

Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council

Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan

Policy Statement

Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council is committed to promoting biodiversity in all of its activities and recognises its responsibility to encourage and protect the natural environment.

Background

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 S40, 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 S102(3), 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 considerations.
- 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

Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council is a rural village, with a range and number of natural areas, including hedges, ditches, farmland, trees, flood plain and rivers.

Parish Council responsibilities

The Parish Council owns the following land and buildings:

- Cemetery on Mill Way
- Falklands Walk/ Engineers Wood
- Garden Plots, Mill Way
- Holywell Front – Common Land
- Millfields pavilion and sports ground
- Overcote Fen
- Recreation Ground and playing fields on Overcote Lane

¹ As defined in 'Biodiversity 202: a strategy of England's wildlife and ecosystems' by DEFRA
Biodiversity Policy – Adopted September 2024

The Parish Council is also responsible for the grass, hedge and shrub cutting of the cemetery and all of its open space/grass areas.

What the Parish Council will do

- Consider the impact of biodiversity in the decisions made through the Parish Council, including when commenting on planning applications.
- Look to reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides used on Parish Council owned land whilst considering alternative methods of controlling unwanted weeds and maintaining football pitches.
- Review how it manages land at Falklands Walk/ Engineers Wood which may include but is not limited to:
 - Leaving standing and fallen dead wood as a habitat for invertebrates where appropriate.
 - 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 appropriate.
- Balance the Shrub cutting that takes place once or twice a year to ensure shrubs do not encroach on footpaths and passageways. Cutting is to take place outside of the bird nesting season.
- Look to place additional bird boxes where appropriate in Parish Council owned trees and maintain those already in situ.
- Look to promote biodiversity via the Parish Council website and the Villager.
- Have an action plan which it will review annually.

Adopted at meeting of Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council held on 3rd September 2024.

Reviewed 2nd September 2025

Signed.....

Miss J Bowd

Parish Clerk

Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council Biodiversity Action Plan

SITE/OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (YEARS)	REPORTING/ PUBLICITY
Whole Council Area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity	Gain local support for action	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Cemetery	Develop a summer wildflower area Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Falklands Walk/ Engineers Wood	To continue to leave the area to develop as a natural open space with hibernacula plus planting hedgerows etc	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources Provide shelter for all types of wildlife	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Garden Plots, Mill Way	Continue to work with local volunteers to enhance and develop the wildflower plots.	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Overcote Fen	Maintain natural pond so that it populates naturally. Continue to work with local volunteers and residents	A water source for a variety of wildlife Increased diversity of habitats and food sources Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees Raise awareness in community of biodiversity	Ongoing Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Common other open spaces	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs (provide dog bag stations where appropriate). Continue with regular tree surveys and maintenance work of hedges and land	Protecting habitats Protecting habitats	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website