

Document Control

Adopted date: September 2026

Next review date: September 2027

CAISTOR ST EDMUND & BIXLEY PARISH 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, as strengthened by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Caistor St Edmund & Bixley Parish Council (hereafter “we”) will in exercising all its functions have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity. This duty also means that we can spend funds for this purpose.

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. It is the building block of our ‘ecosystems’. These 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 contributes to people's health, wellbeing, recreation and sense of place.

Aims and Objectives

The object of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of the parish.

We will consider biodiversity, sustainability, climate resilience and environmental impact when making decisions and when developing policies, projects and strategies.

In particular, we will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- Consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- Manage our land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- Support local businesses & council operations in the adoption of low impact practices.
- Support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

- Endeavour to maintain and promote a dark sky environment

Actions

Planning applications

- When commenting on planning applications, we will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- We will 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.
- We will consider whether proposed developments seek to achieve appropriate Biodiversity Net Gain and protect existing habitats wherever possible.
- Agreed in principle to adopt the CPRE Norfolk standard light pollution clause, as follows.
 “National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Clause 191c and Norfolk County Council’s Environmental Lighting Zones Policy both recognise the importance of preserving dark landscapes and dark skies. In order to minimise light pollution, we recommend that, if this application is permitted, any outdoor lights associated with the proposed development should be:
 1) Fully shielded (enclosed in full cut-off flat glass fitments)
 2) Directed downwards (mounted horizontally to the ground and not tilted upwards)
 3) Switched on only when needed (no dusk to dawn lamps)
 4) White light low-energy lamps (preferably LED’s*) and not orange or pink sodium sources.”

Land and property management

- We will consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of our open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regard to the cutting and removal of vegetation, the application of chemicals and the timing of maintenance work.
- Special care will be taken in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not unduly harm the natural environment.
- We will seek opportunities to create and connect wildlife habitats on land owned or managed by the Council.

Local community

- We will raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website, social media accounts and articles in local magazines.
- We will encourage residents to manage gardens and green spaces in ways that benefit wildlife and will promote national initiatives such as No Mow May, Hedgehog Awareness Week and local tree planting schemes where appropriate.
- We will 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, we will involve the community in local biodiversity projects, including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

Partners

- We will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the parish.
- We 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.
- We will work with neighbouring parish councils, landowners, Norfolk County Council, South Norfolk Council, local environmental organisations and volunteer groups where opportunities arise.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, together with a brief summary of how the policy has been implemented in the previous twelve months.

ACTION PLAN

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	DESIRED OUTCOME	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole Parish Protect and enhance biodiversity	Raise awareness through the Council website and meetings Encourage wildlife-friendly planting by residents, businesses and landowners. Promote pollinator-friendly gardens and habitat connectivity across the parish.	Increased community awareness and participation. Improved and better-connected habitats supporting a wider range of wildlife species.	Website, and meetings.
Whole council area Protect and support biodiversity	Raise local awareness of biodiversity Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity	Gain local support for action Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Website and at annual parish council meeting
The Raking Pit Maintain the site's peaceful character whilst enhancing biodiversity.	Maintain native trees, hedgerows and spring bulbs. Review opportunities for additional native planting. Maintain bird boxes and bug hotels. Increase pollinator-friendly planting where appropriate. Monitor habitat condition annually. To continue to sensitively manage the area, without changing its character. To maintain the native trees, hedges and bulbs which have been planted and	Improved habitats for birds, insects and other wildlife whilst preserving the site's tranquil character and remembrance function. Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Website, and meetings. Website, social media and at annual parish council meeting

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	DESIRED OUTCOME	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
	~~regularly review future planting requirements.~~ ~~To maintain and renew bird boxes as required.~~ ~~To maintain and renew bug hotel as required.~~ ~~Adopt a plan to support wildlife & diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience quiet and calm remembrance~~	~~Offering _____ increase protection and encouraging wildlife.~~ ~~Encouraging insects/bugs.~~ ~~Encouraging insects particularly butterflies & bees~~	
Built Environment Improve habitat connectivity and reduce disturbance to wildlife. The built landscape	Encourage hedgehog highways and permeable garden boundaries. Promote swift bricks, bat boxes and bird nesting opportunities in appropriate developments. Discourage unnecessary external and flood lighting. Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries Discourage external lighting where not needed for security purposes	Better movement of wildlife through the parish. Improved nesting opportunities. Protection of nocturnal wildlife and dark skies. Extending habitats Protecting nocturnal habitat	Website and planning consultation responses where appropriate. Website and social media accounts

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Community Awareness Increase understanding and involvement in biodiversity	Maintain biodiversity information on the Council website. Share seasonal wildlife advice and local conservation initiatives. Encourage farmers, landowners and residents to support biodiversity projects.	Greater public awareness and community ownership of biodiversity. Increased participation in local environmental initiatives.	Website
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	~~Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife~~ ~~Create a page on the parish council website for photographs / information / links~~ ~~Encourage local farmers and landowners to contribute~~ ~~Discourage floodlighting~~	~~Engagement/ownership of biodiversity~~ ~~Promote biodiversity~~ ~~Promote biodiversity~~ ~~Protect nocturnal habitat~~	Website and social media accounts
Litter picking Improve habitat quality across the parish.	Continue organised parish litter-picking events and encourage volunteer participation. Undertake litter picking of parish	Cleaner habitats for wildlife, safer public spaces and increased community engagement. Improved habitat condition for wildlife. Safer public open space. Improved resilience of nature. Gain local support for action.	Standing agenda item at Council meetings, website Standing item on meeting agendas
Community Projects Support local biodiversity initiatives.	Support tree, hedge and wildflower planting where appropriate. Work with schools, community groups and	Extended and improved habitats. Greater community participation and environmental stewardship.	Website

Support community projects	residents on biodiversity projects. Promote volunteering opportunities. Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations and residents.	Extending habitats Promote biodiversity	Website and social media accounts
Hedgehog Recovery Support declining native species. Hedgehog recovery programme	Promote Hedgehog Highways and responsible wildlife care through the Council website. Share practical guidance for residents on creating hedgehog-friendly gardens. Share the link to Hedgehog Highways online via website alongside key information for their treatment and care	Increased habitat connectivity and improved opportunities for hedgehog populations to recover. Increased biodiversity. Help prevents a species from becoming extinct.	Website Website and social media accounts

Policy reviewed and re-adopted with amendments at Parish Council meeting on 9th July 2025.