

PONTESBURY PARISH COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY AND LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

Government guidance published (17 May 2023) states that 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

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty

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 must reconsider the selected actions within five 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 a regular agenda item

• note what action they are already taking to conserve and enhance biodiversity

• agree what further steps they should take to conserve and enhance biodiversity

Commit to the aim that Pontesbury parish should be filled with places of rich, diverse and abundant wildlife

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. Biodiversity is the building block of our 'ecosystems' that in turn 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 conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area. The Full Council and any committees of the Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

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

- consider the impact on biodiversity in all decisions made by the Council
- report on biodiversity as a standing item on Full Council Meeting agendas
- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity e.g reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides used on parish council land wherever possible, cut hedges outside of the bird nesting season and other examples included in the LNRS below
- support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact / nature positive practices
- encourage and support other organisations within the parish to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity

Pontesbury Parish Council is working in partnership with Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group/Rea Valley Community Wildlife Group and through a cluster arrangement with Minsterley and Hanwood Parish Councils to help nature recover throughout the Rea Valley – Rea-Act for Nature?

In the Shropshire LNRS most of the areas mentioned below, in parish council ownership/management came under

A10.3 Create and restore species rich grassland

A14.3 Enhance wildlife value of multifunctional green space

Initiatives/Development ideas	Resources	Key Champions	Potential cost/sources of funding
Area 1.a Hall Bank meadow area – aim to be the flagship area for Pontesbury Parish to model initiatives that residents can try at home • Surveys/community bioblitz to create baseline of what is there • Bird/bat boxes in trees • Wetland meadow/wildflower meadow through centre • Dry hedge • Link through to Old Railway Line to create a circular path - completed • Art installations using willow/wood • Local Nature reserve status? • Further tree planting • Extend community orchard with nut and other trees • Signage to tell visitors what is happening/key species/why doing it and how to get involved/blackboard to record what seen?	Large stretch of land owned by the parish council including: a variety of deciduous trees – some established some recently planted Community woodland Stretch of meadow Hedge with mature trees and patches of willow allowed to grow up Management Plan already developed for wildlife corridor by developers Management Plan for meadow area already drawn up by RSVP	Parish Council own the land and use contractors to mow a path for walkers around the site and keep the areas around the community orchard Local residents helped with watering orchard and may help with pruning? Local ex-SC Tree Officer giving advice and leading initial watering/pruning Set up a local residents group to help with watering and management of area/drive project/come up with ideas	

• Parish arboretum of native trees that people could grow in their gardens			
Area 1.b Village Green/Community Garden • Wildflower mini-meadow all along border of village green • Blossom circle - building on existing cordon trees round edge of village green • Benches/picnic tables for people to enjoy wildlife • Harvest/fruit events - community meals (happening each September) • Need to maintain football area for local children in centre • Environmental art structures • Increase Signage for educational purposes	Large Village green space Ornamental borders Some deciduous trees planted by developer Area with raised beds/shed/fruit bushes – Community Garden	Land owned by PPC Community Garden run by PCEAG and local volunteers Primary School – have garden plot and helping to create wildflower meadow Local residents	
Area 1.c Planters in patio area around Pavilion building • Increase rainwater harvesting • Planters for veg • Citrus trees • Planting for pollinators • Increase Signage for educational purposes	20 planters on a patio area	Community Garden volunteers 3 beds Age UK 2 beds Pc handyman/caretaker – other beds	
Area 1.d bed by nursery and hedge • Wildflower mini-meadow with existing pollinating plants • Lay hedge by nursery • Increase Signage for educational purposes	Piece of scrubland with a few pollinators currently	Volunteers Ark nursery permission to lay hedge	
Area 2. School Green/Jubilee Gardens • Mini wildflower meadow • Bird/bat boxes • Plant trees for succession • No mow may	PC managed areas of amenity grassed area, mature trees and benches	PPC/PCEAG and primary school planting mini-meadow	

