



Lostwithiel Town Council

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

**This policy was developed and adopted on: 10th March 2026
Minute Reference 339/25**

1. Introduction

Lostwithiel Town Council acknowledges its statutory responsibilities under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as amended by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021.

As a public authority, the Council must consider, in the exercise of its functions, what actions it can reasonably undertake to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

The Council recognises that biodiversity underpins the health, resilience and long-term sustainability of the natural environment and contributes significantly to the wellbeing of the community. This policy sets out the Council's commitment to protecting, restoring and enhancing biodiversity within the parish of Lostwithiel.

2. Definition

For the purposes of this policy, the Council adopts DEFRA's definition of biodiversity as "the variety of all life on Earth," encompassing all species of plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms, and the ecosystems of which they form a part.

Biodiversity is valued both intrinsically and for the ecosystem services it provides, including clean air and water, food production, climate regulation, flood mitigation, soil health, pollination, and cultural and recreational benefits.

3. Policy Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that biodiversity considerations are embedded across all Council functions, decision-making processes and land management activities, and to promote a coordinated approach to biodiversity enhancement across Lostwithiel.

4. Policy Objectives

The Council will:

- 1. Integrate biodiversity considerations** into all relevant Council decisions, including planning consultations and strategic policy development.
- 2. Manage Council-owned land and property** in ways that conserve and enhance biodiversity.

3. **Support and encourage biodiversity-positive action** by residents, businesses, schools and community groups.
4. **Work collaboratively with partners** to protect and enhance habitats and species across the parish.
5. **Promote awareness and understanding** of biodiversity and its importance to the community.

5. Policy Commitments

5.1 Planning and Development

When responding to planning applications, the Council will:

- Support proposals that conserve, enhance or create wildlife habitats.
- Oppose proposals that would result in the loss or degradation of important or sensitive habitats.
- Consider the biodiversity net gain offered by each development.
- Promote the integration of biodiversity policies within neighbourhood planning documents.

5.2 Land and Property Management

The Council will:

- Undertake a biodiversity audit of all Council-owned land.
- Manage open spaces using practices that support wildlife, including reduced mowing, minimal chemical use and seasonally sensitive maintenance.
- Ensure grounds maintenance contracts include biodiversity-protective requirements.
- Use sustainable and responsibly sourced materials in procurement.
- Consider biodiversity impacts when maintaining or adapting Council buildings.

5.3 Community Engagement

The Council will:

- Raise public awareness of biodiversity through Council communications.

- Encourage residents, businesses and community groups to adopt biodiversity-friendly practices.
- Involve the community in biodiversity projects on Council land where appropriate.

5.4 Partnership Working

The Council will:

- Work with relevant organisations, landowners and agencies to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- Review Local Nature Recovery Strategies, species conservation strategies and protected site strategies, including those relating to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- Consider opportunities to contribute to the implementation of these strategies.

6. Monitoring and Reporting Framework

To ensure effective delivery of this policy, the Council will implement the following monitoring and reporting arrangements:

6.1 Annual Biodiversity Report

An annual report will be prepared for Full Council summarising:

- Progress against the Action Plan
- Outcomes of biodiversity audits
- Biodiversity-related actions undertaken during the year
- Community engagement activities
- Partnership initiatives
- Any recommended amendments to the policy or Action Plan

The report will be published on the Council's website.

6.2 Action Plan Review

- The Biodiversity Action Plan will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

- Priorities will be categorised as short-term (6–12 months), medium-term (2–4 years) and long-term (4+ years).

6.3 Performance Indicators

The Council will monitor progress using indicators such as:

- Number of biodiversity enhancement projects completed
- Area of land managed under biodiversity-friendly regimes
- Number of community participants in biodiversity initiatives
- Number of planning responses referencing biodiversity net gain
- Reduction in chemical use on Council land
- Increase in recorded species or habitats (where measurable)



LOSTWITHIEL FOR NATURE: OUR BIODIVERSITY COMMITMENT

Why Biodiversity Matters

A biodiverse environment is more robust in the face of change

- Clean air and water
- Pollination for food
- Flood protection
- Climate resilience
- Wildlife and wellbeing



