

## Biodiversity

### Background

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England, including Parish 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. 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 earth<sup>1</sup>. Biodiversity is everywhere: in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains rivers and the sea.

### The Local Area

Nash Parish Council is a rural village, with several natural areas, including hedges, ditches and farmland.

### Parish Council responsibilities

The Parish Council owns the recreation ground in the village, the pond and in the future will adopt The Old Chapel Graveyard.

The Parish Council is also responsible for the grass cutting of verges, along with the cutting of the recreation ground.

### What the Parish Council will do

- Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made through the Parish Council, especially when commenting on planning applications
- It will reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides used on Parish Council owned land
- It will consider how to manage the land at The Old Chapel Graveyard, 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 possible as a habitat for invertebrates
  - Removing invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna as required
  - The Parish Council will consider limiting the number of cuts in The Old Chapel Graveyard and allowing the grasses to grow and be swathed in September.
- At the recreation ground, the Parish Council will
  - Ensure that there is a margin of uncut grass around hedges to allow longer grasses to grow
  - Allow fallen tree branches to remain, if safe, to allow invertebrates to inhabit
  - Any hedge cutting to take place outside of the bird nesting season
  - The Parish Council will look to purchase and install bird boxes in Parish Council owned trees

<sup>1</sup> As defined in 'Biodiversity 2020: a strategy of England's wildlife and ecosystems' by DEFRA

The Parish Council is committed to preserving the pond and the surrounding area for the local wildlife that reside there. Biodiversity is of significant importance and the preservation of the area is key to ensuring it is a safe environment for all wildlife present. The Parish council will ensure:

- The presence of blue-green algae is actively monitored
- Regular, gentle thinning-out of excess aquatic vegetation every autumn to reduce the progressive build-up of nutrients such as nitrates and phosphates. This will avoid leaving the aquatic vegetation to rot down over winter, releasing nutrients back into the water to encourage blanketweed or other forms of algae
- The Parish Council will aim to leave 25% of the pond dense with plants.

Date of policy: November 2023

<sup>1</sup> As defined in 'Biodiversity 2020: a strategy of England's wildlife and ecosystems' by DEFRA