

# Biodiversity Policy

## Introduction

In line with the statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021, Frampton Cotterell Parish Council will actively consider the impact of its decisions on biodiversity. The council will implement and periodically review this policy to ensure that biodiversity is considered in all relevant actions, plans, and projects. The Parish Council will engage in a biodiversity audit of its landholdings and community areas, ensuring that biodiversity is integrated into long-term planning decisions.

**Related policies:** [Bird nest and bat roost policy](#), [Pesticide policy](#), and [Environment policy](#).

## 1. Habitat Protection and Enhancement

**1.1 Habitat Management:** The Parish Council shall protect and enhance natural habitats within Frampton Cotterell, supporting biodiversity through responsible land management practices. Conservation management plans shall be developed and updated regularly for parish council-owned green spaces to ensure the preservation of key habitats. These plans shall be created by the Community Nature Officer and the Climate and Nature Officer.

**1.2 Native Planting:** Native plant species will be prioritized in all landscaping and planting schemes on public land to support local wildlife. This will include the creation of wildlife corridors, particularly through hedgerows, wildflower meadows, and tree planting initiatives.

**1.3 Invasive Species Control:** The council shall work to prevent the spread of invasive species that negatively impact local biodiversity. Where necessary, action plans will be developed to manage and control such species on council-owned land in line with the pesticide policy.

**1.4 Green Spaces Protection:** Parish Council owned green spaces will be protected from development that may cause significant harm to biodiversity. Habitat restoration and enhancement measures will be included in all planning applications/land changes related to green spaces. All works shall be in line with the bird nesting and bat roost policy.

**1.5 Community Nature Reserves:** as part of the Frampton Cotterell Nature Group Community Nature Reserves Project, Parish Council Officers shall offer guidance on habitat management and enhancement to residents who sign up to the project.

## 2. Sustainable Land Management

**2.1 Sustainable Practices:** The Parish Council will promote sustainable land management techniques, including reduced pesticide use and organic land care

practices. The council is committed to working toward being pesticide-free in all its operations and on its land, following the Pesticide Policy.

**2.2 Conservation of Wildlife Corridors:** Priority will be given to maintaining and enhancing wildlife corridors that link key habitats across the parish. Efforts will be made to improve connectivity between fragmented habitats through partnerships with local landowners and volunteers.

**2.3 Water Management and Wetlands:** The council will support local efforts to protect the River Frome and local wetlands/ponds from pollution and habitat destruction. Sustainable water management practices will be implemented to conserve and improve aquatic habitats, including the creation of ponds and wetland areas where appropriate. Miniature pond creation will be encouraged to local residents and landowners.

**Tree Arisings:** Arisings from tree work should be left on site where safe to do so. Log piles should be created or arisings processed into mulch. Mulch can then be used around the parish for tree and hedge planting or donated to the allotments.

**Ash Dieback:** In response to the ash dieback disease, the Council will:

- ✓ Conduct tree health and safety surveys with arborist every 3 years to monitor ash tree health.
- ✓ Tree surgeon to monitor diseased trees more frequently as per the health and safety survey.
- ✓ Assess each tree individually to determine if it poses a risk to public safety.
- ✓ Remove ash trees only when they are deemed hazardous.
- ✓ Where no immediate risk is present, retain ash trees to allow natural selection for disease-resistant individuals.

This approach aligns with best practices, as retaining trees can support the development of tolerant strains and contribute to biodiversity.

### 3. Planning and Decision Making

**3.1 Environmental Considerations in Planning:** All planning applications and developments shall be assessed for their impact on local biodiversity. For parish council development that requires planning, biodiversity net gain calculations shall be undertaken in line with planning requirements. The council will prioritize the preservation and enhancement of local wildlife habitats in any new developments (refer to section 10.1 of the Environment Policy on Environmental Considerations).

**3.2 Biodiversity Checklist for Planning Applications:** The Parish Council will use a checklist to evaluate planning applications and ensure that recommendations for biodiversity enhancements are included where applicable and suitable (not as a copy paste document for all applications). This checklist will guide the planning committee in

recommending biodiversity features in new developments and improvements where applicable:

- ✓ **Hedgehog Highways:** Gaps in fences or hedges for hedgehog passage.
- ✓ **Swift Bricks:** Incorporation of universal Swift bricks into buildings to support endangered Swift population.
- ✓ **Log Piles and Dead Wood:** Provision of log piles for invertebrates, small mammals, and fungi.
- ✓ **Native Planting:** Use of native plant species in landscaping to support local pollinators.
- ✓ **Nest Boxes:** Installation of bird and bat boxes to support local species.
- ✓ **Ponds or Water Features:** Creation of ponds or water features to provide habitat for amphibians and other wildlife.
- ✓ **Green Roofs or Walls:** Installation of green roofs or walls to increase biodiversity and reduce urban heat.
- ✓ **Wildlife Corridors:** Design of developments with connected green spaces to allow wildlife movement.
- ✓ **Pollinator-Friendly Landscaping:** Consideration of pollinator-friendly plants and trees in landscaping.
- ✓ **Dark corridors:** Artificial lighting should avoid impacting 'dark corridors' such as hedgerows, trees and buildings used by feeding and roosting bats.

**3.3 Climate & Nature Committee:** The parish council shall continue to run Climate & Nature Committees to review biodiversity recovery plans in the parish. The committee shall identify collaborative opportunities to work with other local authorities to support biodiversity initiatives.

**3.4 Local Climate & Nature Action Plan:** The Council shall maintain and create 3-year Local Climate and Nature Action Plans in line with South Glos Councils guidelines. Projects, including biodiversity projects, shall be reviewed, and monitored at each Climate and Nature Committee.

## 4. Biodiversity Action Plans and Champion Species

**5.1 Champion Species:** In line with the Local Climate and Nature Action Plan, the Parish Council has identified several champion species that are emblematic of local biodiversity and whose conservation will be prioritised. Action plans will be developed for each champion species to ensure that their habitats are preserved, and their populations are supported. These species will be central to the council's biodiversity efforts.

**5.2 Biodiversity Action Plans:** The council will develop and implement specific action plans for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the parish. These will be designed to address the needs of local species, protect habitats, and reduce threats to biodiversity. Plans will be developed and reviewed annually by the Climate & Nature Committee.

## 6. Community Engagement

**6.1 Public Awareness Campaigns:** The Parish Council will continue to promote biodiversity awareness through public education initiatives, working closely with local schools, community groups, and environmental organizations (see section 6.3 of the Environment Policy on Community Engagement).

**6.2 Volunteer Involvement:** The council shall continue to be committed to running regular volunteer sessions for wildlife conservation, including habitat restoration, species monitoring, and the creation of wildlife-friendly spaces. These volunteer sessions will be supported by the council's officers and open to all members of the community.

**6.3 Partnerships and Collaboration:** The council will work closely with local environmental organisations, wildlife trusts, and neighbouring councils to share knowledge, resources, and best practices for protecting biodiversity across the region (refer to section 12.3 of the Environment Policy on Partnerships). The Council shall engage with organisations such as local churches to support in the creation of biodiversity recovery and management plans as part of the Community Nature Reserve Project.

**6.4 Biodiversity Events:** The Parish Council shall continue to organise biodiversity related events, such as the annual BioBlitz, to help record local wildlife and engage the community.

## 7. Biodiversity Monitoring and Reporting

**7.1 Monitoring Biodiversity:** The Parish Council will establish a monitoring system to regularly assess the status of biodiversity within the parish. This will include tracking species populations, habitat conditions, and the success of biodiversity initiatives.

**7.2 Annual Reporting:** The council will report on biodiversity initiatives and progress annually following biodiversity audit, ensuring transparency and accountability. Key biodiversity metrics, such as wildlife surveys and habitat restoration outcomes, will be included in the annual environmental report (see section 10.1 of the Environment Policy on Annual Reporting).

**7.3 Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Feedback from residents, biodiversity experts, and partners will be solicited to ensure continuous improvement of the

biodiversity policy and action plans. The council will review this policy annually to adapt to changing environmental conditions and ensure its relevance.

## 8. Resources and Budget

**8.1 Funding for Biodiversity Projects:** The Parish Council will allocate a dedicated budget and earmarked reserves for biodiversity-related projects, ensuring the financial resources are available for the conservation and enhancement of local wildlife and habitats. Where budget or EMR is not available, external grant funding shall be sought to ensure the continuation of biodiversity projects.

**8.2 Sustainable Procurement:** The council will prioritize the use of sustainably sourced products and services in biodiversity projects, in line with section 11 of the Environment Policy on Responsible and Sustainable Procurement.