

# GREAT WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## Statement on Biodiversity

Version 1

*This policy document should be reviewed and updated as necessary.*

Version	Review Date	Reviewed By	Summary of Changes
1	July 2022	S. Gilbert	

## **Great Waltham Parish Council – Statement on Biodiversity**

1. This statement has been adopted by Great Waltham Parish Council (“Council”) to demonstrate it recognises its duties in relation to biodiversity and the actions it takes to meet its commitments. The Council has direct responsibility for a number of green areas within the parish:
2. Recreation grounds at Great Waltham, Ford End and Howe Street
  - 2.1. While these are predominantly grassed spaces, they are bordered by a number of trees and hedges which are regularly inspected and maintained to encourage strong and healthy growth.
  - 2.2. The Council employs professional inspectors and tree/hedge maintenance companies. It schedules non-emergency work at the sites to minimise disturbance for nesting birds and other wildlife.
  - 2.3. The Council has handyperson and caretaking resources available to maintain the facilities at its recreation grounds. The role holders are encouraged to maintain facilities in a sympathetic manner to encourage biodiversity.
  - 2.4. The Council takes all opportunities to initiate the planting of trees and wildlife planting areas. The recreation ground at Ford End has been developed in conjunction with other agencies to create a wooded area with associated wild flowering.
3. Allotment sites at Brook Mead and Bury Lane
  - 3.1. The majority of these areas are under cultivation. The allotment agreements issued to individual plot holders include a section on the use of chemicals where the Council states it has *“a strong preference for organic cultivation on its allotment sites, without the use of chemicals. In particular, it supports the use of biodegradable weed suppressants, such as cardboard. However, it recognizes that there may be exceptional circumstances when permitted chemicals are deemed necessary. Nevertheless, [...] such use must be carried out safely, legally and without affecting adjacent allotment gardens or properties”*.
  - 3.2. In relation to the setting of bonfires at the allotment sites, the Council states in the allotment agreement that *“as with the use of chemicals, [it] maintains an environmentally-friendly policy towards the disposal of waste from the [sites]. Its preference is for as much material as possible to be recycled. While an individual bonfire may be small in the overall scheme of things, each one releases significant amounts of pollutants such as carbon monoxide and dioxins into the air that are damaging to local air quality and to human health. The Council therefore wishes to discourage bonfires on land for which it has responsibilities, hence the nature of the [strict conditions it sets out in the allotment agreement wording]”*.
  - 3.3. The Council employs professional hedge maintenance companies. It schedules non-emergency work at the sites to minimise disturbance for nesting birds and other wildlife.

#### 4. Other green spaces

- 4.1. The Council also maintains other, often roadside, green areas. These can be common land areas or locations where ownership is unknown. When it assumes responsibility, it makes sure such maintenance minimises disturbance for nesting birds and the reseeded cycles of flora.
  - 4.2. In relation to roadside verges not under its direct control, as necessary, the Council liaises with those landowners, authorities or agencies responsible for maintenance to ensure minimal disturbance for nesting birds and the reseeded cycles of flora.
5. The Council recognises and actively supports higher authorities' plans which acknowledge the work which needed to tackle climate change and biodiversity issues. In particular, it has resolved to remain especially mindful of Chelmsford City Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan<sup>1</sup>, as it affects activities in the parish.
  6. In its capacity as consultee for local planning applications, the Council scrutinises and comments on applications to ensure all necessary environmental issues have been considered in relation to both the proposal itself or the work required to deliver what is being proposed. The Council supports wildlife planting areas within any new development.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chelmsford City Council (2020), *Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan*. Available at [https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/\\_resources/assets/inline/full/0/3649750.pdf](https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/_resources/assets/inline/full/0/3649750.pdf). (Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> April 2022).