



## **AMENITIES COMMITTEE** **BIODIVERSITY POLICY**

### **Introduction**

In accordance with the duty imposed on Town and Parish Councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Marden Parish Council will be exercising all its functions with regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This duty also means that Town and Parish Councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

### **Definition**

According to DEFRA (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.

Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. It is the building block of our 'ecosystems'. These provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The object of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of the Parish of Marden.

All committees of Marden Parish Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, Marden Parish Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the Parish in the following ways:

- Consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- Manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- Support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact practices.

Office Opening Times:

Mondays, Tuesdays & Fridays 10am - 12 noon

Email: [clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk)

Website: [www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](http://www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk)

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- Support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

## **Actions**

### **Planning Applications**

- The Parish 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 with a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of 20% in line with Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policy NE4.
- 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.
- It will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain on a case-by-case basis.
- Any apparent breaches of biodiversity conditions will be reported to MBC Enforcement/MBC Biodiversity Officer.
- It will include policies in support of biodiversity within the adopted Marden Neighbourhood Plan and consider further when undertaking the Neighbourhood Plan review process.

### **Land and Property Management**

- The Parish Council will consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting 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.
- The Parish Council will consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.
- The Parish Council has an adopted Estate Management Plan and Grounds Maintenance Plan for its open spaces.

### **Local Community**

- The Parish Council will raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- The Parish Council will engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference. The Parish Council has an Environmental Group who have asked residents to be involved.
- It will, where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.
- Marden already has a thriving Marden Wildlife and Farming Cluster Group, Marden in Bloom and Horticultural Society who contribute to biodiversity issues.

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## Partners

- Marden Parish Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the Parish. Various projects have already been undertaken with the involvement of tree planting with KCC, Kent Police Cadets, Marden in Bloom, Community Payback, the Parish Church and Marden Wildlife.
- Marden Parish Council has mapped MPC local open spaces on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- It will review any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies in respect of local sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs). It should be considered how to become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.
- The parish of Marden has two SSSI's - the River Beult where a recovery plan is being led by the Environment Agency and Marden Meadows which is managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust and has 5 Ancient Woodlands - Chainhurst (north), Tilden, Bridgehurst, Wilden and Widehurst – as well as a number of semi-ancient woodland areas which are irreplaceable and need protection. Consideration should also be given to Ancient Hedgerows in the Parish.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly, alongside the already adopted Environmental Policy and Terms of Reference, as part of the Parish Council policy review process together with a summary of how the policy has been implemented in the previous twelve months.

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## BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

**Site:**

Whole Parish

**Objective:**

Protect and support biodiversity

**Action:**

Raise local awareness of biodiversity

Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity eg through Planning

**Outcome:**

Gain local support for action

Connect and diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species

**Timeline:**

Ongoing

**Reporting:**

Pear Technology mapping

**Publicity:**

Parish Newsletter

**Site:**

MPC Open Space at Marden Cemetery, Marden Playing Field and Southons Field

**Objective:**

Planting

**Action:**

Additional planting

Hedgerow renewal

Adopt a plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience quiet and calm remembrance.

**Outcome:**

Increased diversity of habitats and food sources

Increased cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals

Encouraging insects, particularly butterflies & bees

Increase hedgerow cover

**Timeline:**

Ongoing

**Reporting:**

N/A

**Publicity:**

Parish Newsletter

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**Site:**

MPC Open Space at Marden Cemetery, Marden Playing Field and Southons Field

**Objective:**

Boundary treatments

**Action:**

Sympathetically maintain hedging

Leave some areas unmown

Only use environmentally friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.

**Outcome:**

Food sources and cover

Encourages insects

Sustain and enhance natural habitats

**Timeline:**

Ongoing

**Reporting:**

N/A

**Publicity:**

N/A

**Site:**

MPC Open Space at Marden Cemetery, Marden Playing Field and Southons Field

**Objective:**

Produce management plans

**Action:**

Adopt a management plan

Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs

**Outcome:**

Sustain and enhance natural habitats

Protecting habitats

**Timeline:**

Ongoing

**Reporting:**

Frequent review of Management Plans

**Publicity:**

N/A

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**Site:**

The Built Landscape

**Objective:**

Reduce loss of trees

**Action:**

Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan

Resist tree loss in urban environment

**Outcome:**

Protecting/enhancing habitats

Maintain tree cover

**Timeline:**

Ongoing

**Reporting:**

Through planning outcomes

**Publicity:**

N/A

**Site:**

Parishwide

**Objective:**

Increase community awareness of biodiversity

**Action:**

Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish

Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the parish newsletter

Create a page on the parish council website for photographs / information / links

Encourage local farmers to contribute

Discourage floodlighting.

**Outcome:**

Engagement/ownership of biodiversity

Neighbourhood Plan consultation

Promote biodiversity

Promote biodiversity – link to Marden Wildlife website/Facebook page

Marden Farmers Cluster Group

Protect nocturnal animals

**Timeline:**

Ongoing

**Reporting:**

Through Neighbourhood Plans

**Publicity:**

Newsletter

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**Site:**

Parishwide

**Objective:**

Support Community Projects

**Action:**

Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.

Work in partnership with the school to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.

Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.

**Outcome:**

Extending habitats

Promote biodiversity

Visits to local schools

**Promote biodiversity Timeline:**

Ongoing

**Reporting:**

N/A

**Publicity:**

Newsletter

Social Media

*Adopted by Marden Parish Council on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023*

*Reviewed/Amended on: 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025*

*Review Date: March 2026*

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