



# **Buckfastleigh Town Council Biodiversity Policy 2024**

## **1. Introduction and Definition**

- 1.1 In accordance with Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 103 of the Environment Act 2021, public authorities (including town and parish councils) who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.
- 1.2 As defined by Defra (Biodiversity 2020) biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants. It is the building block of our ecosystems which provide us with a wide variety of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water, and clean air, but also protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, purification of our water and pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services which enrich our lives.
- 1.3 Buckfastleigh Town Council will in exercising all its functions have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity and can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

- 2.1 The object of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of the parish of Buckfastleigh.
- 2.2 All committees and working parties of Buckfastleigh Town Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.
- 2.3 In particular, the Town Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the parish as follows:
  - Consider the potential impact on biodiversity when examining and commenting on planning applications,
  - Manage land and property (where applicable) using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity,
  - Support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact practices,
  - Support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

## **3. Actions**

### **3.1 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 (if applicable)

### **3.2 Land and property management**

- The council will carry out a biodiversity audit of its land (if applicable),
- The council will consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces (if applicable). This will include adopting beneficial practices regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, 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 (if applicable) including the Town Hall where the Town Council is the sole trustee.

### **3.3 Local community**

- The council will raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website, social media, and articles in the community news sheet,
- 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 and wildlife habitat making.

### **3.4 Partnerships**

- Buckfastleigh Town Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the parish,
- 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.

To be reviewed each year at the Annual Town Council meeting with a summary of the how the policy has been implemented in the previous 12 months.

**Adopted by full Council on 21.02.2024.**

**Date of Review May 2024**