



## **BIODIVERSITY POLICY**

**Adopted 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**Reviewed Annually**

### **Background**

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 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 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 consideration.
- Act to deliver policies and achieve objectives.

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth<sup>1</sup>. Biodiversity is everywhere: in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains Rivers and the sea.

### **The Local Area**

Hullbridge Parish Council is a rural village, with a considerable number of natural areas, including Kendal Park Nature Reserve, the River Crouch, Poole's Lane Recreation Ground, the Rose Garden, an Allotment site and various hedges, ditches, footpaths and farmland.

### **Parish Council responsibilities**

The Parish Council has responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of Kendal Park Nature Reserve (which includes a community pond), the Rose Garden and the Allotment site. In addition, the Parish is responsible for the cutting and upkeep of several footpaths, verges, and public rights of way in the village.

The Parish Council has a green initiative "Hullbridge goes Green" which will incorporate the council's commitment to biodiversity within its remit.

### **What the Parish Council will do**

- Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made through the Parish Council, especially when commenting on planning applications.

<sup>1</sup> As defined in 'Biodiversity 2020: a strategy of England's wildlife and ecosystems' by DEFRA



- It will reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides used on Parish Council owned land.
- It will review how it manages its general open spaces and Kendal Park Nature Reserve as part of the five-year management plan. Including but not limited to
  - Leaving standing and fallen dead wood as a habitat for invertebrates
  - 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 required.
  - A wildflower area will be preserved within the nature reserve.
  - The Parish Council will consider reducing the number of cuts in the area and allowing the grass to grow and be swathed in September.
- The Parish Council will promote biodiversity at its Allotment site as part of the Tenancy Agreement with plot holders.
- All street planters and hanging baskets will be planted with flowers that support insect biodiversity where possible.
- Hedge cutting takes place twice a year and is very much a balancing act as the Parish Council hedges run alongside narrow, well-used footpaths so require cutting. All hedges are cut outside of the bird nesting season.
- The Parish Council will look to purchase and install bird boxes and dormouse houses in the Parish Council owned trees.
- The Parish Council will promote biodiversity to residents as part of its Annual 'Best Kept Front Gardens' competition.
- The Parish Council will look to promote biodiversity via the Parish Council website.

<sup>1</sup> As defined in 'Biodiversity 2020: a strategy of England's wildlife and ecosystems' by DEFRA