



GRENDON UNDERWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

All correspondence to the Parish Clerk on clerk@grendonunderwoodparishcouncil.gov.uk

Tel: 0778 993 8307 Web Site: <https://www.grendonunderwoodparishcouncil.gov.uk>

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

CP02.02

Authorised & Adopted: GRENDON UNDERWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

Authorisation & last review as shown in the Policy Review Record CD08A

CHANGE LOG	
v.1 May 2025	To comply with statute
v.2 May 2026	To stipulate mandated "considerations" & Agenda item.

I PURPOSE

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act), Section 40 imposes a statutory duty on all public authorities — including parish councils — to “have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”

In addition, the Environmental Act of 2021, Section 102 strengthens the NERC primary duty by requiring public bodies, explicitly including parish councils, in England & Wales, to

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Set policies and objectives
- Act to deliver them
- Reconsider actions at least every 5 years

Whilst no statute says “you must put biodiversity on every agenda.”, the Council accepts that the law requires councils to demonstrate that they have ‘considered’ their biodiversity duty.

In order to comply with this duty, Government guidance and sector advice (NALC, DEFRA, Rural Services Network) recommend:

- Making sure biodiversity is discussed at council meetings.
- Recording the consideration in the minutes. [see minute template at APPENDIX II]
- Updating policies and processes accordingly.

This Policy therefore requires Council to add biodiversity as a formal agenda item and to have in place a Biodiversity Policy to provide clear evidence of compliance.

In order to demonstrate compliance, the Agenda Item should include: [see agenda template at APPENDIX I]

- Review of current parish activities
- Identification of opportunities to conserve or enhance biodiversity
- Progress on previously agreed biodiversity actions
- Any new proposals from councillors, residents, or partner organisations

This Policy hereby formalises the Grendon Underwood Parish Council (The Council) approach to enhancing, conserving and developing biodiversity, throughout the parish, whenever and wherever such opportunities exist or arise.

The Policy provides the framework within which Council will effectively manage and conduct its administrative arrangements in relation to the requirements of the relevant legislation such as to ensure the timely and efficient compliance with its obligations and to deliver its duties in regard to the expectations of the residents of the Parish.

It also describes how the council will identify the viability and address any associated fiscal or operational risk, associated with the deployment of public monies when considering an action as defined by the policy.

Council has made every effort to ensure all relevant statutory requirements to which a council is subject are encompassed in this Policy but confirm that, in any event, those requirements apply whether or not they are incorporated herein.

This Policy has been drawn up within the context of the Parish Council’s Freedom of Information Policy and its Data Protection Policy and every effort has been made to ensure this Policy is consistent with council Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Health & Safety legislation and all other council policies, statutes and regulations where relevant.

NOTES:

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- 'Council' means Grendon Underwood Parish Council.
- Where the word 'Councillor' or 'Member' is used, unless the context suggests otherwise, the meaning is intended to include elected and co-opted councillors.
- A 'co-opted member' is a person who is not an elected member of the Council but who has been co-opted onto the Council, or a committee or sub-committee properly constituted by Council, by a majority of elected Councillors at a properly constituted meeting of Council and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of Council or that committee or sub-committee.
- A 'meeting' is a properly constituted meeting of the Council, any of its committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.
- Where gender specific wording is used, meaning is intended to be gender neutral.

II SCOPE

Responsibilities

- Full Council: overall responsibility for compliance.
- Clerk: ensuring agenda items, records, and policy are current.
- RFO – fiscal review of any proposals
- Councillors: identifying opportunities and supporting delivery

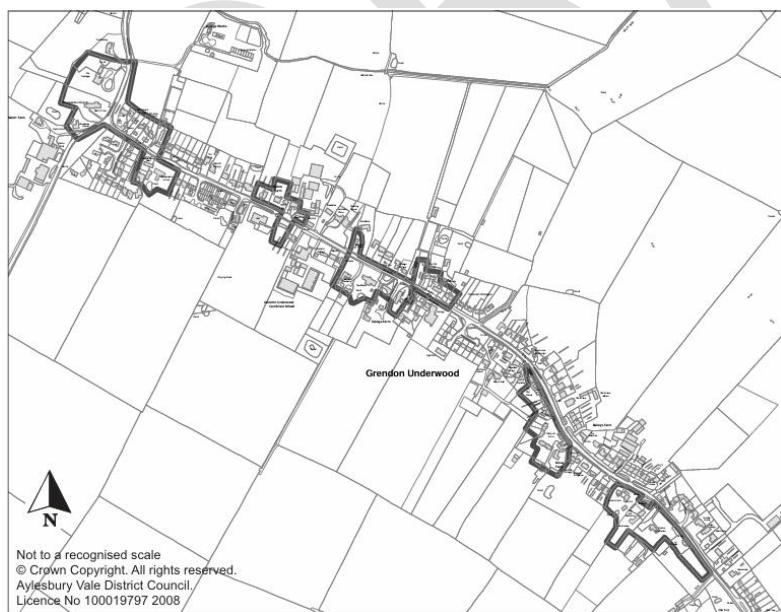
The Policy lays out how Councillors and council employees are expected to abide by all statutory requirements and applies to all relevant activities undertaken by the Parish Council, including:

