



# MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

## BIODIVERSITY POLICY

### BACKGROUND

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 Environmental Act 2021, March Town 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 Council can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

### DEFINITION

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020) biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – essentially everything that is alive on our planet.

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, less obviously, 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.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area.

The Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the town of March in the following ways;

- Consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- When commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats and consider what any development might make in terms of BNG (biodiversity net gain)

- When considering planning applications, it shall support protection of sensitive habitats and consider whether the development would result in the loss of important habitats.
- Manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that help promote biodiversity
- Support local business and council operations in the adoption of nature positive practices
- Encourage and support other organisations and community projects within the town to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- Support residents and local organisations to enhance and promote biodiversity.
- Assessing chemicals used/use of chemicals in general when maintaining council owned land/facilities, ensuring safe disposal thereof
- Restricting use of pesticides on open spaces and at allotments
- Encourage allotment tenants to use natural methods to assist and protect biodiversity
- Compost green waste produced from maintaining March Town Council land/facilities where possible.
- Consider best practice to support pollinators
- Submit conditions to new build developments, both residential and commercial, to deliver biodiversity net gain above government minimums laid out in Environment Bill and planning policy. Supporting application site and building design elements that benefit biodiversity through conservation and integration of existing habitats or creation of new. Supporting protection of sensitive habitats and green areas listed within the adopted Neighbourhood Plan
- Maintenance contract specifications will ensure work conducted is not detrimental to the natural environment whilst delivering acceptable standards of work delivered
- Sourcing sustainable materials and environmentally friendly products when procuring supplies for the Council's use

This Policy was adopted on **2 September 2024 [Minute No 81]** and will be reviewed in 2 years (or sooner, should legislation dictate).