What the Council Is Doing

Protecting Nature in Planning

- Supporting wildlife-friendly development
- Challenging habitat loss
- Promoting Biodiversity Net Gain

Managing Land for Wildlife

- Reduced mowing for wildflowers
- Less chemical use
- Creating nature corridors
- Planting native species

Partnering for Change

- Supporting Local Nature Recovery Strategies

- Working with environmental organisations

How You Can Help

- Plant pollinator-friendly flowers
- Reduce pesticides
- Leave a corner of your garden wild
- Create a pond or log pile
- Join local conservation activities

Our Progress

Each year we publish a **Biodiversity Report** showing:

- New habitats created
- Improvements to Council land
- Community involvement
- Progress toward long-term goals

Together, we can make Lostwithiel a thriving place for wildlife and people.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Checklist

A formal checklist for use when reviewing planning applications

This checklist can be appended to your policy or used as a standalone assessment tool for the Planning Committee.

Biodiversity Net Gain – Planning Response Checklist

Application Reference: Site Address: Date Assessed: Assessed By:

A. Baseline Information

- Has the applicant provided a biodiversity baseline assessment?
- Does the baseline include habitat types, condition assessments and species records?
- Are any priority habitats or species (as defined by Section 41 NERC Act) present?
- Are any statutory or non-statutory designations affected (SSSI, LNR, CWS, ancient woodland, veteran trees)?

B. Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation

- Has a DEFRA Biodiversity Metric been submitted?
- Is the metric complete, transparent and methodologically sound?
- Does the proposal demonstrate at least **10% Biodiversity Net Gain** (or higher if required locally)?
- Are post-development habitat types appropriate and ecologically valuable?
- Are proposed habitats deliverable and maintainable for a minimum of 30 years?

C. Avoid–Mitigate–Compensate Hierarchy

- Has the applicant demonstrated avoidance of harm to existing habitats?
- Are mitigation measures clearly described and adequate?

- Is compensation only used as a last resort?
- Are off-site gains justified and secured through legal agreements?

D. Habitat Creation and Enhancement

- Does the proposal include native species planting?
- Are wildlife corridors protected or enhanced?
- Are SuDS features designed for biodiversity (e.g., wetland planting)?
- Are green roofs, green walls or other nature-based solutions included?
- Are lighting impacts on wildlife minimised?

E. Long-Term Management

- Is a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) provided?
- Does the LEMP include monitoring, maintenance and reporting requirements?
- Are responsibilities and funding arrangements clearly identified?

F. Overall Assessment

- Supports BNG and biodiversity enhancement
- Requires further information
- Does not meet BNG requirements

Comments / Recommendations:

Biodiversity Audit Template

A structured template for auditing Council-owned land

Lostwithiel Town Council – Biodiversity Audit Template

Site Name: Location / Grid Reference:

Date of Survey:

Surveyor(s):

1. Site Description

- General description of the site
- Current land use
- Adjacent land uses
- Known constraints (e.g., access, contamination, utilities)

2. Habitat Assessment

Tick all that apply and describe condition:

Habitat Type	Present?	Condition (Good/Moderate/Poor)	Notes
Woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hedgerows	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grassland (amenity)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grassland (wildflower/meadow)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wetland / pond	<input type="checkbox"/>
River / stream	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scrub	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trees (individual)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Veteran or ancient trees	<input type="checkbox"/>

Habitat Type	Present?	Condition (Good/Moderate/Poor)	Notes
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Species Observations

- Notable species (flora and fauna)
- Protected species evidence
- Invasive non-native species present

4. Pressures and Threats

- Mowing regime
- Chemical use
- Disturbance
- Litter / pollution
- Fragmentation
- Shading
- Water quality issues

5. Opportunities for Enhancement

- Wildflower planting
- Reduced mowing / meadow creation
- Hedgerow restoration
- Tree planting
- Pond creation or enhancement
- Nest boxes / bat boxes / insect hotels
- Creation of nature corridors
- Removal of invasive species

6. Recommended Actions

List actions, responsible person, and timescale

7. Photographic Record

Attach photographs with captions.

8. Summary and Recommendations

A short summary of key findings and recommended next steps.

