

Payhembury Parish Council

Biodiversity Policy

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1. Background

1.1. Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (section 40) 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.

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth (as defined in ‘Biodiversity 2020: a strategy of England’s wildlife and ecosystems’ by DEFRA). Biodiversity is everywhere: in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains, rivers and the sea.

2. The Local Area

2.1. Payhembury is a rural parish, with a considerable number of natural areas, including Hembury Fort, the River Tale, the playing fields, village green, Waterloo Plot, the Churchyard, Poffit Lane & other footpaths. Most of these areas are privately owned, however a number of them have public access.

3. Parish Council Responsibilities

3.1. The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of three areas of open land – the playing fields, the village green and Waterloo Plot, plus the area around the War Memorial.

3.2. The Parish Council is also responsible for the trees they have planted along the Colestocks to Payhembury footpath and in the Jubilee Copse in Upton.

3.3. The Parish Council is also responsible for the provision and updating of the Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan.

4. What the Parish Council will do

4.1. The Parish Council:

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- will consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made through the Parish Council.
- will, when considering planning applications, 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.
- will, as far as is possible, conserve the biodiversity of the land it manages. It will adopt beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work. Special care will be taken in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- will, undertake work in partnership with other individuals and organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the parish.
- will, wherever possible, raise public awareness of biodiversity issues. It will, where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on land that it manages including for example tree planting, wild flower meadows, birdbox making. The Parish Council will communicate information and raise awareness of biodiversity through its website and by other means as appropriate.
- will ensure that when the Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed, the working group include biodiversity in their discussions and that it is added to the plan as appropriate.