



This policy is in response to the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' placed on local authorities introduced by the Environment Act 2021. Swillington Village Council will take biodiversity into account in all its decisions and actions. The Council should reconsider their actions on a regular basis.

According to the Act, public authorities need to check if a number of strategies affect how they comply with their biodiversity duty including:

- Local nature recovery strategies
- Species conservation strategies
- Protected site strategies

The Council should understand how or if they are relevant to their organisation, be aware of how these strategies affect land that is owned and managed by the Council, or actions the Council could take to conserve or enhance biodiversity and consider how the Council can contribute to the strategy where appropriate.

Biodiversity is the collective term for the variety and abundance of forms of life found in an area, including animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms like bacteria. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems to maintain, balance and support life.

Biodiversity supports everything in nature that we need to survive, including food, oxygen, clean air and clean water.

Swillington Village Council will:

1. Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions it makes in council, committee and working group meetings. It will seek to minimise adverse impacts on biodiversity as a result of the council's activities and will identify opportunities to increase biodiversity when practicable.
2. Encourage practices and projects beneficial to biodiversity through grants the Council makes to local groups.
3. Communicate information and raise awareness of biodiversity through its website and newsletters.
4. The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the village.

5. The Council will, wherever possible, raise public awareness of biodiversity issues as part of its leadership role within the local community.
6. The Council, when commenting on planning applications, will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats. It will 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.
7. Monitor its internal policies and processes to enhance biodiversity.

Swillington Village Council as a landowner:

1. The Council will proactively remove invasive species as required under appropriate legislation in order to prevent harm to native species.
2. The Council will avoid the use of herbicides except in exceptional circumstances.
3. The Council will properly scale and time grounds maintenance work or vegetation removal such that the impact on biodiversity is minimised. Maintenance practices that are beneficial to biodiversity will be taken into consideration when contracts are placed.
4. The Council will create dedicated spaces to attract and enhance wildlife.
5. The Council will improve the buildings it manages and land around them to enhance biodiversity.

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