

Forncett Parish Council

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

Forncett Parish Council is a rural village, with a considerable number of natural areas, including hedges, ditches, farmland, and a large number of public footpaths.

Parish Council responsibilities

The Parish Council owns one area of land - an area of approximately one acre, just off Station Road.

The parish council also contributes to the maintenance of some of the public footpaths in the parish, through links with volunteer walkers and the Countryside Access Officer.

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 review how it manages the land at Station Road, 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

¹ As defined in 'Biodiversity 2020: a strategy of England's wildlife and ecosystems' by DEFRA
V1 Adopted March 2024

- Volunteers will endeavor to cut back new annual growth on hedges running alongside public rights of way (in the event that hedges have not been maintained by the landowner) to enable free access along paths, but any major cutting back will be reserved until outside of the bird nesting season (March – August), unless the path is obstructed by a storm damaged bush or tree.
- The Parish Council will consider installing bird and bat boxes in the Parish Council owned trees.
- The Parish Council will support the work of the Forncett Nature Group, wherever practical.