



Ashburton Town Council

Biodiversity Policy

Date Adopted	22 JULY 2026
Review date	2027 - 2028

Signed by Town Mayor:

Date:



Ashburton Town Council Biodiversity Policy

Introduction

The Environment Act 2021 places a duty on public authorities in England, including town and parish councils, to consider how their activities can contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

Government guidance issued in 2023 confirms that local councils should:

- Consider opportunities to protect and improve biodiversity.
- Establish appropriate objectives and actions.
- Take practical steps to deliver those objectives.

While town and parish councils are not required to publish formal biodiversity reports, they are expected to demonstrate that biodiversity has been considered in their decision-making and that positive actions are being taken where practicable.

Ashburton Town Council recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing the natural environment for current and future generations and is committed to playing its part in supporting wildlife, habitats and ecological resilience within the parish.

What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity refers to the variety of living organisms and the ecosystems of which they are part. This includes plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms, together with the physical conditions which support them in a variety of habitats.

Healthy biodiversity contributes significantly to the character and beauty of local communities. It also underpins the essential services upon which society depends: clean air and water; food production; the regulation of weather and climate; flood management; and pollination. Without biodiverse and healthy ecosystems, society would collapse.'

Policy Objectives

Ashburton Town Council will seek to protect and enhance biodiversity through its decisions, land management practices and community leadership role.

The Council will:

- Promote the conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats within the parish.
- Consider biodiversity implications when making decisions and developing policies.



- Manage Council-owned land and buildings in ways that support nature recovery.
- Encourage sustainable practices among local organisations, businesses and residents.
- Support community initiatives that contribute to environmental improvement and biodiversity gain.
- Work collaboratively with local partners to achieve positive environmental outcomes.

Biodiversity in Ashburton

Ashburton has the potential to be surrounded by a rich and varied natural environment. Many of the past land management practices have, over time, denuded this previously rich biodiversity.

However, we are fortunate to still have vestiges of natural habitat, including the River Ashburn; hedgerows; woodland; verges; meadows; and extensively managed farmland on the fringes of Dartmoor. These habitats can still support a wide range of wildlife, and contribute to the character and environmental quality of the parish, as well as to the wellbeing of parishioners.

Ashburton Town Council recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing these natural assets and will seek opportunities to support biodiversity through its own activities and by encouraging wider community involvement.

The Council will:

- Support the protection and enhancement of local wildlife habitats, including trees, hedgerows, watercourses and green spaces.
- Encourage the planting of native trees, shrubs and wildflowers that provide food and shelter for wildlife.
- Promote measures that support pollinators, birds, bats, hedgehogs and other native species.
- Consider opportunities to increase biodiversity on Council-owned land through appropriate habitat management and planting schemes.
- Support community-led environmental initiatives and volunteer projects that improve local biodiversity.
- Work with local organisations, landowners and environmental groups to promote nature recovery and ecological resilience within the parish.



- Seek opportunities to improve public awareness and appreciation of Ashburton's natural environment through education, events and community engagement activities.

Through these actions, Ashburton Town Council aims to contribute positively to local nature recovery while helping to ensure that the town remains an attractive and environmentally sustainable place in which to live, work and visit.

Planning and Development

When commenting on planning applications, the Council will:

- Seek to ensure that developers provide features that protect existing habitats and incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity.
- Encourage developers to provide features that support wildlife, such as native planting, wildlife corridors, bird nesting opportunities and bat roosting features.
- Consider the impact of proposals on protected species, important habitats and ecological networks.
- Support biodiversity net gain principles.
- Encourage sustainable drainage, green infrastructure and landscaping that benefits wildlife.
- Seek to ensure that planning proposals contribute positively to the natural environment.

Management of Council Land and Property

The Council will:

- Review and manage Council-owned land with biodiversity considerations at the forefront.
- Adopt environmentally responsible grounds maintenance practices that support wildlife and habitat creation.
- Reduce the unnecessary use of pesticides, herbicides and other chemicals.
- Prioritise opportunities for tree planting, wildflower areas and habitat enhancement.
- Protect existing trees, hedgerows and other valuable natural features under Council ownership.
- Incorporate biodiversity improvements when undertaking works to Council buildings and facilities.



- Procure sustainable and environmentally responsible materials and services where feasible.
- Ensure contractors working on Council-owned land are aware of biodiversity considerations relevant to their work.

Community Engagement

The Council will seek to encourage and support biodiversity throughout the parish by:

- Promoting awareness of local wildlife and environmental issues through Council communications.
- Supporting community-led conservation and environmental projects.
- Encouraging wildlife-friendly gardening and land management practices.
- Working with local schools, community groups and voluntary organisations to raise awareness of biodiversity.
- Supporting opportunities for residents to participate in activities such as tree planting, habitat creation and wildlife monitoring.
- Celebrating and promoting the natural heritage of Ashburton and the surrounding area.

Partnership Working

Ashburton Town Council recognises that achieving meaningful improvements for biodiversity requires collaboration.

The Council will therefore seek to work with:

- Local environmental and conservation groups.
- Community organisations and volunteers.
- Landowners and businesses.
- Devon-based wildlife and environmental organisations.
- Relevant local authorities and statutory bodies.

The Council will have regard to relevant local and national biodiversity strategies, nature recovery plans and environmental initiatives when considering its own actions and priorities.

Monitoring and Review



Ashburton Town Council

The Council will review its biodiversity objectives and actions periodically and consider additional measures as opportunities arise.