



# Toppesfield Parish Council



## Biodiversity Policy

### 1. Background

In accordance with Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Toppesfield Parish Council recognises its duty to consider what actions it can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity within its jurisdiction.

### 2. Definition

Biodiversity refers to the variety of all life on Earth—plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms. It underpins ecosystem services that support human wellbeing, including clean air, water, food production, climate regulation, and cultural enrichment.

### 3. Aims and Objectives

The Council aims to:

- Conserve and enhance biodiversity across the parish.
- Integrate biodiversity considerations into all decision-making processes.
- Promote sustainable land and property management.
- Engage and support the local community in biodiversity initiatives.

### 4. Policy Commitments

#### Planning Applications

The Council will:

- Support developments that conserve or create habitats.
- Advocate for biodiversity net gain in all planning responses.
- Protect sensitive habitats from inappropriate development.

#### Land and Property Management

The Council will:

- Conduct biodiversity audits of its landholdings.
- Adopt environmentally friendly maintenance practices (e.g. reduced mowing, chemical-free management).
- Specify biodiversity-friendly standards in grounds maintenance contracts.
- Source sustainable materials and consider biodiversity in building management.

## **Community Engagement**

The Council will:

- Raise awareness via newsletters, website, and events.
- Encourage community participation in biodiversity projects (e.g. tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making).
- Promote wildlife-friendly gardening and hedgehog highways.
- Collaborate with local schools and organisations to foster environmental stewardship.

## **Partnerships**

The Council will:

- Work with local conservation groups, farmers, and neighbouring councils.
- Review and support local nature recovery strategies and SSSI management plans.

## **5. Monitoring and Review**

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes.

Progress will be monitored through council reports and community feedback.

A summary of actions taken will be published annually.