



Aylsham Town Council

Biodiversity Policy

Background

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England, including Town Councils to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. This was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021 so public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England and have a policy to that effect. This means a public authority must;

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver policies and achieve objectives .

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth¹. Biodiversity is everywhere: in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains Rivers and the sea.

The Local Area

Aylsham Town Council is a small Market Town set in a rural area, with a considerable number of natural areas, including hedges, ditches, farmland, and the River Bure. In addition, just over a mile away is Blickling Park, a renowned National Trust property. Within the town are two Norfolk Trails – Marriotts Way and Weavers Way and also the Bure Valley Path.

Town Council responsibilities

The Town Council owns many pieces of land in the town – most of these are green areas, or play areas from developments. There is one large belt of land alongside Henry Page Road which is owned and managed by the Town Council. The council is also owns, the cemetery, the Paupers Graveyard, the Staiths on Banningham Road and Old Station Yard. The Town Council also has responsibility for the Churchyard. The Recreation Ground is run by a Management Committee and the Town Council is the Custodian Trustee.

The Town Council is also responsible for the grass cutting of verges, a delegated function from Norfolk County Council.

The Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2021 and work on this is overseen by ACE (Aylsham Climate Emergency).

What the Town Council will do

- Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made through the Town Council, especially when commenting on planning applications e.g. inclusion of swift bricks, hedgehog highways etc
- It will reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides used on Town Council owned land
- It will review how it manages the land it owns or is responsible for, this may include, but is not limited to.
 - Leaving standing and fallen dead wood as a habitat for invertebrates
 - Leaving leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever suitable as a habitat for invertebrates
 - Removing invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna as required.
- The Aylsham Neighbourhood Plan NDP is being reviewed shortly and the working group will ensure that biodiversity is discussed and added to the plan as necessary.
- As Custodian Trustee for Aylsham Recreation Ground the Town Council will encourage the Management Committee to consider Biodiversity in its work.
- Hedge cutting takes place up to twice a year, and is very much a balancing act as many of the Town Council hedges run alongside well used footpaths so require cutting. All hedges are cut outside of the bird nesting season.
- The Town Council will be receptive to all new ideas linked to biodiversity

The Town Council will look to promote biodiversity via the ACE website

Policy created: December 2023

Adopted: December 2023

To be reviewed: December 2025