

CROWMARSH PARISH COUNCIL



BIODIVERSITY POLICY

ADOPTED ON 3RD SEPTEMBER 2026

Crowmarsh Parish Council Biodiversity Policy

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth and includes all species of animals and plants. The objective of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity within the area of Crowmarsh Parish.

Objectives

The Council will aim to improve the biodiversity in the following ways:

- Manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity
- Consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications
- Encourage other organisations working within the parish to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- Support local residents and local organisations in activities to enhance and promote biodiversity

Actions

Land and property management

Consider the conservation and promotion of biodiversity in open spaces. As necessary, obtain guidance from ecologists. These considerations will include the timing and extent of cutting to allow a diversity of habitats to exist, reducing disturbance during nesting as well as minimising the use of harmful chemicals. Look to create new biodiversity friendly habitats where opportunities exist. Where possible, using sustainable materials for buildings and structures. An action plan is appended to this document outlining some of the activities envisaged.

Planning

With regards to planning applications, the Council will seek to protect sensitive or important habitats from development. Ensure that developments account for biodiversity net gain. Include biodiversity policy within the neighbourhood plan.

Local community and partners

Raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity issues through the website and Crowmarsh News. Encourage and where possible assist local business, partners and residents to make biodiversity positive actions. Where possible, organise local residents to take part in activities that would promote biodiversity.

