

# Biodiversity Policy

Adopted:	April 2026
Next Review:	April 2027

## Purpose

Collingham Parish Council recognises that biodiversity underpins a healthy environment and contributes to the wellbeing of residents, the resilience of local ecosystems, and the character of the parish.

The Council will, in the exercise of its functions, have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity and will seek, where practicable and proportionate, to improve habitats and support nature recovery within the parish.

This policy is intended to help the Council meet its biodiversity duty and to guide decision-making, management of land and assets, and community initiatives.

## Scope

This policy applies to the activities of Collingham Parish Council insofar as they may affect biodiversity, including but not limited to:

- the management of Council-owned or Council-managed land and green spaces
- planting, landscaping and grounds maintenance
- the maintenance, repair or replacement of Council assets
- the Council's comments on planning applications, where relevant to biodiversity
- procurement, projects, grants and partnership working
- community engagement and local environmental initiatives

## Policy statement

Collingham Parish Council will, so far as is consistent with its statutory powers, duties, resources and responsibilities:

1. consider the likely effects of its decisions and activities on biodiversity

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2. seek opportunities to conserve existing habitats and enhance biodiversity where practicable
3. incorporate biodiversity into relevant policies, projects and land management decisions
4. support nature-positive practices in the management of Council land and assets
5. work with residents, community groups, landowners and other organisations where appropriate to support biodiversity in the parish.

## Objectives

The Council's objectives are to:

1. **Protect** existing biodiversity value on land within the Council's control, as far as reasonably practicable.
2. **Enhance** habitats through appropriate planting, management and maintenance practices.
3. **Integrate** biodiversity considerations into routine Council business and decision-making.
4. **Support** local awareness and involvement in practical biodiversity improvements.
5. **Review** actions periodically and update the Council's approach in light of experience, local priorities and available guidance.

## Principles

When exercising its functions, the Council will seek to apply the following principles:

- retain and improve existing natural features where practicable
- favour native and wildlife-friendly planting where suitable
- avoid unnecessary harm to habitats and species
- time works, where possible, to minimise disturbance to wildlife
- reduce the use of chemicals where a practical alternative exists
- consider longer grass regimes, wildflower areas, hedge management and tree planting where suitable and manageable
- balance biodiversity benefits with public safety, accessibility, amenity, budget and maintenance constraints

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## Actions

To help deliver this policy, the Council will, where appropriate and practicable:

- identify land, verges, open spaces or other areas under its control that may offer opportunities for biodiversity enhancement
- review grounds maintenance practices to identify where changes could benefit biodiversity
- consider wildlife-friendly planting in appropriate locations
- consider the retention or creation of habitat features such as long grass areas, pollinator-friendly planting, hedgerows, trees, deadwood habitats, bird boxes or insect habitats where suitable
- consider biodiversity implications when renewing or improving Council-managed sites
- include biodiversity as a consideration in relevant project planning and procurement
- take biodiversity into account when responding to planning applications, where this is a material planning consideration and relevant to the Council's comments
- work with local partners and volunteer groups on suitable biodiversity initiatives.

## Planning and decision-making

Where the Council comments on planning applications, it will, where relevant, consider biodiversity impacts and opportunities for habitat protection or enhancement. In doing so, the Council will confine its comments to material planning considerations and the scope of its role as a consultee. The Council will also seek to have regard to biodiversity in its wider decision-making, including projects, maintenance and land management.

## Responsibilities

The Council as a corporate body is responsible for approving this policy and reviewing progress against it. The Clerk, acting under delegated authority where applicable, will support implementation through administration, project coordination, agenda-setting and reporting. Councillors will take this policy into account when making decisions on relevant matters. Contractors engaged by the Council will be expected, where relevant, to work in a manner consistent with the Council's biodiversity aims and any site-specific instructions.

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## Monitoring and review

The Council will keep a record of biodiversity-related actions taken under this policy and will review progress periodically. The policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or earlier if there is a significant change in legislation, guidance, Council responsibilities or local circumstances. Although parish councils are not subject to the same statutory reporting requirement as principal local authorities, keeping a clear written record of actions and future intentions is good practice and helps demonstrate compliance with the biodiversity duty.

## Linked documents

This policy should be read alongside, where relevant:

- the Council's Asset Register
- any grounds maintenance specifications
- tree, open space or cemetery policies if applicable
- relevant risk assessments
- planning consultation procedures
- any action plan or project list adopted by the Council in support of biodiversity