

Background

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

Biodiversity refers to the variety of all living things and their interactions. It is a key indicator of the health of an ecosystem and essential for life on earth.

Conserving biodiversity can include restoring or enhancing a population or habitat. This duty has been reinforced under the Environment Act 2021

This means that, as a public authority, you must:

- Develop policies and strategies and put them into practice.
- Manage the planning system.
- Manage:
 - land and buildings
 - woodlands and nature reserves
 - public open space
 - community amenities
 - waste and pollution
 - energy and water
 - wood and plant products

The Local Area and Parish Council Responsibility

The Parish of Harlton is surrounded by arable and grazing farmland. It has a Church with an open Churchyard and Cemetery, as well as a community owned pub and large garden which backs onto adjacent farm fields.

Areas of environmental interest in the village include the village pond in the centre of the village – owned and managed by a private landowner, the 1.5 hectare of mixed woodland known as the Clunch Pit (and old quarry site) and the Glebe (Village Green - 0.59 Acres) with its hedgerows, shrubbery and mature Chestnut and Lime Trees. Both open public green spaces in Parish Council ownership. The Village Green is in a Conservation area. There is a small parcel of open green space in the High Street, owned by the PC, adjacent to the telephone box, on which the council has planted two fruit trees. Other green spaces in the village include a private cricket ground off Washpit Lane.

Whilst the PC does not own or have responsibility for footpaths or verges not on Parish Council owned land, the PC may decide at times to manage areas, if it feels the standard of management of certain aspects should be addressed for the for the safety and convenience of residents, such as keeping Rod's Walk track clear leading up to the Clunch Pit. Additionally, it is noted that householders in general manage the grass verges in front of their properties.

What the Parish Council Will Do

- It will strive to make a positive contribution to protecting the local and wider environment.
- To consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made through the Parish Council, including when commenting on planning applications.
- It will seek to manage land and open green spaces for which it is responsible in ways which benefit the environment and biodiversity

These may include, but are not limited to:

- The restoration of natural processes and landscape recovery (Clunch pit)
- Recognise the importance of trees, hedgerows, and dead wood as an essential corridor of wildlife.
- Leaving standing dead wood and leaving or placing fallen dead wood, including some hedge cuttings, as a habitat for invertebrates on Council owned land wherever possible.
- Use native and sustainably sourced trees when planting
- Maintaining newly planted trees to give them the best chance of survival
- Maintain the health of existing trees.
- Where possible, reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides on Parish Council owned land where feasible and appropriate.
- Ensure hedges are cut outside of the bird nesting season and, if possible, later in the winter to allow birds to feed on any berries (if present).
- Continue to support Haslingfield & Harlton Eco Group with local eco initiatives and activities – such as the 'No Mow' May (depending upon traffic visibility or pedestrian use) and the BioBlitz in the Clunch Pit in 2023.
- Support where feasible the recommendations for management of verges:
- Engage the wider community by promoting biodiversity on the village website and in Newsletters.

Adopted July 2024:

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