



Melksham Town Council

Biodiversity Policy

Date Adopted: 24th November 2025

Date Due For Review: November 2027



BIODIVERSITY POLICY

1. Introduction

Melksham Town Council recognises the vital importance of biodiversity in supporting healthy environments, resilient communities and a sustainable future. This Biodiversity Policy outlines the Council's commitment to conserving, enhancing and celebrating biodiversity across all its assets, activities and services. Our goal is to ensure that natural habitats and species thrive within Melksham, benefiting both wildlife and people.

2. Legislative Framework

This policy is guided by key pieces of UK legislation and national strategies:

- Environment Act 2021 – Mandates public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 – Imposes a duty on public authorities to have regard for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – Protects native species and designated sites.
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Requires the planning system to contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- Other local and national guidance, including the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan and any relevant updates.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All land owned, managed, or influenced by the Town Council
- All council-led or supported projects, including planning, infrastructure, and community initiatives
- Partnerships with local organizations, developers, and residents

4. Policy Objectives

The Council will:

1. Protect and Enhance Local Habitats
 - Safeguard existing natural habitats, species, and ecological networks within council-managed land.
 - Identify and restore degraded habitats, particularly those of local or regional importance.
2. Integrate Biodiversity into Decision-Making
 - Embed biodiversity considerations into all relevant council strategies, policies, and planning decisions.
 - Require development proposals to avoid biodiversity loss and deliver measurable net gains.

3. Promote Nature-Based Solutions
 - Support the use of sustainable drainage systems, tree planting, rewilding, and pollinator-friendly landscaping.
 - Integrate green infrastructure into urban design to increase resilience to climate change.
4. Engage and Educate the Community
 - Encourage local residents, schools, and businesses to take part in biodiversity projects.
 - Promote awareness campaigns and citizen science initiatives to monitor local wildlife.
5. Lead by Example
 - Manage council-owned land, parks, and open spaces to maximise biodiversity.
 - Reduce pesticide and herbicide use and adopt wildlife-friendly maintenance practices.
6. Monitor and Report Progress
 - Establish measurable biodiversity indicators (e.g., species richness, habitat connectivity).
 - Publish an annual biodiversity progress report to the Council and the community.

5. Implementation

- Responsibility

The Town Clerk will oversee policy implementation, supported by councillors, managers, amenities team and volunteers.

- Partnerships

The Council will work with local wildlife groups, schools, regional authorities, and environmental NGOs to deliver joint biodiversity initiatives.

- Funding

Opportunities for external funding and grants will be pursued to support biodiversity projects.

- Reporting

Concerns or suggestions regarding biodiversity management can be submitted to the Council via established channels.