



**Royston Town Council**  
**Biodiversity Policy**  
**Adopted by Full Council 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 - Minute number: 278/24**  
**Review date: January 2025**

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, Royston Town 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.

Aims and Objectives:

The object of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of Royston. All committees of Royston Town Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, Royston Town Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses & council operations where possible in the adoption of low impact practices.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

Actions:

**Planning applications**

- The council, when commenting on planning applications, will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- It will support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.

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- It will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain and seek to go over and above 10% where possible.

### **Land and property management**

- The council will carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- The council will consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work.
- Special care will be taken to ensure that the work carried out on open spaces, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- The council will consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

### **Local community**

- The council will raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- The council will engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- It will, where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower planting.

### **Partners**

- Royston Town Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the town.

In addition, an action plan will be drawn and progress against its objectives will be reported at the Annual Town Meeting and in the Annual Report.



## NATURE ACTION PLAN

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Website Newsletter Social Media
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	
Green Walk and Stile Plantations	Take expert advice on the management of the sites.	Sustain & enhance natural habitats.	Ongoing	Website Newsletter Social Media
	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.	Protecting habitats		
	Work with volunteers, contractors and other agencies to enhance the areas.	Protecting/enhancing habitats		
	Plant more diverse hedging and wildflowers where possible.	Enhance habitats		
	Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after.	Regular attention.		
	To have regular bat surveys.	Sustain & protect habitat.		
	Cutting back, bird box and path maintenance to take place outside of bird nesting season.	Protect habitat.		
Green Street Allotments	Encourage allotment holders to continue to embrace biodiversity and recognise their contribution.	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	Website Newsletter
	Encourage the use of organic treatments rather than chemicals and pesticides.	Protecting wildlife.		
	Hedge cutting to take place outside of bird nesting season.	Protecting wildlife.		

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<p>The Built Landscape</p>	<p>Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Provision of land for allotment space should be considered on all suitable larger applications to assist RTC in its statutory duty to provide these and further biodiversity.</p> <p>Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries.</p>	<p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p> <p>Enhancing habitats</p> <p>Extending habitats</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Website</p>
<p>Increase community awareness of biodiversity</p>	<p>Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with ideas for actions highlighted on the website e.g. installing Swift boxes.</p> <p>Maintain a page on the town council website updating actions taken, ongoing projects, photographs, and useful links.</p>	<p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Website Newsletter</p>
<p>Support Community Projects</p>	<p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.</p> <p>Work in partnership with schools to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.</p> <p>Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.</p>	<p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p>		<p>Website Newsletter</p>