



# Horley Town Council

## Biodiversity Policy

### 1. Introduction:

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, Horley Town Council will in exercising all its functions give due regard to conserving biodiversity. This duty also means that local councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

### 2. Definition:

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on earth. It includes all species of animals and plants ie. 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 is also 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.

### 3. Aims and Objectives:

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

- To consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- To manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- To encourage local businesses, organisations and community groups in the implementation of low impact practices and in council operations, to safeguard biodiversity.
- To encourage residents to enhance and promote biodiversity.

### **3.1 Planning Applications:**

When commenting on planning applications, the council will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.

The council 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.

The council will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain and to meet the recommended threshold.

### **3.2 Land and Property Management:**

The council will carry out a routine biodiversity audit of its landholdings in consultation with its grounds maintenance contractors.

The council will consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include implementing beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work.

Extra care will be taken to ensure that the work carried out on open spaces meets acceptable standards and does not harm the natural environment.

Additionally, the council will consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

### **3.3 Local community:**

The council will raise public awareness on biodiversity issues to make a difference, including through its website and newsletters.

The council will where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects at its parks and open spaces, to include initiatives such as tree planting and wildflower planting.

### **3.4 Action Plan:**

The council will seek to work collaboratively with other local authorities and organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity locally. In addition to the Action Plan included in this policy, the objectives set by the council will be actively progressed and kept monitored.

## APPENDIX A – SITE ACTION PLAN

Site/Objective	Considerations	Outcomes	Target (Years)
<b>All Areas</b>	Raise local awareness on biodiversity aims and objectives	Gains local support for action	Ongoing
	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity	Connects and diversifies habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing
<b>Allotments</b>	<p>Consider additional planting</p> <p>Ensure wildlife habitats and biodiversity aim are actively supported whilst maintaining the sites in a way which enables its use for growing plants, flowers, vegetables, crops etc</p> <p>Encourage allotment holders to always embrace biodiversity and recognise their positive contribution.</p> <p>Encourage the use of organic treatments rather than chemicals and pesticides.</p> <p>Leave areas of leaf debris/vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates</p>	<p>Increases diversity of habitats and food sources</p> <p>Increases cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals</p> <p>Encourages insects particularly butterflies and bees</p>	Ongoing
<b>Horley Recreation Ground and other parks/ open spaces under the council's control</b>	Sympathetically maintain hedging where appropriate	Promotes food sources and	Ongoing
	<p>Leave some areas unmown where practicable.</p> <p>Only use environmentally friendly pesticides (if necessary) and only in ideal weather conditions</p> <p>Review and implement Management Plans where appropriate</p> <p>Encourages residents and</p>	<p>Encourages insects</p> <p>Sustains and enhances natural habitats</p> <p>Sustains, protects and enhances natural habitats</p>	Ongoing

	<p>visitors to remove litter (including dog waste)</p> <p>Supports the principal authorities on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting areas requiring cutting for highway safety</p> <p>Encourages involvement by residents and visitors in maintaining open space areas, making clear within set guidelines.</p>		
<b>The Built Landscape</b>	<p>Ensures planning consultations are considered in line with best practice to promote biodiversity</p> <p>Encourages biodiverse approaches to protect small roaming animals on highways or in areas with permeable boundaries</p>	Protects and enhances habitats	Ongoing
<b>Increasing Community Awareness</b>	<p>Informs residents about the importance of biodiversity, including the importance of gardens and the outdoors as habitats for wildlife</p>	<p>Promotes biodiversity/extended habitats</p> <p>Protects nocturnal animals</p>	Ongoing
<b>Supporting Community Projects</b>	<p>Encourages hedge/tree planting in appropriate areas</p> <p>Supports workings in partnership with schools and community groups to develop environmental awareness</p> <p>Encourages voluntary group involvement in areas of specific interest general upkeep of community areas and open spaces.</p>	Extends habitats, promotes biodiversity, awareness and involvement	Ongoing

**THIS BIODIVERSITY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN WAS APPROVED AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING  
ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2027**