

Upper Heyford Parish Council Biodiversity Policy

Reviewed & Approved in the Parish Council Meeting on the 8th January 2026
Minute Reference 61. a)
Next review July 2027

1. Introduction

Upper Heyford Parish Council recognises the importance of biodiversity in maintaining healthy ecosystems, supporting climate resilience, and enhancing the wellbeing of residents. Biodiversity includes the variety of plants, animals, insects, and microorganisms, and the habitats that support them.

Upper Heyford includes a mix of village, countryside, and former RAF airfield landscapes, all of which offer opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity for the benefit of wildlife and the local community.

2. Policy Statement

Upper Heyford Parish Council is committed to:

- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity within the parish
- Managing parish-owned or managed land in ways that support wildlife
- Considering biodiversity in decision-making and service delivery
- Supporting local and national biodiversity objectives
- Encouraging community awareness and involvement in biodiversity initiatives

3. Legislative and Policy Context

This policy supports the Parish Council's duties and responsibilities under:

- The **Environment Act 2021**, including the duty on public authorities to have regard to biodiversity
- The **Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006**
- Relevant local biodiversity strategies, including those for Oxfordshire
- National frameworks such as the **UK Biodiversity Framework**

4. Objectives

Upper Heyford Parish Council will aim to:

1. Conserve and enhance habitats and species within the parish
2. Increase biodiversity on parish-managed land where practical
3. Minimise practices that negatively impact wildlife
4. Support sustainable land and grounds management

5. Work with residents, community groups, landowners, and other authorities to promote biodiversity

5. Actions and Commitments

Where appropriate and within available resources, the Parish Council will:

5.1 Land and Asset Management

- Manage green spaces, verges, and open areas to encourage native plants and wildlife
- Reduce the use of pesticides, herbicides, and peat-based products
- Introduce or expand areas of long grass, wildflowers, or natural planting where suitable
- Plant native trees, hedgerows, and shrubs where appropriate
- Protect existing habitats such as mature trees, hedgerows, and ponds

5.2 Planning and Decision-Making

- Consider biodiversity impacts when commenting on planning applications
- Support developments that protect and enhance local biodiversity
- Encourage biodiversity net gain and nature-positive design where possible

5.3 Procurement and Operations

- Where practical, use environmentally responsible suppliers and materials
- Consider biodiversity impacts when commissioning works or services

5.4 Community Engagement

- Encourage residents to support biodiversity through wildlife-friendly gardening and land management
- Support or promote local biodiversity projects, events, or volunteering opportunities
- Share information on biodiversity through parish communications such as noticeboards, the parish website, or newsletters

6. Monitoring and Review

- The Parish Council will periodically review progress against this policy
- Actions will be updated in line with available resources and changing priorities

- This policy will be reviewed at least every **three years**

7. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy rests with Upper Heyford Parish Council.
Implementation may be delegated to:

- A named councillor or committee
- The Parish Clerk
- Working groups or volunteers, where appropriate