



## ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY POLICY

Aston Rowant Parish Council is committed to protecting the environment and the natural heritage of the Parish. The Parish Council also recognises the need for sustainable development and the provision of quality public amenities and services.

The Parish Council is obligated to consider the impact of its functions on the parish, which includes the villages of Aston Rowant, Kingston Blount, Kingston Stert, Copcourt and Chalford and any conservation areas within those villages.

- 1. In carrying out its own activities, the Parish Council will aim to make a positive contribution to protecting and enhancing the environment by:**
  - Minimising waste and pollution
  - Following a policy of reducing, reusing and recycling
  - Eliminating the unnecessary use of energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions
  - Providing information electronically and reducing the use of paper
  - Avoiding the use of 'single use plastic' items
  
- 2. When purchasing services and goods, the Parish Council will give preference to:**
  - Local suppliers who pay, at minimum, the Living Wage
  - Options which are environmentally friendly and/or Fair Trade
  - Products which have been manufactured from recycled materials
  - Products which can be disposed of in an environmentally sustainable manner
  
- 3. The Parish Council will require that contractors and Councillors who carry out maintenance work of behalf of the Parish Council:**
  - Minimise the use of harmful pesticides and chemicals
  - Work in a way that benefits wildlife and the environment
  - Use native, wildflower friendly species for planting where possible
  - Follow the Parish Councils Environmental policy
  
- 4. In its decision making, the Parish Council will take careful consideration of:**
  - The importance of walking, cycling and public transport
  - The need to conserve and improve natural habitats
  - The need to protect vulnerable and protected species
  - The need to conserve the natural beauty of the parish and surrounding landscape
  
- 5. In addition, where possible, the Parish Council will:**
  - Encourage the protection and enhancement of the unique character, beauty, heritage and biodiversity within the parish
  - Ensure the parish's natural beauty and heritage are not compromised by inappropriate development
  - Ensure the nature conservation value of the various streams and tributaries of the River Thame is maintained and enhanced

- Encourage the protection of the integrity of biodiversity sites and sites of geological and geomorphological importance, and those of archaeological and historical value within the parish
- Highlight the importance and value of our local environment and its contribution to our community's quality of life
- Encourage local action in support of the environment
- Improve the consistency of water quality to maintain a healthy river ecosystem
- Discourage all forms of littering, particularly dog fouling and single-use plastics
- Encourage the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources
- Encourage the reduction, reuse and recycling of resources within the parish
- Encourage the use of materials and systems which improve energy efficiency of developments
- Support and encourage actions and initiatives to bring land into proactive conservation management
- Recognise the importance of hedgerows as an essential corridor for the movement of wildlife which may support many animals and plants

## BIODIVERSITY

### **What is biodiversity, and why is it important?**

Biodiversity, or 'biological diversity' is the term used to describe the enormous variety of life on Earth, including animals, plants, fungi and bacteria.

It is important because all the Earth's species work together to survive and maintain their ecosystems. However, many species are under threat due to human consumption, pollution, climate change and population growth.

### **What can Parish Councils do to help Biodiversity?**

Parish councils, like all public authorities in the UK, have a legal duty to consider conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their functions. This includes:

- Ensuring public access to high quality open spaces, including the ability to designate land as Local Green Space.
- Protecting Green-Belt land and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- Maintaining green corridors, to prevent neighbouring areas from merging
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment through the protection of valued landscapes.

### **How can the public help improve the biodiversity in Aston Rowant parish?**

This parish has a wide range of biodiverse habitats, including trees, hedges, grassland, woodland and wetlands which gives it a very special appeal, epitomised by the site at Fiveways.

We know many residents are concerned about the potential impact from future housing developments on these habitats and we look forward to hearing any ideas for how biodiversity in Aston Rowant, Kingston Blount, Kingston Stert, Copcourt and Chalford can be safeguarded and improved. This could include, for example, improvements to existing wildlife sites, creating new sites, providing additional habitats (such as bird and bat boxes), improving wildlife corridors between sites, or seeking to protect specific areas from development.

**Please let us know what you think using the online contact/feedback form on our website:**

<https://www.astonrowantparishcouncil.gov.uk/contact/>

## CURRENT PARISH COUNCIL MEASURES AND INITIATIVES

	Activity	Target (& date)	Responsibility
Provision of dog waste and litter bins	Potential new dog waste bin by Crowell Permissive Path and new litter bins at Village Hall	Spring 2024, or earlier	Clerk Village Maintenance All Councillors Hillwerke Recreational Trust
Monthly Litter pick	Engage new litter picker ASAP	Sept/Oct'23	Clerk All Councillors
Bi-Annual Litter picks	In conjunction with the Great British Litter Pick and SODC	Every Mar/Apr and Sept/Oct	Footpaths and Amenities Group (FAAG) All Councillors Members of the public
Report Fly-Tipping to SODC	Monitor footpaths or bridleways for fly-tipping	Encouragement of all parishioners to use SODC website report page, and/or OCC "Fix-my-Street" App	All parishioners All Councillors SODC OCC
Flower planting and tubs at village entrances on B4009	Snowdrops, Daffodils, wild flowers at Fiveways Local volunteer maintains the flower tubs in Spring/Autumn	More planting to be achieved at Fiveways, KB Cross-Village lanes and any other areas	FAAG All Councillors Members of the public or any other volunteer
Maintaining a log of tree planting & maintenance	Potential exercise to locate, plot and update on condition and maintenance that may be needed, plus consider new sites/species.	Ongoing	FAAG
Village Maintenance	Verges, Hedgerows and Shrubs – apart from one 'free' cut of KB Lanes in May, all other regular maintenance jobs removed from District and County schedules	Maintaining the value of 'No Mow May' to encourage wildlife habitats, but ensuring vision splays and footpaths etc. are kept tidy and passable.	Village Maintenance FAAG Clerk All Councillors External grass-cutting and weed-killing contractors engaged on an annual basis
Footpath Warden(s)	Ensure continuity of the role when current incumbent retires	Ongoing liaison with FAAG/PC re: regular maintenance.	FAAG All councillors
Monitor and protect the chalk streams flowing through the parish	Make public more aware of local water courses. Monitor pollution of streams which is killing plants and fish down-stream. Prompt reporting of sewage leaks to Thames Water.	Ongoing	FAAG All Councillors Members of the public
Footpath Map(s)	Currently displayed outside Village Hall	Update and display in more places, plus online version	FAAG All councillors
Reduce and re-use paper	Avoid printing documents Electronic communications Use double-sided printing Re-use envelopes	Ongoing	Clerk All Councillors