



STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY 2026

VERSION 2

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Stotfold Town Council recognises its statutory duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity in the exercise of its functions.
- 1.2 The Town Council acknowledges that biodiversity is an essential component of a healthy local environment and is committed to managing its land, assets, and services in a way that supports habitat protection and ecological enhancement wherever practicable and proportionate.
- 1.3 In fulfilling this duty, the Council will seek to:
 - protect and enhance biodiversity on land within its ownership or control
 - ensure that biodiversity considerations are embedded into decision-making processes
 - balance environmental objectives with its duty to provide safe and accessible public facilities
 - support community and partner initiatives which contribute positively to local biodiversity

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
 - all Council-owned or managed land
 - open spaces, recreation grounds and allotments
 - cemetery and landscaped areas
 - formal sports provision
 - procurement and delivery of grounds maintenance services
 - planning consultation responses
 - project development and asset management decisions

3. Governance & Responsibility

- 3.1 Delivery of this policy is overseen by the Public Realm Committee.
An Officer Lead will ensure compliance, contractor management, and record keeping:
 - embedding biodiversity considerations within operational decision-making
 - ensuring that land management practices reflect this policy
 - liaising with contractors and community partners
 - maintaining appropriate treatment and habitat records

- 3.2 Biodiversity implications shall be considered where relevant in:
- land management decisions
 - procurement processes
 - maintenance regimes
 - project delivery
 - planning consultation responses
- 3.2 In particular, the 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 in the adoption of low impact practices.
 - support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

4. Land Management Approach

- 4.1 The Town Council will adopt environmentally responsible grounds maintenance practices that protect and enhance biodiversity. This will include retaining and creating habitats such as long grass areas, hedgerows, and wildflower zones; leaving selected areas unmown to support pollinators and insects; and managing hedging sympathetically to provide food and shelter. Care will be taken to avoid over-intensive maintenance that could damage or reduce the ecological value of these habitats.

5. Weed and Vegetation Management

- 5.1 The Council recognises that some vegetation management is necessary and will take a balanced, proportionate approach. Weeds will be managed in specific areas as required, prioritising manual methods such as hand-pulling. Where this is insufficient, kerbside spraying and targeted application to hard surfaces will be used to maintain the areas.

6. Use of Herbicides and Pesticides.

The Council will minimise chemical use but recognises that targeted application is sometimes necessary.

6.1 Permitted Use:

- Kerbside spraying with pesticides is permitted as part of highway and public realm maintenance.
- Spraying on hard surfaces (e.g. pavements, kerbs, concrete, and other impermeable surfaces) is permitted where required.

6.2 Restricted Use:

- Spraying on grass, soil, or other 'live' surfaces is not permitted, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. invasive species control), and only with appropriate authorisation.

6.3 Conditions of Use:

All pesticide use must:

- comply with UK legislation and best practice guidance
- be carried out by trained operatives
- use the least harmful effective product
- avoid application in unsuitable weather conditions
- minimise risk to:
 - pollinators
 - watercourses
 - pets and the public

7. Planning & Development

7.1 When responding to planning applications, the Town Council will seek to:

- protect existing habitats and ecological features
- encourage appropriate landscaping and planting schemes
- support biodiversity net gain measures where applicable
- promote sustainable drainage and green infrastructure

8. Community Engagement

8.1 The Council will:

- encourage residents to support biodiversity in gardens and local spaces
- promote awareness through communications and local initiatives
- support volunteer projects and partnerships
- discourage harmful practices such as excessive artificial lighting

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 The Town Council will:

- Biodiversity actions will be monitored through reporting mechanisms.
- The policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation changes.
- Continuous improvement will be sought through data collection and community feedback.

Version History:

Version No	Date Approved/ Reviewed	Author/ Owner	Summary Of Changes	Responsible Committee	Review Date
1	13/12/2023	Deputy Clerk	Adopted	Public Realm	December 2023
2	13/5/2026	Deputy Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Scope section listing covered assets and activities• New Governance & Responsibility section, assigning oversight to the	Public Realm	May 2028

			<p>Public Realm Committee and defining the Officer Lead role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New dedicated Weed & Vegetation Management section • New Herbicides & Pesticides section covering permitted use, restricted use, and conditions of use • Planning section updated to reference Biodiversity Net Gain, sustainable drainage and green infrastructure • Review cycle changed from annual to every two years • Action Plan updated: Cemetery actions linked to Cemetery Management Plan 2025–2030 		
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SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Cemetery linked to Cemetery Management Plan 2025–2030)	Establish annual Bioblitz surveys, wildflower planting, and installation of bird/bat boxes.	Baseline data collected on flora and fauna; habitats enhanced and monitored.	Annual Bioblitz; wildflower planting and habitat boxes ongoing	Cemetery Management Plan updates; Stotfold News
Other open spaces	<p>Adopt a management plan.</p> <p>Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.</p> <p>Work with CBC council on verge management</p> <p>Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after.</p>	<p>Sustain & enhance natural habitats.</p> <p>Protecting habitats</p> <p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p> <p>Regular attention.</p>	2027-28	
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	
	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries	Extending habitats.		

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	<p>Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the town.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the Stotfold News</p> <p>Create a page on the council website for photographs / information / links</p> <p>Encourage local farmers to contribute.</p> <p>Provide seed bombs / bulbs etc. for residents' use.</p> <p>Discourage floodlighting.</p>	<p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Protect nocturnal animals.</p>	Ongoing	
Support Community Projects	<p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the school 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>		