

# WEELEY PARISH COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY POLICY

## 1. Introduction and Statutory Duty

In accordance with the duty imposed by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, [Name of Parish] Council will, in exercising all its functions, have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

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

- **Decision Making:** Consider sustainability and biodiversity impacts in all Council decisions and planning responses.
- **Land Management:** Manage Council-owned land using nature-positive practices.
- **Community Leadership:** Support and advise residents and local organisations in biodiversity efforts.

## 3. Operational Policies

### 3.1 Planning and Development

The Council is a statutory consultee and will:

- Comment on planning applications to support designs that integrate existing habitats or provide new ones, such as bird boxes, bee bricks, or hedgehog highways.
- Encourage **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** of at least 10% on all relevant local developments.
- Seek to protect sensitive local habitats, such as streams, hedgerows, and veteran trees, from development.

### 3.2 Land and Property Management

For all land under Council control (e.g., recreation grounds, cemeteries, allotments), the Council will:

- **Mowing Regimes:** Adopt beneficial practices such as leaving some areas unmown until bulb leaves die back or participating in schemes like "No Mow May".
- **Chemical Use:** Minimise or eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides in favour of environmentally friendly alternatives.

**Adopted on:** 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026

**Next Review Date:** April 2031

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- **Sustainable Procurement:** Source peat-free compost and sustainable materials for all Council projects.
- **Habitat Creation:** Where feasible, plant native trees, hedgerows, and wildflower meadows.

### 3.3 Community Engagement

The Council will act as a facilitator for local nature recovery by:

- Raising awareness through the parish magazine, website, and social media.
- Organising or supporting community events like litter picks, "BioBlitz" surveys, or tree-planting days.
- Providing practical support, such as distributing seed bombs or bird box kits to residents.

### 4. Monitoring and Review

- **Review:** This policy will be reviewed at least every **five years** (or sooner if legislation changes).
- **Annual Reporting:** A summary of biodiversity improvements and policy implementation will be included in the Council's Annual Report.

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**Next Review Date:** April 2031