



# **Biodiversity Policy**

## **West Bedlington Town Council**

|                    |                                    |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Adopted</b>     | <b>13<sup>th</sup> August 2026</b> |
| <b>Next review</b> | <b>August 2027</b>                 |

## **BIODIVERSITY POLICY**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 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, West Bedlington Town Council, which has many 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.
- 1.2 This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

### **2. Definition**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this 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.
- 2.3 Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

### **3. Aims and objectives**

- 3.1 The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of West Bedlington Town Council's area.
- 3.2 The full Council and any committees of the Town Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.
- 3.3 In particular, the Town 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 town to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind

- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity

## **4. Actions**

### **4.1 Planning applications**

#### **4.1.1 The Town 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

### **4.2 Land and property management**

#### **4.2.1. The Town Council will:**

- take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance regimes to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment
- source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Town Council's use

### **4.3 Local community**

#### **4.3.1. The Town Council will:**

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website, social media and newsletter
- engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference

### **4.4 Partners**

4.4.1 The Town Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area.

## **5. Monitoring**

5.1 This policy was adopted in July 2026, (minute reference xxx) and will be reviewed in two years or sooner should legislation dictate.

5.2 During the review period, actions to keep in mind to raise local awareness of biodiversity are as follows:

- Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity

- Connect and diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species
- Work in partnership with schools to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them
- Ensure that planning consultations are considered against West Bedlington's Neighbourhood Plan (once finalised)
- Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations