

## BIODIVERSITY POLICY

### Background

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, public authorities in England, including Parish Councils, have a duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy and decision-making processes.

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

Accordingly, Hutton Parish Council will:

- Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Agree policies and objectives as appropriate;
- Take practical action where possible to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the Parish.

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth and includes all species of plants, animals, insects, fungi and microorganisms, together with the habitats and ecosystems that support them.

### The Local Area

Hutton Parish contains a mixture of residential areas, green spaces, hedgerows, trees, grassed areas, farmland and public open spaces which contribute to local biodiversity and wildlife habitats.

The Parish includes areas of ecological importance which provide habitats for birds, pollinators, insects and other wildlife.

### Parish Council Responsibilities

Hutton Parish Council owns, manages or has responsibility for a number of community assets and public spaces within the Parish.

These may include:

- Public open spaces
- Play areas
- Recreational land
- Verges and grassed areas
- Hedgerows and trees
- Community buildings and associated land

- Allotments or amenity land where applicable

The Council recognises that the management of these areas can contribute positively to biodiversity and environmental sustainability.

#### What Hutton Parish Council Will Do

Hutton Parish Council will, where practical and proportionate:

- Consider the impact on biodiversity when making decisions and when responding to planning applications;
- Protect and enhance natural habitats where opportunities arise;
- Reduce the use of pesticides, herbicides and chemicals on Council-owned land wherever reasonably practicable;
- Encourage environmentally sustainable land management practices;
- Consider opportunities for native planting and pollinator-friendly planting schemes;
- Retain and protect trees, hedgerows and green spaces where possible;
- Leave areas of longer grass or wildflower growth where appropriate and safe to do so;
- Avoid hedge cutting during the main bird nesting season wherever practicable;
- Consider biodiversity improvements when maintaining Council land or facilities;
- Encourage responsible management of community open spaces;
- Promote public awareness of biodiversity and environmental sustainability through the Council's website and communications where appropriate.

#### Land Management Principles

Where practical and appropriate, the Council will seek to:

- Leave standing or fallen dead wood where safe to do so as habitat for wildlife and invertebrates;
- Leave leaf litter and natural vegetation in suitable areas to support biodiversity;
- Remove invasive species where necessary and appropriate;
- Maintain trees and hedgerows responsibly;
- Balance biodiversity enhancement with public safety, accessibility and amenity use.

#### Planning and Development

When commenting on planning applications, Hutton Parish Council will consider:

- The protection of existing habitats;
- The retention of trees and hedgerows;
- Biodiversity net gain where appropriate;
- Sustainable drainage and green infrastructure;
- Environmental impacts on the Parish.

#### Working with the Community

The Council will seek to support and encourage local biodiversity initiatives through partnership working with:

- Residents

- Community groups
- Landowners
- Environmental organisations
- North Somerset Council and other relevant bodies

where opportunities arise.

#### Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective and reflects current legislation, guidance and local priorities.

The Council will consider biodiversity objectives as part of its ongoing decision-making and asset management responsibilities.

**This Biodiversity Policy was adopted by Hutton Parish Council on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026.**