

# **KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY POLICY**

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## **PREAMBLE**

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, **Kidderminster Town Council** will in exercising all its functions have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

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. It is 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. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The object of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity within land owned by Kidderminster Town Council.

All committees of Kidderminster Town Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, Kidderminster Town Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- Ask the Planning Authority to consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by relevant planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses & council operations in the adoption of low impact practices.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

## **ACTIONS**

### **Planning applications**

- The council, when commenting on relevant planning applications, will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- It will support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will ask the planning authority to consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.
- It will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain. This is a legal requirement, no need for KTC to do this.

### **Land and property management**

- The council will carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings, subject to funding being available.
- The council will encourage the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regards 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.
- Special care will be taken in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- The council will consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

### **Local community**

Subject to resources being available,

- The council will raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and other media.
- The council will engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- It will, where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

### **Partners**

- Kidderminster Town Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the town.
- Subject to resources being available, 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.

This policy will be reviewed each year together with a summary of how the policy has been implemented in the previous twelve months.