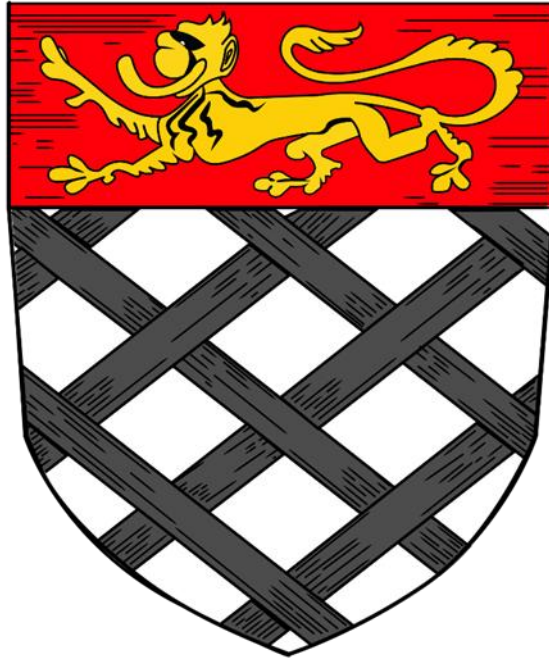


**MEPPERSHALL
PARISH COUNCIL**



BIODIVERSITY POLICY

As re-adopted at a meeting of Meppershall Parish Council on 9th February 2026

CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| DOCUMENT CONTROL..... | 3 |
| DOCUMENT AMENDMENT HISTORY | 3 |
| 1. INTRODUCTION..... | 4 |
| 2. DEFINITIONS..... | 4 |
| 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES..... | 4 |
| 4. ACTIONS | 5 |
| 5. MONITORING | 5 |
| 6. ACTION PLAN | 6 |

DOCUMENT CONTROL

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Organisation | Meppershall Parish Council |
| Title | MPC Biodiversity Policy |
| Creator | Alessandra Marabese - Clerk |
| Source | Procedures Working Group |
| First Adopted | Monday 12 th February 2024 |
| Last Approved | Monday 9 th February 2026 |
| Distribution | Internal and External |
| Filename | MPC Biodiversity Policy v1.0 2026© |
| Owner | Clerk |
| Subject | Environment |
| Protective Marking | None |
| Review date | Biennially |

DOCUMENT AMENDMENT HISTORY

| Revision No. | Originator of change | Date of change | Change Description |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1.0 | Creation | 12/02/24 | Policy Created |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. 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, Meppershall Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council) which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.
- 1.2. This duty also means that parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity
- 1.3. Government guidance clarifies that, as a public authority, parish councils must:
 - 1.3.1. Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
 - 1.3.2. Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
 - 1.3.3. Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. Biodiversity is the building block of our ‘ecosystems’ that in turn 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.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The object of this policy is to seek enhancement of biodiversity in Council owned areas and to raise the profile of biodiversity within the Parish. To make biodiversity a part of all decision making.
- 3.2. The Full Council and any committees of the Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions. Council will develop and implement a biodiversity policy.
- 3.3. Council will seek to improve the biodiversity in Council owned areas in the following ways:
 - 3.3.1. Consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
 - 3.3.2. Manage Council owned land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
 - 3.3.3. Consider grant support to residents and local organisations’ activities that enhance and promote biodiversity.
 - 3.3.4. Increase community awareness of biodiversity issues through publication of articles in The Meppershall Messenger.

4. ACTIONS

- 4.1. **Planning applications** - The Council will consider:
 - 4.1.1. When commenting on planning applications, its support for site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
 - 4.1.2. Supporting the 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.
 - 4.1.3. What each proposed development might provide in terms of enhanced biodiversity for the Parish.
- 4.2. **Land and property management** - The Council will:
 - 4.2.1. Consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces.
 - 4.2.2. Specify grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not significantly harm the natural environment.
 - 4.2.3. Where feasible source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use.
 - 4.2.4. Consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.
- 4.3. **Local community** - The Council will:
 - 4.3.1. Raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, via its website, social media channels and through the Meppershall Messenger.
 - 4.3.2. Where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land.
- 4.4. **Partners** - The Council will:
 - 4.4.1. Seek to work in partnership with relevant organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area.

5. MONITORING

- 5.1. This policy will be reviewed in line with Council's Policy review processes but not less than as published in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Section 40(1)(1D), as amended.

