

ALDBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL



BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT **Adopted 1 November 2023 – 142/23**

Introduction

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Aldbourne Parish Council will in exercising all its functions have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

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. It is the building block of our 'ecosystems'. These 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.

The Local Area

Aldbourne Parish is a rural parish, with a considerable number of natural areas, including hedges, ditches, open spaces and farmland.

Parish Council Responsibilities

Rectory Wood, the football field, the green and the pond, as well as Goddards, Claridge and Whitely Road play areas are all either owned or come under the responsibility of the Parish Council. In addition Palmer's Field is owned by the Parish Council and whilst currently leased to ARC, the Council still currently maintains the area.

The Parish Council is also responsible for the grass cutting most of verges throughout the centre of the village on behalf of Wiltshire Council.

The Parish Council is responsible for the provision and updating of the Aldbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Our Commitment: In October 2019 Aldbourne Parish Council acknowledged there was a 'Climate Emergency'. A working party was set up to actively promote the community wellbeing of the inhabitants of Aldbourne. The Council continues to be committed to taking actions that contribute to biodiversity conservation and raise awareness about the significance of biodiversity within our local community.

Our approach will include, but is not limited to, the following actions:

1. Community Engagement and Education:

- We will continue to maintain and enhance the existing verge wilding areas. We will continue to maintain all trees under our responsibility, and plant new trees as required. We will continue to maintain reduced cutting to enhance the flora and fauna that grows there.
- We will actively engage with our local community on biodiversity conservation, sharing relevant information via the Dabchick, Council website and Facebook.
- We will, where appropriate, support local organisations in promoting their educational programmes, workshops, and public events to inform residents about biodiversity's significance and how they can contribute to conservation efforts in their own spaces.

2. Policy Development and Budgeting:

- We will develop, when needed, further biodiversity conservation policies.
- We will consider the financial implications of biodiversity strategies when calculating the annual budget.

3. Advocacy and Support:

- We will advocate, when required, for biodiversity conservation in the broader region by collaborating, when appropriate, with neighbouring councils, environmental organisations, and regional authorities.
- We will provide guidance to residents who wish to implement biodiversity-friendly practices on their properties by directing them to the appropriate organisations or resources when requested.

4. Local Planning and Development:

- We will provide input on local planning and development proposals to ensure they consider biodiversity conservation.
- We will advocate for green infrastructure and nature-based solutions in development projects.

5. Participation in Regional Strategies:

- We will engage with regional strategies, which might include local nature recovery strategies and species conservation strategies.

6. Networking and Collaboration: - Where appropriate, we will network with other councils and local environmental organisations, to share best practices and collaborate on biodiversity conservation projects.

7. Review and Adapt: - We will periodically review and adapt our approach to biodiversity conservation based on community needs and changing circumstances and to that end this policy will be reviewed annually, and any suggested changes brought to the Council for consideration.