to use glycosophates to clear weeds from roadside around the Green as this broad spectrum weedkiller disrupts eco-systems.
5. The Parish Council maintains 7 public streetlamps, all have been replaced to reduce light pollution and reduce energy use.

Tina Hooker
1 July 2026