

Biodiversity

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 earth¹. Biodiversity is everywhere: in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains, rivers and the sea.

The Local Area

Beachamwell Parish Council is a rural village, with a considerable number of natural areas, including hedges, ditches, and farmland.

Parish Council responsibilities

The Parish Council is the owner of the village green. It owns no other land. The Parish Council is responsible for the grass cutting of the village green.

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.
- It will reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides used on Parish Council owned land
- It will review how it manages the land, this may include but is 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.
- As owner of the village green the Parish Council will
 - Consider where there could be a margin of uncut grass to allow longer grasses to grow
 - Allow fallen tree branches to remain, if safe, to allow invertebrates to habitat
 - To preserve the trees and encourage biodiversity area under the trees will be wilded, either to grow as long grass and flowers..
- Any hedges are cut outside of the bird nesting season.
- The Parish Council will look to purchase and install bird and bat boxes in the Parish Council owned trees.
- The Parish Council will look to promote biodiversity via the Parish Council website.

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