



**WAREHAM**  
Town Council

# **WAREHAM TOWN COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY POLICY**

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## INTRODUCTION

Wareham is a historic market town situated on the rivers Frome and Piddle or Trent in Dorset. Wareham Town, the parish for which Wareham Town Council is responsible, is primarily comprised of Wareham's urban town landscape with several small green spaces and areas within it surrounded by riverside meadows, meadows and heathland. Wareham is located in the Dorset National Landscape, formerly the Purbeck AONB, and notably contains both the Wareham Common and Wareham Meadows Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

This policy sets out how Wareham Town Council strives to conserve and enhance biodiversity and has been created considering where the Town Council has agency over land it owns directly, land and spaces it cares for on behalf of residents as well as its leadership role with partners and residents in and around Wareham.

This policy belongs to Wareham Town Council and should be monitored regularly and must be reviewed no less frequently than every five years.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Wareham Town Council seeks to fulfil its duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the following areas:

- 1.1 Managing Council land with biodiversity in mind
- 1.2 Our approach to caring for Public Spaces
- 1.3 Community Engagement and Support
- 1.4 Environment and Biodiversity Consciousness in the Organisation

Beyond the above areas, Wareham Town Council seeks to align its environmental and biodiversity-supporting activities with best practice and guidance as they become available, as well as relevant legislation and biodiversity strategies, not limited to the Nature Recovery Dorset Strategy<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-s-local-nature-recovery-strategy>

## **MANAGING COUNCIL LAND WITH BIODIVERSITY IN MIND**

Wareham Town Council's land offers a variety of habitats supporting biodiversity. Wareham Town Council will protect these habitats where possible and enhance or create habitats.

### **MAINTAINING HABITATS**

Wareham Town Council owns and manages several amenity green spaces such as the Recreation Ground, Hauses Field, various play areas and small parcels of land. These areas differ from one another in their contributions towards biodiversity in Wareham. Wareham Town Council seeks to protect and enhance their biodiversity contributions broadly in the following ways:

- 2.1 Maintaining green spaces and biodiverse areas on Wareham Town Council land, avoiding depleting this where practicable and enhancing other areas to offset any required development if needed.
- 2.2 Keeping a robust regime of maintenance and surveillance for trees on Wareham Town Council land to ensure their health and safety.
- 2.3 Continuously monitoring land owned by Wareham Town Council to identify any emergent threats to biodiverse spaces and mitigate against these.
- 2.4 Identifying invasive species on Wareham Town Council land and removing them where practicable.
- 2.5 Following best practice regarding hedge maintenance to avoid undue disturbance of birds and other species reliant on hedge habitats.
- 2.6 Reducing the use of glyphosate pesticides on Wareham Town Council land as much as is practicable, only using glyphosate where an alternative cannot be deployed.

### **CREATING AND ENHANCING HABITATS**

While managing its land and facilities, there are opportunities for Wareham Town Council to enhance or create habitats to support biodiversity, both temporarily and more permanently.

- 3.1 Creating shelters by leaving dead wood and other vegetation to support biodiversity following hedge and tree maintenance where possible.
- 3.2 Ongoing consideration of where suitable plants and vegetation can be introduced to enhance biodiversity where practicable and resource allows.

## **OUR APPROACH TO CARING FOR PUBLIC SPACES**

Wareham Town Council's activities extend beyond land and facilities it owns and much of its work maintains, beautifies and otherwise enhances the wider town and public realm. Wareham Town Council considers how it can both reasonably protect and enhance biodiversity and the environment beyond land it owns directly.

- 4.1 Creating stepping-stone corridors for pollinators by installing and maintaining planters throughout the town.
- 4.2 Reducing use of pesticides and glyphosates in the public realm where possible, using agricultural vinegar and other alternative methods.
- 4.3 Removing litter and other biodiversity endangering materials from the public realm, collaborating with Dorset Council to remove risks Wareham Town Council cannot remove directly.
- 4.4 Stewardship in local development by creating, monitoring and updating a neighbourhood plan to further protect green and amenity spaces important to residents and for biodiversity from less-suitable development.
- 4.5 Wareham Town Council responds to all planning applications within Wareham Town Parish as a statutory consultee and uses this opportunity to act as a local consultative voice and critical friend ensuring biodiversity has not been unduly overlooked in local development.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT**

Wareham Town Council's role in community leadership is central to the town. Its proximity as the closest form of government to residents as well as its prominent location within the town enable it to closely engage with and support residents, voluntary groups and other partners in furthering the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Wareham.

