Berryfields Parish Council

Biodiversity Policy

Version 1.0 – October 2026

1. Background

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, Berryfields Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council), which has functions exercisable in relation to England, must from time to time consider what action it can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

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

2. Definition

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.

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

3. Aims and Objectives

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area.

The Full Council and any committees of the Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact, and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, the 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 parish 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 Development Planning

The Council will:

- When commenting on planning applications, and generally influencing planning decisions, support site and building design that benefits biodiversity including through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.

- Support the protection of sensitive habitats from development and consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications, including any potential for adding unwanted further nutrients to waterways.
- Check that development proposals include proper drainage management off soils and hard surfaces to reduce the risk of local flooding which can impact wildlife and wildlife habitats.
- Consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- Include policies in support of biodiversity within any neighbourhood plan or similar planning documents developed by the Council, where applicable.

4.2 Land and Property Management

The Council recognises that land and green spaces within Berryfields are owned or managed by a range of organisations, including the Parish Council, Buckinghamshire Council, developers and private management companies. The following actions relate to land and property owned or managed by the Council.

The Council will:

- Consider carrying out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- Consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regard to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work, paying attention to the government's regulations for plant protection products.
- Take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- Source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use.
- Consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

Any changes to land management arrangements will take account of public safety, visibility, accessibility, recreational use, existing contractual commitments and available resources. Proposals requiring additional expenditure or changes to existing contracts will be subject to the Council's normal approval procedures.

4.3 Local Community

The Council will:

- Raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- Engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- Where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including, for example, tree planting, wildflower meadows and bird box making.

4.4 Partners

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

It will review any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies in respect of local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

Where appropriate, the Council will also work with Buckinghamshire Council, developers, management companies and other relevant organisations to encourage biodiversity improvements on land outside the Council's ownership or management.

5. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually at the Council's Annual Meeting, or sooner should legislation dictate.

The Council will maintain a Biodiversity Action Plan (Appendix A) to identify potential actions, record agreed priorities and monitor progress. The Action Plan will be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate.

The Council will consider publishing a summary of how the policy has been implemented, with reference to any biodiversity assessments undertaken, to demonstrate progress.

The Council will reconsider the actions it can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity at least every five years, in accordance with its statutory duty.

Appendix A – Biodiversity Action Plan

Adapted from the SLCC Model Biodiversity Policy (October 2025). Actions are for consideration by Berryfields Parish Council and will be confirmed, prioritised and allocated timescales as appropriate.

Site / Objective	Action	Outcome	Target (years)	Reporting / Publicity
Whole parish	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for biodiversity initiatives.	Ongoing	Parish magazine, social media, website.
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect and diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species.	Ongoing	Mapping
Allotments	Consider additional planting. Maintain and renew bird boxes as required. Adopt a plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site for allotment use. Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates, without compromising the allotment policy or tenancy agreements.	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources. Increased cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees.		
Recreation grounds / play parks	Sympathetically maintain hedging. Leave some suitable areas unmown, where appropriate. Only use environment-friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.	Food sources and cover for wildlife. Encourage insects. Sustain and enhance natural habitats.		
Common / other open spaces	Consider adopting a management plan. Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs. Work with Buckinghamshire Council and other responsible landowners on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety. Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after, making it clear what is expected e.g. peat free compost and no chemicals.	Sustain and enhance natural habitats. Protecting habitats. Protecting/enhancing habitats. Regular attention.		

The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered with regard to biodiversity. Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries.	Protecting/enhancing habitats. Extending habitats.	Ongoing	
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish. Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the parish magazine. Create a page on the parish council website for photographs/information/links. Encourage local farmers to contribute. Provide seed bombs/bulbs etc. for residents' use. Discourage floodlighting.	Engagement/ownership of biodiversity. Promote biodiversity. Extending habitats. Protect nocturnal animals.	Ongoing	Parish consultation
Support Community Projects	Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas. Work in partnership with the school to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them. Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.	Extending habitats. Promote biodiversity.		

Document History

Version	Date Approved	Changes/Action	Approved By	Minute Ref
1.0		New policy based on the SLCC Model Biodiversity Policy (October 2025), adapted to reflect Berryfields Parish Council's local circumstances.		