

1. Introduction

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires public authorities in England, including parish councils to consider the conservation of biodiversity as part of policy and decision making. Subsequently, this was amended by the Environment Act 2021 to 'conserve and enhance' biodiversity in England, such that public authorities must:

- address conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.
- Apply policies and specific objectives to fulfil requirements.

Although not obliged to report on achievements, town and parish councils, are required to state their considerations as to action for biodiversity enhancement and agree policies and objectives with reconsideration within five years.

2. Definition

As defined by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DeFRA) in 2020:

'biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth, including all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet'. Biodiversity is everywhere, in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains rivers and the sea. Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value'.

Studies have demonstrated that biodiversity provides foundation for our 'ecosystems' which provide the basis for development of essential products and goods for the benefit of our community. Essentials include food, fresh water and clean air, but also climate regulation, protection from natural detrimental occurrences, (e.g, floods), water purification and crop pollination. Biodiversity also fulfils the needs of certain cultural requirements.

3. The Local Area

The semi-rural village environment within Streatley Parish contains a range of bio-diverse natural areas including, chalk uplands, forest, open fields, The meadow, hedges, ditches and the river Thames as the east boundary.

4. Parish Council Land

The Parish Council is involved with a number of plots of land, including:

- Plots to the south of the properties on the south side of The High Street, some plots of which are long-term leased to residents
- Plot on the east side of the A329 Reading Road
- The Recreation Ground

5. Aims, Objectives

The object of this policy is to protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Streatley Parish. Parish Council decisions will include consideration of sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity with policies and strategies developed to suit.

6. Actions

The Parish Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- Consider biodiversity impact as part of planning application reviews, supporting proposals which protect, conserve, enhance and generally benefit biodiversity and habitats.
- Consider biodiversity during reviews of other companies and authorities who work in the parish.
- Manage council land to promote biodiversity, with consideration towards cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and maintenance work scheduling.
- Adopt grounds maintenance practices which do not harm the natural environment
- Manage council land to enhance biodiversity, such as:
 - Maintaining invertebrates habitats in fallen dead wood, leaf litter and dead vegetation
 - Removal of invasive and non-invasive species which are detrimental to native flora or fauna.
 - Consider a margin of uncut grass around the boundary of the Recreation Ground

- Schedule grass cutting, hedge trimming and tree pollarding to avoid biodiversity damage.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed with a frequency of not more than two years or as subsequent legislation may dictate. An action plan will be developed over the coming year and a summary of how the policy has been implemented will be reported within council meeting minutes.



Signed :

Colin Smith
Chairman, Streatley Parish Council

Date : 09 December 2024