

# Biodiversity Policy

## Dunstall Parish Council

### 1. Background

Under the **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006**, public authorities in England, including Parish Councils, have a duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their functions.

This duty was strengthened by the **Environment Act 2021**, which now requires public authorities to consider what actions they can take to **conserve and enhance biodiversity** in England.

As a result, **Dunstall Parish Council (DBPC)** must:

- Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on this consideration
- Act to deliver those policies and achieve the agreed objectives

Although town and parish councils are not required to publish a report on their biodiversity actions, Government guidance requires all public authorities to:

- Consider what action to take for biodiversity
- Agree relevant policies and objectives
- Review selected actions at least every five years, or more frequently if desired

### 2. Definition of Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes:

- All species of animals and plants
- The natural systems that support them

Biodiversity is essential because it underpins the benefits that humans gain from the natural environment. It contributes to:

- Economic prosperity
- Human health and well-being
- Quality of life and environmental resilience

Biodiversity also has **intrinsic value**, independent of its benefits to people. It forms the foundation of ecosystems that provide essential services such as:

- Food, fresh water, and clean air
- Climate regulation
- Flood and disaster protection
- Water purification
- Pollination of crops

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

The aim of this policy is to **conserve and enhance biodiversity** within the parish.

Dunstall Parish Council will consider **sustainability, environmental impact, and biodiversity** when making decisions and will develop and implement relevant policies and strategies as required.

In particular, DBPC will seek to improve biodiversity by:

- Considering the potential impact on biodiversity when reviewing planning applications
- Managing council-owned land and property using environmentally friendly practices
- Supporting local businesses and council operations in adopting low-impact or biodiversity-positive practices
- Supporting residents and local organisations in activities that enhance and promote biodiversity

### **4. Actions**

#### **4.1 Planning Applications**

When commenting on planning applications, Dunstall Parish Council will:

- Support site and building designs that benefit biodiversity through:
  - Conservation and integration of existing habitats
  - Provision of new habitats where appropriate
- Support the protection of sensitive habitats from development
- Consider whether development proposals may result in the loss of important wildlife habitats

- Consider what each proposed development can contribute in terms of **biodiversity net gain**

## **4.2 Land and Property Management**

Dunstall Parish Council will:

- Carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings
- Consider conservation and promotion of local biodiversity when managing open spaces, including:
  - Cutting and removal of vegetation
  - Application of chemicals
  - Timing of maintenance works
- Take special care when specifying grounds maintenance contracts to ensure:
  - Acceptable standards are achieved
  - No unnecessary harm is caused to the natural environment
- Source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for council use
- Consider biodiversity issues and opportunities when managing council buildings

## **4.3 Local Community**

Dunstall Parish Council will:

- Raise public awareness of biodiversity issues through:
  - The council website
- Where feasible, encourage the community to take part in biodiversity projects on, such as:
  - Tree planting
  - Creation of “no-cut” areas

## **5. Partnership Working**

The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to **protect, promote, and enhance biodiversity** within the parish.

## Appendix 1 – Biodiversity Action Plan

Site / Objective	Action	Outcome	Target (Years)
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity	Connected and diversified habitats that meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing
The built landscape	Assess planning applications to ensure no net loss of natural habitat. Protect significant trees and hedges. Encourage hedgehog and small-animal highways using permeable boundaries	Protection and enhancement of habitats	Ongoing
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	Ask residents for their views on actions to conserve biodiversity within the parish	Increased engagement and community ownership	Ongoing
Community involvement	Support volunteer gardening activities or clubs to manage and protect planting areas	Increased engagement and community ownership	Ongoing