- Management of discretionary support of third-party owned land, open spaces, verges, and assets
- Planning consultations and responses
- Procurement and contracts
- Community projects and grants
- Strategic decision-making and policy development

The Parish Council does not own any land or property suitable for direct council intervention in pursuit of the aims of this policy so is not relevant within the scope of the Policy.

Therefore, any action identified, sponsored or supported by council will be limited to project support, collaboration, management & publicity, subject to ownership and privacy considerations of the land or property on which the action is intended.

The plan below shows six Conservation Areas along Main Street all privately owned over which the council has no authority to act without the necessary owner collaborations.



In addition, council owns a small field adjacent to St Leonard's parish churchyard which includes a large natural pond. The field is reserved as a potential churchyard extension and is therefore not suitable for any long-term biodiversity consideration. The Parish Council leases two parcels of land within the Playing Fields from the owner, Saye and Sele Foundation. Both are designated as playground assets and are managed under the council Community Asset budget.

The council supplements the maintenance of a number of grass verges throughout the village, in voluntary support of a Buckinghamshire Council/ Highways responsibility and are managed under the council Environment budget. These are subject to strict Highways legislation and not suitable for biodiversity intervention.

The council owns two roadside planters which are maintained by subcontractors coming under the council Environment budget.

III POLICY

To conform to its statutory duties, Council will:

- Integrate biodiversity considerations into all relevant decisions and activities.

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- Support nature recovery through local partnerships and community engagement.
- Promote sustainable land management, including reduced pesticide use and wildlife-friendly practices.
- Monitor progress and review biodiversity actions at least every five years.
- Maintain biodiversity as a standing agenda item at least annually.
- Review grass-cutting regimes to encourage wildflower growth where appropriate.
- Collaborate with land owners to plant native species in council-supported areas.
- Encourage residents to participate in local nature initiatives.
- Planning Applications – council responses to County planning requests should assess development proposals against the NPPF requirement to deliver a min.10% biodiversity net gain and to refuse where council deems the provision proposed as inadequate or not credible.
 - Where developments have been approved subject to a biological net gain condition, the council will monitor and report any breach of the planning condition to Buckinghamshire Council and endeavour to support parishioners in raising concerns.
 - Consider site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- Council will support residents, local groups, and other non-profit making organisations wishing to propose projects designed to enhance and promote biodiversity projects and working in partnership with them when appropriate. Such support may be in the form of:
 - small grants being approved through the standard small grant application procedure.
 - Publicity on the council noticeboards, website or leafletting and social media.
- On receipt of a proposed project, seek advice from expertise and biodiversity groups, such as BBOWT, in the pursuit of the objectives of this policy.

IV REPORTING & REVIEW

The Council will:

- Record biodiversity considerations in meeting minutes
- Review this policy every five years or earlier if legislation changes

APPENDIX I – AGENDA TEMPLATE

262701 7 – Biodiversity Duty – to consider Council duties under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as strengthened by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021.

- 7.1 Review of current parish activities; Policies
- 7.2 Identification of opportunities to conserve or enhance biodiversity
- 7.3 Progress on previously agreed biodiversity actions
- 7.4 Any new proposals from councillors, residents, or partner organisations/ supporting documents; reports

APPENDIX II – MINUTE TEMPLATE

The Council considered its Biodiversity Duty in accordance with Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 and Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021.

Matters discussed included:

- Review of current biodiversity-related activities
- Opportunities to conserve or enhance biodiversity
- Progress on previously agreed actions
- New proposals raised

Resolved:

1. That the Council notes its statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
2. That the following actions be approved:
 - [Insert agreed actions]
3. That the Biodiversity Duty Policy be [adopted / reviewed / updated] as presented.

Action: Clerk to update the action log and implement decisions.