

STERT BIODIVERSITY POLICY

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, Stert Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council) which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority 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.

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.

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 open spaces 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.

ACTIONS

Planning applications

The Council will:

- when commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits

biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new

habitats.

- 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.
- consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.

Open space management

The Council will:

- consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regarding 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

Local community

The Council will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and notifications.
- 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, birdbox making.

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.

MONITORING

This policy was adopted on 29th September 1926 at the meeting of Stert parish Council (Minute reference 29/09/26) and will be reviewed periodically or sooner should legislation dictate and recorded in minutes each year at the Annual Meeting.

ACTION PLAN

SITE/ OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET DATE	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity by posting a biodiversity policy.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Website

Common / other open spaces	Adopt a management plan. Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs. Verge management, favouring biodiversity (e.g. mow verges in June) 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. Check hedges and trees for nesting birds before cutting. Hedge cutting not recommended between 1st Feb and 31st August as per Hedgerow Act 2024)	Sustain and enhance natural habitats. Protecting habitats Protecting/enhancing habitats Regular attention.	Ongoing	Website / conversations with footpath group
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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.	Engagement/ ownership of biodiversity Promote biodiversity.	Ongoing	Website
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of this Biodiversity Policy	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	