

# Wickford Town Council

## **Biodiversity Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

Wickford Town Council (the Council) should consider biodiversity in our policies and decision-making as a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity stemming from the Environment Act 2021.

The Council has a duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to exercise its functions have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

### **2. Definition**

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020) biodiversity of 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 provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

The object of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of the Council. 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
- The practising and promoting of recycling
- The preservation of trees and wildlife
- Support local businesses and Council operations in the adoption of low impact practices
- Support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity

### **4. Actions**

#### Planning

- The Council, when commenting on planning applications, will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats
- It 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
- It will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain
- It will include policies in support of biodiversity within the Neighbourhood Plan

#### Local Community

- The Council will raise public awareness of biodiversity issues including through its website, social media and publications
- The Council will engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference

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- It will, where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects for example – tree and bulb planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making

## Partners

- The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote, enhance biodiversity within the areas of Wickford
- It will review any local nature recovery strategies, special conservation strategies or protected site strategies in respect of local sites and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations

This policy is to be reviewed bi-annually.

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