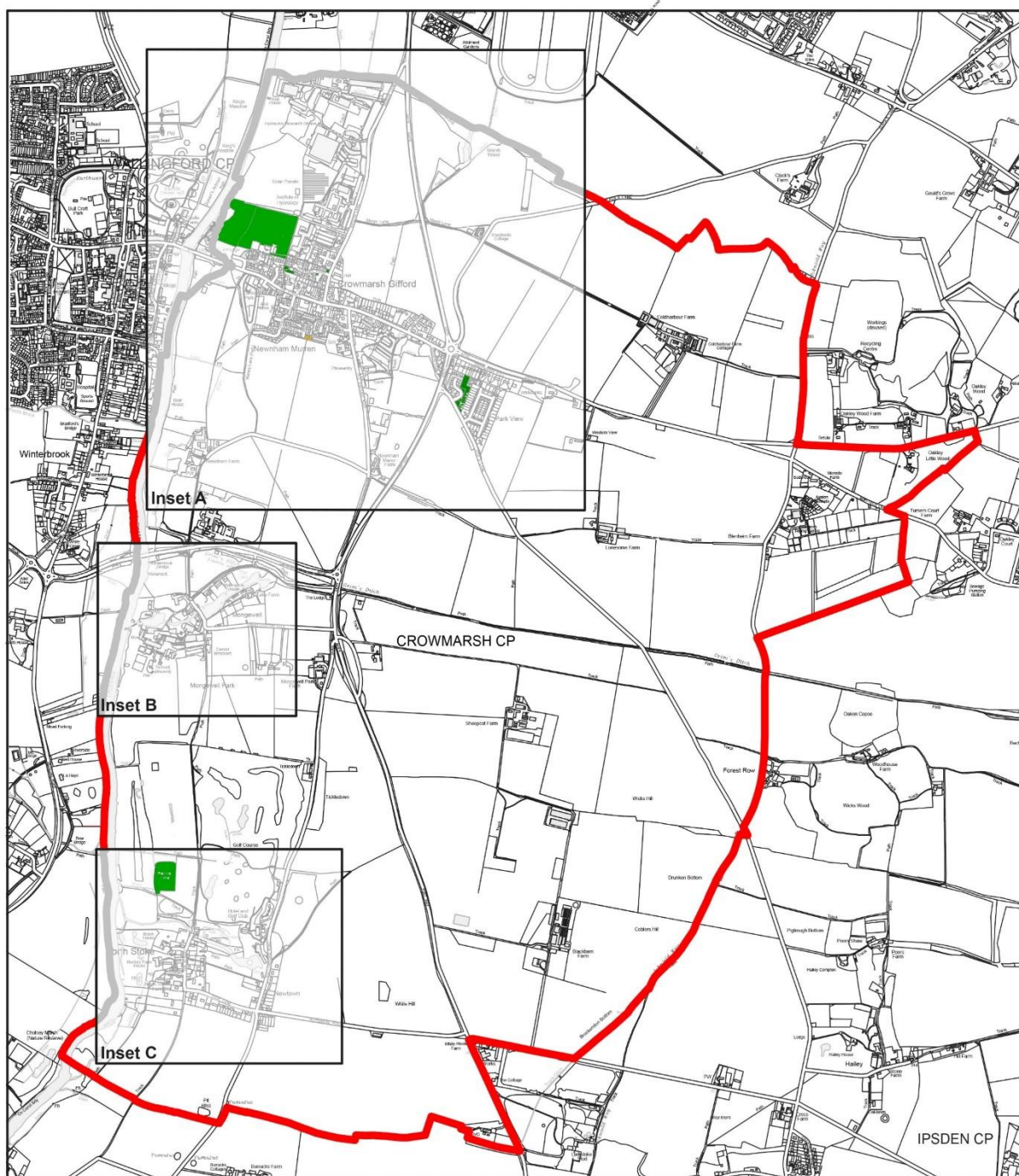
Monitoring

This policy was adopted on 3rd September 2026 (minute reference 5937) and will be reviewed in two years or sooner as legislation dictates. With reference to the associated Crowmarsh Parish Council Action Plan, activities and progress will be published annually.

Crowmarsh Parish Council Biodiversity Action Plan

Site/Objective	Actions	Outcome/target	Next steps/Reporting
Playing fields	- Maintain playing areas whilst minimising harmful chemicals - Plant/encourage trees and minimal mowing on periphery of playing areas	Maintain safe recreational space whilst increasing biodiversity value. Reduce pesticide/herbicide use where practicable. Establish native trees and create rough grass margins around field edges.	Periodic review of management regime and planting success.
Play Area & Adult Gym	- Encourage grass and shrubs/trees within the area - Preference for sustainable materials	Increase shade, pollinator habitat and visual amenity where possible. Ensure all future replacements or installations use sustainable materials where feasible.	Record planting and sustainable material use at the Env and Rec Committee
Nature Area	- Follow the separate management plan for this area to ensure the widest range of biodiversity consistent with the location and public enjoyment/ participation. - Consider opportunities to create new habitats supportive of biodiversity	Increase habitat diversity through features such as wildflower areas, deadwood habitat, bird/bat boxes or ponds/scrapes where appropriate.	Periodic biodiversity survey and review of management plan objectives.
Newnham Churchyard	Consult on adapting management scheme to include biodiversity friendly habitats	Increase native wildflowers while maintaining access and appearance.	Monitor habitat changes.
N. Stoke recreation field	Consult with local residents with a Council preference to manage as a biodiversity friendly area	Agree and implement a biodiversity-focused management plan.	Resident consultation on future use.
Allotments	Review to examine potential for biodiversity friendly areas/planting	Encourage wildlife-friendly gardening, peat-free compost use, pollinator-friendly planting and provision of diverse habitat.	Advise allotment holders on good biodiversity practices
Verges	Light touch mowing where suitable. This can include recommendations such as 'no mow May'	Identify suitable verges for biodiversity management and monitor public feedback.	Regular assessment of managed verges and mowing practices.
Trees	Where possible try to preserve trees and if necessary, replace.	No net loss of mature trees under PC management. Replace any removed trees with suitable native species and identify opportunities for additional tree planting.	Tree audit and planting record.

The outline of the Parish boundaries are shown in Figure 1. Some of the green areas across the Parish which the Council either owns or is involved in the management is shown in Figure 2.



