

CLEE ST MARGARET PARISH COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY POLICY

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, **Clee St Margaret Parish Council** (hereinafter referred to as the Parish Council) must from time to time consider actions it can take, consistent 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 lives on our planet. Biodiversity is the building block of our ecosystems that provide us with our food, water and clean air, that are vital to our individual and social wellbeing, and that protect us from natural disasters, regulate our climate, purify our water and pollinate our crops.

The Parish Council recognises its responsibilities and duties to conserve and protect biodiversity, and to work towards enhancing biodiversity through the management of its land, open spaces and natural habitats.

This policy outlines the main areas where the Parish Council can impact the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within its land, and in particular Clee Liberty Common, the Community's main natural asset.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES and ACTIONS

Clee St Margaret Parish Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions in all areas and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

The key ways the Parish Council will work to improve biodiversity in the area include:

LAND MANAGEMENT

- carry out, review and update biodiversity audits of its land
- continue to seek advice from and work in partnership with other organisations to monitor, protect and increase biodiversity on its land and within the area
- be mindful of the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its parish and adopt, whenever and wherever possible, environmentally low-impact and nature positive practices in the management of its natural assets
- take care in the specification of land maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, while reaching acceptable standards, does not unduly harm the natural environment

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications, and support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats and/or provision of new habitats
- consider what proposed local developments could make in terms of biodiversity net gain
- support the protection of sensitive habitats from development, and consider whether the proposed work would mean the loss of such habitats

LOCAL COMMUNITY

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues and work with community to identify biodiversity priorities
- engage the community in nature and biodiversity projects on its lands
- encourage local community organisations to carry out its activities with sustainability and biodiversity in mind

PARTNERS

- continue to work with a wide range of outside organisations to protect, conserve and increase biodiversity within the council area
- it will regularly review and update local nature recovery and species conservation, and consider how it may become involved and contribute to implementing the strategies' recommendations

Monitoring of Policy

This policy was adopted on 15th January 2024 (Minute reference 9.1) and will be reviewed 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 to show progress.