- 5.1 Town Council Councillors are annually appointed to serve as representatives on outside bodies, many of which are engaged with work supporting the environment and biodiversity in the area. Councillor engagement with these groups fosters collaboration between these groups and the Town Council and helps to triage support or guidance where appropriate.
- 5.2 Wareham Town Council works closely with voluntary organisations within the town to contribute to biodiversity-supporting initiatives. This work includes logistical and financial support to groups such as the Wareham Community Growers and Northmoor Wildlife Haven as well as permitting biodiverse initiatives on Wareham Town Council land.

- 5.3 Local and regional groups engaged in environmental, and biodiversity work frequently use Wareham Town Council's facilities to meet and host events. Facilitating these events is a key area of logistical support for these groups enabling them to carry out their activities and outreach work at financially sustainable rates.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE ORGANISATION**

- 6.1 Environmental and biodiversity foresight in procurement, ensuring considerations are made for the environmental and biodiversity implications of goods, equipment, services and developments procured by the Town Council.
- 6.2 Adoption, monitoring and awareness of policies informing Wareham Town Council's actions to deliver against the Biodiversity Duty
- 6.3 Awareness raising of biodiversity-supporting actions and policies for service-delivering officers.

## **BIODIVERSITY ACTIONS**

Wareham Town Council has identified the below as tangible, key actions for it to deliver against its ambitions to protect and enhance biodiversity in Wareham. The action list acts as a guide for the Town Council's actions across its activities but may not be exhaustive. Wareham Town Council may identify further actions throughout the course of transacting its business which further benefit biodiversity.

ACTION	LOCATION(S)	DATE / FREQUENCY
Maintaining WTC sites of lesser biodiversity value with biodiversity in mind – Avoiding use of pesticides where possible, allowing material from hedge cutting to be left for local mammals, insects. Ensuring hedge cutting is carried out outside of birdnesting seasons.	Wareham Recreation Ground Hausen Field Drax Play Area Carey Hall Lands Land at Bestwall Road	Ongoing
Ensuring built features / buildings / other developments have biodiversity net gain principals in mind.	All WTC locations	Ongoing
Monitoring sites for invasive species which threaten biodiversity and removing them where possible	All WTC locations	Ongoing

Monitoring the health of trees on Wareham Town Council's land, following guidance and required remedial action to ensure their health and the safety of site users.	All WTC locations	3-yearly
Monitoring Wareham Town Council land to identify unforeseen risks to the sites' biodiversity	Wareham Recreation Ground Hauses Field Drax Play Area Carey Hall Lands	Daily
	All other WTC locations	Ongoing
Identifying where biodiversity-supporting vegetation can be introduced	All WTC locations	As funding, practicality and Council support allows
Supporting planter stocking throughout the locality	Various sites within Wareham	Biannual
Supporting the maintenance of planters throughout the locality		Ongoing
Reduction or elimination of glyphosate usage for weedkilling in the locality and at WTC sites	Various sites within Wareham	Within 1 year, thereafter ongoing
Removal of stray litter from local environment	Various sites within Wareham	Daily
Reporting of complex or larger biodiversity hazards to Dorset Council	Various sites within Wareham	Ongoing
Consideration of biodiversity impacts within planning applications	Various sites within Wareham	Fortnightly
Consideration of biodiversity impacts within Wareham Neighbourhood Plan	Wareham Town Parish and adjoining areas	Neighbourhood Plan Reviews
Appointment of Council representatives to external bodies engaged in biodiversity work	Various sites within Wareham	Annually, Annual Town Council Meeting
Collaboration with voluntary organisations and other partners delivering biodiversity-supporting work	Various sites within Wareham	Ongoing

Responding to consultations affecting the Wareham area in respect to biodiversity	Wareham Town Parish and adjoining areas	Ongoing
Facilitating voluntary organisations and other partners delivering biodiversity-supporting work in WTC buildings	Town Hall	Ongoing
Ensuring financial accessibility for voluntary organisations and other partners delivering biodiversity-supporting work to host events in WTC buildings	Town Hall	Annually, PR&F
Ensuring environmental, sustainability, biodiversity and net-gain considerations in procurement exercises	All WTC locations	Ongoing, During tender specification drafting
Adoption and monitoring of Biodiversity policy	All WTC locations	No less frequently than every 5 years
Awareness and best-practice sharing of biodiversity for officers	Wareham Town Parish	Ongoing