6. ACTION PLAN

| Site / Objective | Action | Outcome | Target (Years) | Reporting / Publicity |
|----------------------------------|---|--|----------------|--|
| Whole council area | <p>Raise local awareness of biodiversity. Obtain community support for planting to encourage biodiversity. Raise awareness of biodiversity and overcome a perception of untidiness and disrespect.</p> <p>Work with and support Community Groups who are committed to wildlife & biodiversity</p> | <p>Gain local support for action. Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species.</p> <p>Improved outcomes</p> | Ongoing | Communication |
| Protect and support biodiversity | Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity. (e.g. a community bulb plant) | Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species | Ongoing | Council |
| Cemetery / churchyard | <p>Additional planting</p> <p>Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates.</p> | <p>Increased diversity of habitats and food sources.</p> <p>Increased cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals.</p> <p>Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees.</p> | Ongoing | Clerk / Groundsman |
| Recreation grounds | <p>Sympathetically maintain hedging.</p> <p>Leave some areas unmown.</p> <p>Only use environmentally friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.</p> <p>Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.</p> | <p>Food sources and cover.</p> <p>Encourages insects.</p> <p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p> <p>Protecting habitats.</p> | Ongoing | <p>Contractor</p> <p>Full Council</p> <p>Contractor</p> <p>Communication</p> |
| Old Road Meadow | Develop a management plan. | Sustain and enhance natural habitats. | 1 | Full Council |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|----------|-------------------------------------|
| Nature Reserve | Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs. | Protecting habitats. | Ongoing | Communication |
| | Creation of a log pile | To create a new wildlife community | 1-2 | Volunteer group with MPC assistance |
| | Enhance the orchard | Sustain & enhance natural habitats | Ongoing | Full Council |
| | Prune and thin trees as required to maintain healthy growth | Sustain & enhance natural habitats | Annually | Volunteer group with MPC assistance |
| Allotments | Encourage use of environmentally friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions. | Sustain and enhance natural habitats. | Ongoing | Communication |
| | Planting of allotment orchard. | Increased diversity of habitats and food sources. | 1-3 | Council and allotment holders |
| Other green spaces | Consult with CBC on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety. | Protecting/enhancing Habitats. | Ongoing | Full Council |
| | Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after. | Regular attention. | Ongoing | Communication |
| | Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs. | Protecting habitats. | Ongoing | Communication |
| | Encourage land-gifting to Council. Target areas for asset transfer to Council. | Protecting/enhancing habitats | 1-5 | Full Council |
| The Built Landscape | Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan. | Protecting/enhancing habitats. | Ongoing | Full Council |
| | Promote the Neighbourhood Plan to potential developers | Protecting/enhancing habitats | Ongoing | Communication |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| | Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries. | Protecting/enhancing habitats | Ongoing | Communication |
| Increase community awareness of biodiversity | Ask residents how they can support Council to conserve biodiversity within the Parish. | Engagement/ownership of biodiversity. | Biannually | Survey |
| | Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife. | Engagement/ownership of biodiversity | Ongoing | Communication |
| | Create a biodiversity page on the parish council website for photographs / information / links. | Engagement/ownership of biodiversity | 1 | Clerk |
| | Provide articles in the Meppershall Messenger about how to make your garden more wildlife friendly. Encourage local farmers to contribute. | Engagement/ownership of biodiversity | Ongoing | Clerk / Councillors |
| | Discourage floodlighting. | Protect nocturnal animals. | Ongoing | Communication |
| | Encourage individual responsibility not to litter. | Protect biodiversity | Ongoing | Communication |
| | Install information boards. | Engagement | 2-3 | Full Council |
| | Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas | Protecting/enhancing habitats | Ongoing | Full Council |
| Support Community Projects | Understand from Meppershall Academy how Council can support their development young people's awareness of the environment around them here in the Parish. | Promote biodiversity. | 1-3 | Governing Body |
| | Work in partnership with all Parish organisations to support/promote biodiversity | Promote biodiversity. | Ongoing | Communication |
| | Look favourably on grant applications which support | Promote biodiversity. | Ongoing | Full Council |

| | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------|---------|--------------|
| | <p>or encourage enhancement of biodiversity in the Parish.</p> <p>Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity</p> | Promote biodiversity. | Ongoing | Full Council |
|--|--|-----------------------|---------|--------------|