



Buckfastleigh Town Council Biodiversity Policy 2024

2025-2026 Summary of activity for the Annual Town Council Meeting 20 May 2026

This report summarises the Town Council's duty and actions in accordance with Section 103 of the Environment Act 2021 regarding the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within the parish of Buckfastleigh and Buckfast over the past 12 months.



The Wildspace Garden at the rear of the Town Hall continues to flourish and is now in its sixth year which has given this area time to establish creating a safe refuge for nesting birds, small mammals, reptiles, invertebrates and insects. The garden is open to the public for much of the year but at specific times so that the site is mostly undisturbed.

The duck pond on Duckspend Road continues to thrive following sensitive and non-invasive management and intervention by the Town Ranger. The pond supports a family of Mallard ducks, native fish introduced by the Ranger, insects and regular wildlife visitors.

In July 2025, in partnership with Dartmoor National Park, the Council hosted our first Water Day. Although primarily organised as a fun filled afternoon for local residents to raise awareness of the towns vulnerability to flooding and its historic and economic dependency on the Dean Burn, river Mardle and river Dart, it also highlighted the risk to our native species which live within the parish and what measures are being taken to alleviate the issues which affect their survival.

The Council is pleased to support, consult and work in partnership with our local volunteer wildlife group, Buckfastleigh Action for Nature Group (BANG) who primarily manage some key Devon County Council owned verges within the parish and the Holy Trinity old churchyard project to restore and enhance wildflowers, encourage insects, birds and bats with awareness of the rare and protected Greater Horseshoe Bat colonies which roost and forage in around Buckfastleigh. The Town Clerk and Town Ranger both attend BANG meetings as representatives of the Town Council.

Below is a summary of activities undertaken by the BANG volunteers:

1. Enhancing biodiversity of the green spaces of the Parish

Road verges: Reduced cutting of selected verges to enable wildflowers to flourish, while ensuring that footpaths are not impeded.

Elliot Plain: Management is more intense with plantings of wildflower seedlings, a path cut

through the grassy area, and grass cut and removed more frequently to balance diversity and appearance given that Elliot Plain stands at an entrance to the Town.

Strode Road: Greater floral diversity than at Elliott Plain. Grass cut by the Town Ranger and small fruit trees planted by the Town Council, with BANG involvement.

Holy Trinity Churchyard: An area of the churchyard is managed for biodiversity. Grass cut (and removed) less frequently to increase floristic diversity.

Greater Horseshoe Bat survey: An annual event with data collected over several years.

Pollinator Project Initiative: Planters around the town with pollinator plants.

Open Wildlife Gardens Initiative: (See also Outreach, below.) Gardens are arguably the greatest source of animal and plant diversity within the Parish.

2. Outreach – encouraging an interest in biodiversity in the area

Newsletters: Seasonal newsletters distributed (mainly by email) to BANG members. Entries also made in the Buckfastleigh Newsletter.

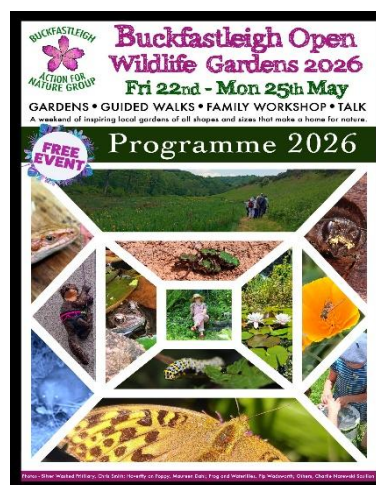
Talks: External speaker on bats given at AGM by bat specialist. Also updates on BANG activities.

Posters: Posters explaining biodiversity placed at strategic locations at green spaces and in town to advertise events.

Open Wildlife Gardens Initiative: A major event held annually over the May Bank Holiday weekend to demonstrate the value of gardens to biodiversity, and to encourage visitors to consider managing their gardens, at least in part, for wildlife.

Further information:

BANG has been awarded a grant of £6000 over a period of two years from the Dart Valley Fund (Schumacher Society) for 'Community Action for Waterways and Wildlife in Buckfastleigh'. This award is in its early stages. We await the outcome of a further grant application to the South West Water 'Nature Recovery Fund'.



Town Council Future Plans

- To continue to work with the BANG group to promote, support and help fund local biodiversity initiatives and have Town Council representation at BANG group meetings.
- To continue to educate, provide advice and signpost to other relevant organisations.
- To discourage the use of harmful pesticides and insecticides.