

Polegate Town Council



BIODIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Number 41		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
1	10.01.25	Adopted
2	19.05.25	Adopted at Annual Stat meeting
3	11.05.26	Adopted at Annual Stat meeting

1. Background and Legal Context

- 1.1 Under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as amended by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, town and parish councils must, when exercising their functions, have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.
- 1.2 This duty enables Polegate Town Council to spend funds on activities that conserve, protect, or enhance biodiversity.
- 1.3 All local authorities', including Town and Parish Councils, were required to consider biodiversity actions by 1st January 2024.
- 1.4 Councils are expected to agree appropriate policies and objectives as soon as reasonably practicable, review biodiversity actions on a regular basis, and reconsider actions within five years of the previous review.
- 1.5 This policy sets out how Polegate Town Council will meet its biodiversity duty and ensure biodiversity considerations are integrated into decision-making.

2. Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.1 Biodiversity refers to the variety of life in an area, including animals, plants fungi, and microorganisms.
- 2.2 These species interact within ecosystems to support essential services such as food production, clean air and water, and oxygen.
- 2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development and land management that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than before.
- 2.4 Polegate Town Council is committed to ensuring that all activities carried out on land it owns, leases or manages take biodiversity into account, including land management, maintenance, new works, and improvements.

3. Land and Assets Managed by the Council

- 3.1 The Council owns or manages a range of land and assets across the town.
- 3.2 These include:
 - Oakleaf Play Area
 - Gosford Allotments
 - Cophall Allotments
 - Brightling Road Leisure Ground and Meadow
 - Polegate War Memorial Recreation Ground,
 - Jubilee Nature Reserve
 - 49 High Street
- 3.3 Biodiversity impacts will be considered across all Council-owned and managed land and property.

4. Relevant Strategies

- 4.1 When exercising its biodiversity duty, the Council will have regard to relevant strategies, including Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Species Conservation Strategies, and Protected site Strategies.
- 4.2 The Council will consider whether such strategies apply to land it owns or manages, affect its activities of decision-making, or identify actions it could take to conserve or enhance biodiversity.

5. Aims and Objections

- 5.1 The aim of this policy is to protect and enhance biodiversity within Polegate.
- 5.2 All Council committees will consider sustainability, environmental impact, and biodiversity when making decisions.
- 5.3 Where necessary, the Council will develop and implement supporting policies or strategies, to achieve this aim.
- 5.4 The Council will seek to improve biodiversity by considering biodiversity impacts when responding to planning applications, managing land and property using environmentally responsible practices, supporting low-impact practices, and encouraging community involvement in biodiversity-related activities.

6. Actions

- 6.1 When commenting on planning applications, the Council will support designs that conserve existing habitats or create new habitats, support the protection of sensitive habitats from inappropriate development, and consider potential biodiversity net gain.
- 6.2 In managing land and property, the Council will ensure grounds maintenance contracts balance required standards with minimising environmental harm, consider biodiversity impacts when managing buildings, and introduce biodiversity-enhancing measures where reasonably practicable.
- 6.3 The Council will raise public awareness of biodiversity through its website and social media and engage, where appropriate, with residents and local business on actions to support biodiversity.
- 6.4 The Council will encourage community involvement in biodiversity projects on Council land, such as tree planting, wildflower areas, and wildlife habitats.
- 6.5 The Council will work with partner organisations to protect, promote, and enhance biodiversity and will consider how it can support relevant nature recovery, species conservation, and protected site strategies.

7. Council Commitment

- 7.1 Polegate Town Council commits to considering biodiversity impacts in all Council, committee, sub-committee, and task and finish group decisions.
- 7.2 The Council will seek to minimise negative impacts on biodiversity arising from its activities and identify opportunities to enhance biodiversity where reasonably practicable.
- 7.3 The Council will raise public awareness of biodiversity as part of its leadership role and will review internal policies and processes to support biodiversity improvements.
- 7.4 As a landowner, the Council will remove invasive species in line with legislation, avoid the use of herbicides except in exceptional circumstances, and plan grounds maintenance to minimise impacts on wildlife.
- 7.5 The Council will create and maintain areas that support wildlife and seek opportunities to improve Council buildings and surrounding land to enhance biodiversity.

8. Reporting and review

- 8.1 There is no statutory requirement for the Council to produce a standalone biodiversity report, and it will not do so.

9. Supporting Guidance

- 9.1 The Council will have regard to relevant national guidance on complying with the biodiversity duty, including guidance published by GOV.UK.
- 9.2 When managing land and property, the Council will consider opportunities to improve green and blue space, including allotments, parks, amenity space, roadside verges, hedgerows, woodlands, nature reserves, and water dependent habitats
- 9.3 Small changes to land management can create wildlife habitats and nature corridors, helping species to thrive and become more resilient to climate change.

**Statement prepared for adoption by Polegate Town Council at its meeting on
11.05.26**

Signed by

Mayor of Polegate

Clerk/Proper Office/RFO