

Biodiversity Policy

Reason for the policy – Statutory Duty

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

Government guidance published on 17th May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Town and parish councils, unlike other authorities, are not obliged to publish a report on their actions, but the Government guidance requires all public authorities to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024. They must agree their policies and objectives as soon as possible after this and may reconsider the selected actions within 5 years of completing their previous consideration, or more frequently if they choose.

To comply with the guidance, town and parish councils could as a minimum:

- Have biodiversity as an agenda item for a meeting before the end of 2023.
- Note what action in respect of biodiversity is already taking place locally.
- Agree what further steps to take at this stage.

Background

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England, including Parish Councils to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. This was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021 so public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This means a public authority must;

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver policies and achieve objectives.

The Local Area

Great Ayton is a rural village that lies within North Yorkshire Council, partially within a conservation area, and with a considerable number of natural environments, allotments, village greens, waterfall park, Captain James Cook Memorial garden, hedges, ditches, and the River Leven.

Parish Council responsibilities

The Parish Council owned land including areas maintained / rented by the Parish Council.

What the Parish Council will do

- Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made through the Parish Council, especially when commenting on planning applications.
- It will consider the reduction of the use of pesticides and herbicides used on Parish Council owned land
- It will follow advice and guidance from North Yorkshire Council on how best to manage and maintain open spaces.
- Review how it manages the land at owned and managed in the village but is not limited to.
 - o Leaving standing and fallen dead wood as a habitat for invertebrates where appropriate
 - o Leaving leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates where appropriate
 - o Look at Provide bug hotels and hedgehog houses to encourage biodiversity.
 - o Removing invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna as required
 - o Install bird boxes in Parish Council owned trees
 - o Carryout tree surveys approximately every five years to ensure the health and longevity of the Council owned trees

The Parish Council will look to promote biodiversity via the Parish Council website and Social Media.

Date adopted: 5th August 2025