

CRANHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Biodiversity Policy

Adopted Date: 2nd September 2025

Next Review due: September 2027

1. Introduction

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England, including Parish Councils to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making.

This was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021 so public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This means a public authority must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver policies and achieve objectives.

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

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is 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.

2. Definition

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

Biodiversity is everywhere, in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains rivers and the sea. 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.

3. The Local Area

Cranham Parish centres on the village of Cranham, which is a rural village, with a considerable number of natural areas, including woodlands (eg Cranham, Rough Park and Buckholt woods), hedges, ditches, farmland, and the Painswick Stream in its midst. It also includes Cranham Common, a site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI). In addition, within a mile or so is the Painswick Beacon, Sheepscombe Common and several woodlands (including, e.g. Lord's and Lady's, and Workman's).

Cranham Parish is within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the largest AONB in England and Wales. Cranham is part of the Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods National Nature Reserve (NNR), which is the largest nature reserve in the Cotswolds. This reserve is largely made up of a chain of beechwoods and limestone grasslands around the upper slopes of the Painswick Valley.

4. Parish Council responsibilities

The Parish Council owns several pieces of land -including the Playing Field; the village Pound, and the Village Allotments.

It is to be noted that an independent charitable trust (Cranham Common Trust, "CCT") owns the Cranham Common (funded by donations from parishioners and others). The Common is managed (under a lease from CCT) by Natural England ("NE") alongside a management committee of parishioner volunteers (Cranham Common Management Committee "CCMC").

Farmland within the parish is also owned by the National Trust ("NT") (managed under lease by local farmers, the Whitakers). NE and NT also manage several of the woodlands and Commons mentioned above which are in or near the Parish.

5. Aims and Objectives.

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Parish Council's area. The Parish Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies

and strategies as required. It is noted that climate change has had a considerable impact on biodiversity. The Council will aim to encourage climate mitigation in its delivery of the actions to improve biodiversity listed below.

6. Actions

The Parish Council will aim - as far as reasonably practicable - to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made through the Parish Council, especially 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. In so far as it is able, the Parish Council will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- Consider the impact on biodiversity in any relevant dealing with CCMC, NE, NT or other third-party landowners.
- Manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity and as far as possible will sustain and enhance wildlife conditions. This will include adopting as far as reasonably possible beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work, paying attention to the Government's regulations for plant protection products.
- Take reasonable care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- Encourage and support residents and local organisations and businesses to enhance and promote biodiversity and/or to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- Review how it manages the land at the Playing Fields, the Pound and the Village Allotments -this may include but is not limited to:
 - Considering leaving standing and fallen dead wood as a habitat for invertebrates and other species whilst ensuring that the land is maintained properly and safely in accordance with good husbandry.

- Leaving leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for Invertebrates.
- Removing (and as far as reasonably practicable and economically expedient, controlling) invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna as required.
- Considering planting native trees and flora when the occasion arises on Parish Council land.
- Considering margins of uncut grass around the hedges adjacent to Village Allotments to allow longer grasses to grow.
- Encouraging actions to sustain and enhance wild life land corridors as well as promoting hedgerow planting and protection.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy was adopted on 2nd September 2025 and will be reviewed in two years or sooner should legislation dictate. The Council will report annually as to how this policy and the actions herein have been implemented in the preceding year, and to show progress against such actions.