• Increase Signage for educational purposes			
Area 3. Sports Area off Bogey Lane • Potential for a community woodland • Wildflower planting around sports pitches and in unused area behind bowling green • Ash-dieback – replacement tree planting	PPC managed area of sports pitches, mature trees and un-used woodland area	Work with different sports teams PPC tree management policy Community woodland group?	
Area 4. Play area off Station Road • Wildflower verges to path • Leave strip by hedges to grow longer and just strim before annual hedge cutting • Old railway link to Minsterley and Hanwood – encourage hedge laying by landowners and • Bat/bird boxes • Leave log piles/brush in treed area alongside path through the play area	PPC managed area with play equipment, trees and hedges		
Area 5. Cycleway Pontesbury to Minsterley Continue to extend wildflower mini-meadows Signage to explain project Bat/bird boxes?	1 mile long foot/cyclepath		
Area 6. Floral beds on Hall Bank Replant for sustainability and pollinators Peat free compost	2 flower beds		
Area 7. Cruckmeole Wildflower planting around bus stop or something on Church Green as part of devolution			

Area 8. Habberley/other areas within Shropshire Hills National Landscape? link with Stepping stones project			
Area 9. Plealey			
Polemere – make contact with landowner			
OTHER General parish council activities			
PC encourage biodiversity consideration as part of planning applications 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 important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications. • consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain	Wildlife Trust planning report		
Opportunities to take on more areas of verge/grassy areas around parish from SC			
Work with local community • to 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, birdbox making • continue to work closely with Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action group and Rea Valley Community Wildlife group on nature recovery activities • Continue to link with and promote SC activities at Poles Coppice and Nills Hill Quarry • Pontesford/Earls Hill – link with groups working there, volunteers and SWT – promote activities • Rea Valley Community Wildlife group – continue to promote talks/walks – joint projects, utilise wealth of knowledge & expertise to do surveying around the parish			
The council has committed to working with Minsterley and Hanwood parish councils as a 'cluster' Re-Act for Nature -to enhance any parish biodiversity initiatives taken			
Cluster activities could include: • Create a logo and brand activities throughout the cluster • Continue baseline survey of what people doing at home using parish maps – put up in Cruckton/Habberley Village halls • Encourage people to take info about what they can do at home – newsletters/website/events • Mapping of important areas already existing across the 3 parishes • Enourage i-record for all residents to build picture of what exists in parish and surveying skills capacity building throughout 3 parishes		Event in October 2026 Event in October 2026	

• Swift mapping etc (Gloucestershire advice) • Minsterley Meadow events • Hanwood events • Green gym style conservation parties doing work around the cluster area e.g creating wildflower meadows/tree planting • Shropshire Wildlife Trust's 'Environment Leadership Programme'. Young people learning new skills in caring for the environment. • Events to promote individual LNRS and how they link together across parishes			

BIODIVERSITY – 2026-28 ACTION PLAN.

Parish Council				
SITE	ACTION	OUTCOME	Date of completion	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Hall Bank Meadow	Link meadow to Old Railway Line Plant wet meadow plants Create dead hedge Bat and bird boxes up Extend community orchard with nut trees Signage about activities	Engage local residents to spend time in nature and walk in area Model activities people can do at home, Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species.	May 2026 June 2026	Newsletter, social media, website, noticeboards

	Set up local residents' group	Gain local support for action Engagement/ownership of biodiversity.		
School Green	Plant 3 trees for succession Wildflower mini-meadow	Increase biodiversity of area		
Sports Area	Survey and Management plan for small woodland – consider community woodland creation	Engage local residents to spend time in nature and walk in area Gain local support for action Engagement/ownership of biodiversity		
Station Road play area	Log piles and leave capture in wooded areas alongside path Bulb planting Work with Rea Valley Scout's Association	Increase biodiversity of area Gain local support for action Engagement/ownership of biodiversity		
Cycleway	Add to wildflower areas Signage to explain what we are doing	Increase biodiversity of area Gain local support for action Engagement/ownership of biodiversity		
Floral beds on Hall bank	Replant for sustainability and pollinators Ground's Maintenance Contractor	Increase biodiversity and sustainability		

Cruckton, Habberley Plealey	Mapping event in each village and engagement to find out what residents want to do	Gain local support for action Engagement/ownership of biodiversity.		

Working document adopted: October 2026

To be reviewed: October 2027