

NORTHLEACH WITH EASTINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

PREAMBLE

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 2021¹, Northleach with Eastington Town Council (“the Council”) will in exercising all its functions have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity. “Having regard to” means the council will give matters genuine attention and give them such weight as may be considered to be appropriate.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

DEFINITION

According to DEFRA ([Biodiversity 2020](#)), biodiversity is simply defined as the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants, both commonplace and rare. Biodiversity is important for its own sake, and because it underpins ecosystems sustaining human life on earth. These include essentials such as food, fresh water, and clean air.

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with only about half of its biodiversity left ([State of Nature 2023](#)). However, it is not too late to reverse this decline.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Council will work towards protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of the parish of Northleach with Eastington.

The Council and its committees will consider biodiversity, sustainability, and environmental impact in their policy and decision-making processes.

In particular, we will aim to support nature recovery and improve the biodiversity of the local area in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications within or affecting the parish.
- manage our land and property better for nature, by adopting environmentally friendly practices that will protect and where possible enhance biodiversity.
- Support local residents, businesses, and organisations in their activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/section/102>

OBJECTIVES

Planning applications

- The Council, when commenting on planning applications, will support site and building design that benefit biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- We will support the protection of sensitive habitats from development and consider whether a proposed development would result in loss of important habitats for wildlife.
- We will consider how proposed development might contribute to [Biodiversity Net Gain](#).

Land and property management

- We will manage our parks and open spaces in a way that benefits biodiversity while ensuring that the primary role of the land is not compromised. This will include minimising the application of pesticides and other harmful chemicals, and timing of maintenance work to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity.
- We will have due regard to the impact on biodiversity when managing our buildings, not just in terms of local habitat, but also our supply chains and waste management.

Local community

- We will seek to raise public awareness of the role of biodiversity in ensuring a healthy natural environment by communicating our policies and practices.
- We will revise the community grant scheme to make specific provision for projects enhancing biodiversity within the parish.
- We will, where feasible, involve the community in projects on our land aimed at enhancing biodiversity including, for example, by using volunteers or community groups in tree or hedgerow planting, wildflower meadow management, or other works to improve existing and provide new habitats.

Partners

- We will work with other organisations to protect, promote, and enhance biodiversity within areas of the parish, working with existing partners like Carbon Neutral Northleach and the Cotswold Conservation Board, and forming new partnerships where needed.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Adopted by Full Council at the meeting on 19 June 2024.

Last reviewed and updated on 11 March 2026.

BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Site / Objective	Action	Outcome	Target (Years)
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing
Cemetery / churchyard	Leave designated areas unmown.	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources. 2026-02-24 update: The existing areas which limited mowing will remain and these areas have been included in the contract for the new contractor responsible for the mowing regime.	Ongoing
	Consider biodiversity in the design of the garden of remembrance project.	Increased cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. 2026-02-24 update: Outline designs have been viewed with areas suitable for enriched biodiversity.	Ongoing
Recreation grounds	Define mowing heights and schedules which consider biodiversity principles but maintain the areas for their required purpose.	Protecting ground cover plants and small insects which provide a food source for other animals. 2026-02-24 update: These requirements have remained within the tender documents for the revised grounds maintenance agreement. A new contractor has been appointed.	Ongoing
	Minimise use of pesticides, be selective in terms of target species, and apply in accordance with regulations.	Minimising harmful effects to the environment and non-target species. 2026-02-24 update: These requirements have remained within the tender documents for the revised grounds maintenance agreement. A new contractor has been appointed.	Ongoing

	Leave designated areas unmown.	Protecting and enhancing natural habitats. Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees. 2026-02-24 update: Designated areas are left unmown or are subject to reduced mowing – these areas have been included within the tender documents for the revised grounds maintenance agreement. A new contractor has been appointed.	Ongoing
	Sympathetically maintain hedging by cutting after berries have dropped in winter.	Providing food sources and cover for birds.	Ongoing
Meadow	Adopt a management plan for grassland restoration and manage the land accordingly.	Increasing biodiversity by managing the meadow for native wildflowers and grass species 2026-02-24 update: The meadow is now enrolled in the 30-year Cotswolds National Landscape scheme, Glorious Cotswold Grasslands. The scheme aim is to restore, conserve and connect wildflower-rich grassland habitat across the Cotswolds to support biodiversity, especially pollinators, birds and other wildlife characteristic of unimproved grassland.	May 2024 onwards
Open spaces generally	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.	Protecting habitats, people, and domestic animals 2026-02-24 update: Regular inspections are carried out of key open spaces and any litter problems are identified and resolved. Any issues are communicated to residents via social media channels. The council continues to provide dog waste bins and has periodic reminders to residents to pick-up after the dogs.	Ongoing

	Support litter picking by residents, including a Spring litter pick across town, by providing equipment and guidance.	Protecting habitats by removing litter from the environment. 2026-02-24 update: No action. Spring litter pick did not occur in 2025. The aim is to revive this for future years.	Ongoing
Road verges	Work with the county council on verge management	Increased wildflower coverage, supporting insect populations. 2026-02-24 update: Specific verges are now part of a wildflower pilot scheme. Results are mixed but the decision was taken in 2025 to sow locally sourced wildflower seeds – this occurred in late 2025. One area has been removed from the trial due to residents’ feedback but replaced with another area.	Ongoing
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan	Protecting/enhancing habitats 2026-02-24 update: Whilst the Council is only a consulted party with no direct responsibility for planning, it actively considers biodiversity in all responses to planning matters.	Ongoing
	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries	Extending habitats. 2026-02-24 update: No action.	Ongoing
	Connect and diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Extending habitats. 2026-02-24 update: No action.	Ongoing
	Discourage floodlighting.	Protecting nocturnal animals. 2026-02-24 update: No action.	Ongoing

Increase community awareness of biodiversity	Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity in the parish.	Engagement/ownership of biodiversity 2026-02-24 update: No action	2025
	Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife.	Maintaining and extending habitats 2026-02-24 update: No action	2025
	Create a page on the parish council website for photographs / information / links	Promoting awareness of biodiversity. 2026-02-24 update: The policy and associated news articles support biodiversity feature on the council's website.	June 2024
Support Community Projects	Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.	Extending habitats. 2026-02-24 update: No action.	Ongoing
	Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.	Promote biodiversity 2026-02-24 update: No action.	2025
	Make specific provision for the community grant scheme to enhance biodiversity within the parish.	Enhancing biodiversity through community action. 2026-02-24 update: The community Grants scheme has been amended to specifically include biodiversity as supporting factor for grant awards.	March 2024