

Milton Ernest Parish Council

Biodiversity Policy, Action Plan & Statutory Compliance Statement

Adopted: 31/12/25

Review Date: 31/12/28

1. Statutory Biodiversity Duty – Compliance Summary

Milton Ernest Parish Council acknowledges its duty under **Section 40 of the Environment Act 2021**, which requires public authorities to consider biodiversity in the exercise of their functions.

The Parish Council will comply with this duty by: –Having regard to biodiversity when making decisions -Managing parish land in a way that supports wildlife -Encouraging biodiversity when considering planning applications - Introducing new biodiversity areas where appropriate - - Reviewing biodiversity actions annually.

This document demonstrates how Milton Ernest Parish Council can meet this duty in a manner proportionate to its size, responsibilities, and resources.

2. Introduction

Milton Ernest Parish Council recognises the importance of biodiversity and the role local councils play in protecting and enhancing the natural environment. The parish is characterised by its rural setting, surrounding countryside, grass verges, hedgerows, and green spaces, all of which support local wildlife.

This policy and action plan sets out realistic and achievable steps to protect and enhance biodiversity within the parish while balancing safety, cost, and maintenance considerations.

3. What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity refers to the variety of plants, animals, insects, and habitats in a particular area. Maintaining biodiversity is good for wildlife and ontributes to the health and wellbeing of residents.

4. Parish Assets and Areas of Influence

Milton Ernest Parish Council has ownership, management responsibility, or influence over:
Grass verges and roadside margins - Public open spaces and recreation areas - Public footpaths and rights of way - Community buildings and land - Trees and hedgerows on parish-managed land

These areas provide opportunities for biodiversity protection and enhancement.

5. Biodiversity Policy Statement

Milton Ernest Parish Council will: - Protect existing wildlife habitats where reasonably possible - Enhance biodiversity through proportionate, low-cost actions - Avoid practices that cause unnecessary harm to wildlife - Encourage biodiversity awareness within the community - Review biodiversity considerations as part of council decision-making

6. Biodiversity Action Plan

Action	Location / Asset	Responsibility	Timescale	Review
Reduce mowing frequency in selected areas	Verges & open spaces	Parish Council / Contractor	Ongoing	Annual
Retain longer grass margins where safe	Verges	Parish Council	Ongoing	Annual

Action	Location / Asset	Responsibility	Timescale	Review
Use native species for new planting	All parish land	Parish Council	Ongoing	Annual
Protect existing trees and hedgerows	Parish land	Parish Council	Ongoing	Annual
Avoid hedge cutting during nesting season (Mar–Aug)	Hedgerows	Parish Council / Contractor	Seasonal	Annual
Install bird, bat, or insect boxes where suitable	Buildings / trees	Parish Council	As opportunities arise	Annual
Minimise use of pesticides and herbicides	All parish land	Parish Council	Ongoing	Annual
Encourage biodiversity enhancements and consider biodiversity n planning responses	Parish-wide	Parish Council	Ongoing	Annual

7. Grass Cutting and Verge Management

- Grass cutting regimes will be reviewed to support wildflowers where appropriate
 - Some areas may be left unmown during spring and summer where safety allows
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8. Trees, Hedges, and Planting

- Existing mature trees and hedgerows will be protected
 - New planting will prioritise native species suitable for the local area
 - Hedge cutting will be timed to avoid the bird nesting season wherever possible
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9. Buildings and Infrastructure

When maintaining or improving parish buildings and infrastructure, the Parish Council will consider: - Installing bird boxes, bat boxes, or insect habitats - Avoiding disturbance to nesting or roosting wildlife - Opportunities for biodiversity enhancements

10. Planning and Development

When commenting on planning applications, Milton Ernest Parish Council will: - Encourage retention of trees, hedgerows, and green spaces - Support biodiversity enhancements such as native planting and wildlife boxes - Promote development that respects the rural character of the parish - Consider biodiversity in all planning responses

11. Community Engagement

The Parish Council will: - Encourage residents to adopt wildlife-friendly gardening practices - Promote local conservation initiatives and volunteering opportunities - Work with local organisations and environmental groups where appropriate

12. Monitoring and Review

- Biodiversity will be reviewed bi-annually by the Parish Council
 - Progress on the Action Plan will be noted in council minutes
 - This document will be formally reviewed every three years
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13. Adoption Statement (for Agenda / Minutes)

Resolved: That Milton Ernest Parish Council adopts the Biodiversity Policy, Action Plan, and Statutory Compliance Statement in accordance with Section 40 of the Environment Act 2021.

Approved by Milton Ernest Parish Council on [Date]