

Introduction – Statutory Duty

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

Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, 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.

Background

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. Denham Parish Council which has functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

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 the building block of our 'ecosystems' that in turn provides 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, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops.

Aims and Objectives

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the parish council's area.

The Full Council and any committees of the Parish will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

Denham Parish Council will aim to improve and encourage biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- Consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications
- Manage its land and property under our control using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- Support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact / nature positive practices.
- Encourage and support organisations within the Denham Parish area of their responsibilities with biodiversity.
- Support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

Actions

Planning applications

The parish council will;

- When commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- Support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.
- Consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- Include policies in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.

Land and Property Management

The parish council will;

- Consider the conservation and promotion of the local biodiversity with the management of its open spaces.
- Take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.

Local Community

The parish council will:

- Raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- Engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- Where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows etc.

Partners:

The parish council will work in partnership with other organisations, such as Colne Valley Regional Park to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the parish area.

It will review any local nature recovery, species conservation, or protected site areas in respect of local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategy recommendations. Denham Parish Council supports green corridors.

Local situation:

Denham is home to several threatened and protected species. These include: Bats, including Pipistrelle, Noctule, and Daubenton.

Hedgehogs

Slow worms

Shrews

Specific threats and problems in Denham:

Thames Water has caused significant pollution through sewage discharge from treatment works into the rivers and watercourses, such as the River Misbourne.

Planning is a major issue of concern in Denham with other large scale developments that have yet to be approved such as the Battery Storage Facility, Data Centre and Heathrow Third Runway.

HS2 has resulted in a significant amount of habitat destruction, and other significant planning infrastructure projects.

Light pollution affects Denham from local areas including Uxbridge, and the major road networks. Removal of trees exacerbates this. Our nightscape is no longer dark, and this has a serious negative impact on wildlife.

Pollution from salt and weedkillers used on the road network.

Pollution from fly tipping and littering.

Habitat destruction caused by wildfires.

The ever-increasing desire for domestic exterior lighting, much of which is highly polluting and affects neighbouring green space, not just that of the owner.

The fashion for removing front gardens, installing decking, paving etc.

Pressure from residents for verges to look “neat and tidy”.

Insufficient regard for wildlife and conditions to protect it when planning applications are agreed.

Derek Wilson – Executive Clerk

Adopted by Full Council 13 April 2026

Site/Objective	Action	Outcome	Target (Years)	Reporting / Publicity
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity	Gain local support for action	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity	Connect and diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	
Recreation ground	Sympathetically maintain hedging. Leave some areas unmown. Only use environment friendly pesticides where necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.	Food sources and cover. Encourage insects. Sustain and enhance natural habitats.	Ongoing	
Common / other open spaces	Adopt a management plan. Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs. Work with Bucks Council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but nothing which areas may need cutting for highway safety. Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after, making it clear what is expected e.g. Peat free compost and no chemicals	Sustain and enhance natural habitats. Protecting Habitats. Protect/enhancing habitats. Regular attention.	Ongoing	

Site/Objective	Action	Outcome	Target (Years)	Reporting / Publicity
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Protecting/enhancing habitats.	Ongoing	
	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries.	Extending habitats.	Ongoing	
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish.	Engagement/ownership of biodiversity.	Ongoing	
	Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the parish magazine.	Promote biodiversity.		
	Create a page on the parish council website for photographs/information/links.	Promote biodiversity.		
	Encourage local farmers to contribute.	Promote biodiversity.		
	Provide seed bombs/bulbs etc for residents' use.	Extending habitats.		
	Discourage flood lighting and light trespass.	Protect nocturnal animals.		

Site/Objective	Action	Outcome	Target (Years)	Reporting / Publicity
Support Community Projects	Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.	Extending habitat Promote biodiversity.	Ongoing	
	Work in partnership with the schools to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.	Promote biodiversity.		
	Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.	Promote biodiversity.		