WESTON ON THE GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

(Based on SLCC Model Template Policy 2024)



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, Weston on the Green Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council) which has any functions exercisable in relation to England 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 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 object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area.

The Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

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 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Local Community

The Council will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- 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, birdbox making.

Partners

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

WESTON ON THE GREEN PARISH ACTION PLAN

Site Objective	Action	Outcome	Target (Years)	Reporting/ Publicity
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Village News, social media, website
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect and diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species.	Ongoing	Village News, website
Playing Field & Spinney	Sympathetically maintain hedging.	Food sources and cover.	Ongoing	Parish Council meeting
	Leave some areas unmown.	Encourages insects.	Ongoing	Parish Council meeting
	Only use environment friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary.	Sustain and enhance natural habitats.	Ongoing	Parish Council meeting
Common/other open spaces	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.	Protecting habitats	Ongoing	Village News, social media, website
	Work with the county council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety.	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	Parish Council meeting
	Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after.	Regular attention	Ongoing	Village News, website
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	Parish Council meeting
	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries.	Extending habitats.	Ongoing	Village News, website
Increase community	Ask residents for	Engagement/ownership of biodiversity.	Ongoing	Neighbourhood Plan

awareness of biodiversity	their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish.			consultation
	Raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity and key projects/information.	Promote biodiversity.	Ongoing	Village News, website
	Discourage floodlighting as dark sky village.	Protect nocturnal animals.	Ongoing	Village News, website
Support Community Projects	Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.	Extending habitats.	Ongoing	Village News
	Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.	Promote biodiversity.	Ongoing	Volunteer events

Policy Adopted by Weston on the Green Parish Council: 3rd December 2025 (Minute Reference: 25.430.20).

Review Date: December 2027 (subject to legislation changes or change in Council circumstances).