



Great Maplestead Parish Council

Biodiversity Policy

**Adopted: 14th May 2025
For Review: May 2026**



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Biodiversity Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Section 40 of the **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006**, updated by **Section 102** of the **Environment Act 2021**, imposes the duty on a **Parish Council** to consider what action it can properly take, consistent with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.
- 1.2** **Great Maplestead Parish Council** (hereinafter referred to as the **Council**) must therefore, from time to time as appropriate, consider its duty in relation to this objective.
- 1.3** This duty also means that the **Council** may spend funds in helping to conserve biodiversity.

2. Definitions

2.1 According to DEFRA (Biodiversity 2020):

- Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth – it includes all species of animals, plants and everything that is alive on the planet.

2.2 Biodiversity is important for its own sake.

- It has its own intrinsic value: a number of studies have shown this value also goes further. Biodiversity is the building block of 'ecosystems' that in turn provide a wide range of goods and services that support 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, climate regulation, water purification and crop pollination.
- Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching lives.

3. Aims and Objectives

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

3.3 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 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.
- encourage and support other organisations within the parish to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- support residents and the activities of local organisation to enhance and promote biodiversity.

4. Actions

4.1 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.
- include policies in support of biodiversity within the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2 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.

4.3 Local Community

The **Council** will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website, social media and newsletter.

- 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 bird-box making.

4.4 Planning

The **Council** will:

- work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the **Council's** area.
- review any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies or protected site strategies in respect of local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- consider how it may become more involved in implementing the various strategies' recommendations.

5. In Conclusion

- 5.1** This **Biodiversity Policy** was adopted on **6th November 2024** and will be reviewed at the **Council's** Annual Meeting in **2026**
- 5.2** The **Council** commits to reviewing this policy each year subsequently at its Annual Meeting and updating it as soon as possible if notified of any future legislative or best practice changes.