

## **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 Environment Act 2021, St Austell Bay Parish Council, herein after referred to as the Council, which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

### **Definition**

According to DEFRA (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is in the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – 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 also less obvious 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 including its beaches and coastline.

The full council and any committees of the Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies required, including the policies contained in the St Austell Bay Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan, Climate Action Plan and the Planning Checklist.

In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area including its beaches and coastline in the following ways:

- Consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications;
- Manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity;
- Support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact/nature positive practices;
- Encourage and support other organisations within the parish to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind;
- Support residents and local organisations activities such as Diggers and Doers, Charlestown Chums, Charlestown History Group, Chandlers Walk Garden, Charlestown Regatta Committee to enhance and promote biodiversity.

## **Actions**

### Planning Applications

The Council will:

- 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;
- Support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications;
- Consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain;
- Include policies in support of biodiversity with the neighbourhood plan and Climate Crisis Action Plan.

## **Land and Property Management**

The Council will

- Consider the need for a biodiversity audit of its holdings;
- Consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regard to cutting and removal of vegetation, the timing of maintenance work, minimising the use of chemicals and paying attention to the Government's regulations for plant protection products;
- Take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment;
- Source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use;
- Consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings, seeking to include additional features such as bee bricks, bat/nest boxes as appropriate.

## **Local Community**

The Council will

- Raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website, noticeboards and any social media channels;
- Where feasible, involve the community and existing volunteer groups in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making etc.

## **Partners**

The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the parish.

It will review any local nature recovery strategies such as the Cornwall Local Nature Recovery Strategy.