

# Biodiversity Policy

## Preamble:

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, Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council will in exercising all its functions have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

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 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. It is the building block of our 'ecosystems'. These 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 object of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of Aldington and Bonnington.

All committees of Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, Aldington and Bonnington Parish 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 & council operations in the adoption of low impact practices.
- Support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

## Actions:

### Planning applications

- The council, when commenting on planning applications, will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.

- It will 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.
- It will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- It will include policies in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.

#### Land and property management

- The council will carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- The council will 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.
- Special care will be taken in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- The council will consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

#### Local community:

- The council will raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- The council will engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- It will, where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

#### Partners:

- Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the parish.
- It will review any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies in respect of local sites of specific scientific interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

This policy will be reviewed each year at the Annual meeting, together with a summary of how the policy has been implemented in the previous twelve months.

Site / Objective	Action	Outcome	Target (Years)	Reporting / publicity
Whole Council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action	Ongoing	Newsletter
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	Mapping
Reynolds Playing Field and Quarry Field	Sympathetically maintain hedging  Leave some areas unmown  Only use environmentally friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions	Food source & cover  Encourages insects  Sustain & enhance natural habitats		
Other open spaces	Adopt a management plan  Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs  Work with the county council on verge management	Sustain & enhance natural habitats  Protecting habitats  Protecting/enhancing habitats		

	Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after	Regular attention		
The built landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan  Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries	Protecting / enhancing habitats  Extending habitats		
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish.  Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the newsletter  Create a page on the parish council website for photographs / information / links	Engagement / ownership of biodiversity  Promote biodiversity  Promote biodiversity	Ongoing	

	<p>Encourage local farmers to contribute</p> <p>Provide seed bombs / bulbs etc. for residents' use.</p> <p>Discourage floodlighting</p>	<p>Promote biodiversity</p> <p>Extending habitats</p> <p>Protect nocturnal animals</p>		
<p>Support community projects</p>	<p>Support hedge / tree planting in any appropriate areas</p> <p>Work in partnership with the school to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them</p> <p>Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations</p>	<p>Extending habitats</p> <p>Promote biodiversity</p> <p>Promote biodiversity</p>		