Crowmarsh Neighbourhood Plan

Figure 1. Parish Boundaries as drawn on the Crowmarsh Neighbourhood Plan showing some of the major green areas

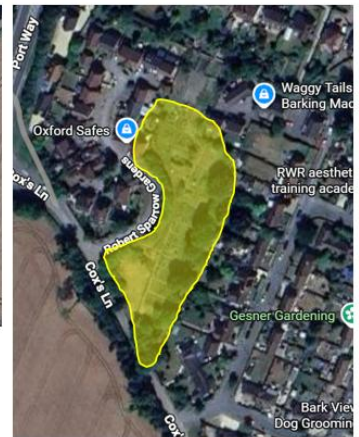


Figure 2. Some of the major green areas in the Parish which the Council either owns or collaborates with in the management of these spaces

How you can help encourage more biodiversity in the Parish in your gardens and allotments

Suggestions from Crowmarsh Parish Council

Why Biodiversity Matters

Biodiversity supports pollination, natural pest control, soil health, and resilience to climate change. Even small gardens and allotments can provide valuable habitats for wildlife and help connect fragmented ecosystems in the Parish. Where possible as part of the Crowmarsh Parish Biodiversity Action Plan, our targets are to:

- Increase plant diversity
- Prioritise native species where possible
- Avoid pesticides and peat-based composts
- Provide year-round food and shelter for insects and birds in particular
- Leave some areas less intensively managed

1. Plant for Pollinators All Year Round

Provide nectar and pollen from early spring to late autumn, perhaps choosing a variety of flower shapes. Examples of useful plants include:

- Spring: Crocus, lungwort (*Pulmonaria*), native primrose, fruit blossom.
- Summer: Lavender, foxglove, comfrey and borage.
- Autumn: Ivy, sedum, asters, *verbena bonariensis*.

2. Grow Native and Wildlife-Friendly Plants

Include native trees, shrubs and wildflowers where space allows. Native species generally support more insects and birds than exotic ornamentals.

Examples include:

- Hawthorn, hazel, dog rose, holly.
- Oxeye daisy, knapweed, bird's-foot trefoil, yarrow.

3. Create Diverse Habitats

Different species need different conditions. If possible, try and leave at least 5–10% of your garden or allotment managed primarily for wildlife. A variety of habitats could include:

- Log piles for beetles and fungi.
- Leaf piles and undisturbed corners for hedgehogs and overwintering insects.
- Areas of longer grass or wildflower meadow.
- A small pond (even a half-barrel pond helps amphibians and insects).

Be aware of the safety of young children when providing water habitats

4. Improve Soil Naturally

Healthy soil has worms, fungi, microbes and a range of plants and roots. Good practice would be to avoid excessive use of artificial fertilisers where possible and to consider the following:

- Add compost and well-rotted manure.
- Mulch bare soil.
- Minimise digging where practical.
- Grow green manures during late autumn/ winter and early spring.

5. Reduce Pesticides and Herbicides

Many chemicals harm beneficial insects and other wildlife. Instead, please consider:

- Encouraging predators such as ladybirds, lacewings and birds.
- Using physical barriers (netting, collars, fleece) to deter pest attack
- Tolerating low levels of pest damage if possible.
- Hand-weeding or mulching to suppress weeds.

6. Provide Food, Water and Shelter

Wildlife needs resources throughout the year. You may want to:

- Install bird feeders, noting RSPB guidelines.
- Provide shallow water dishes with stones for insects.
- Retain seed heads over winter.
- Install bird boxes, bat boxes and insect hotels if space allows.

7. Connected Habitats

Wildlife moves between sites more easily if habitats are connected, so please consider:

- Maintaining gaps under fences for hedgehogs.
- Planting hedges rather than utilising solid boundaries where possible.
- Coordinating with neighbouring plot holders or gardeners to create wildlife corridors where possible.

8. Mow less

We don't have to mow all of our lawn all of the time. According to the British Ecological Society mowing our lawns less helps by providing:

More food for pollinators: Unmown lawns can support hundreds of flowering plant species, increasing nectar sources for bees.

Shelter and habitats: Long grass creates a cool, damp microclimate for ground-dwelling bugs, frogs, and hedgehogs.

Better soil and resilience: Taller grass blades encourage deeper roots, making your turf more resistant to dry spells and reducing carbon emissions from petrol mowers.

By combining productive growing with wildlife-friendly practices, allotments and gardens can support bees, butterflies, birds, hedgehogs, amphibians and countless beneficial insects thus making a positive contribution to biodiversity in Crowmarsh Parish.