

Aynho Parish Council

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Aynho Parish Council Biodiversity Policy

(Environment Act 2021 – Section 40)

Adopted: 7 April 2026

Review: April 2031

1. Purpose

Aynho Parish Council recognises its duty under **Section 40 of the Environment Act 2021** to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

The Council will meet this duty in a way that is **reasonable, proportionate and appropriate** to its statutory functions, landholdings and available resources.

2. Statutory Context

Section 40 of the Environment Act 2021 requires public authorities to:

- Have regard to conserving and enhancing biodiversity
- Periodically consider what action they can take
- Prepare and publish a **Biodiversity Report**

The Council recognises that this duty is **one of consideration rather than outcome**, and it does not override other statutory obligations such as **health and safety, legal duties, or financial stewardship**.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to Parish Council functions where biodiversity may be relevant, including:

- Management of **council-owned land or open spaces**
- **Grounds maintenance contracts**
- **Asset maintenance and improvement works**
- **Advisory responses to planning consultations**
- **Community and partnership working**

4. Practical and Proportionate Actions

Where appropriate, the Council may:

- Encourage **biodiversity-friendly practices** within grounds maintenance contracts
- Retain suitable **habitat features** where compatible with safety and land use
- Consider **native planting and pollinator-friendly planting schemes**
- Balance biodiversity considerations with **accessibility, dignity and safety**.
- Support or signpost **community biodiversity initiatives**

5. Contractors and Land Management

Where reasonable and practicable, the Council will:

- Encourage contractors to follow **biodiversity-sensitive working practices**
- Avoid **unnecessary disturbance of habitats**
- Balance biodiversity considerations with **contractual obligations, safety requirements and operational needs**

6. Review and Reporting

The Council will publish a **Biodiversity Report** in accordance with Section 40 of the Environment Act 2021.

This policy will be **reviewed at least every five years**.

Biodiversity Report

Aynho Parish Council

(Environment Act 2021 – Section 40)

Reporting Period: 2026–2031

1. Council Overview

Aynho Parish Council is a **small parish council**. Its relevant responsibilities include the **management of the sports field and certain areas of council-owned land or open space**.

2. Actions Taken

The Council has:

- Considered **biodiversity impacts** in the management of the cemetery and council land

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- Balanced biodiversity considerations with **safety, dignity and accessibility**, particularly within the cemetery
- Encouraged **biodiversity-friendly approaches within grounds maintenance contracts** where appropriate
- Taken biodiversity considerations into account when responding to **planning consultations** (in an advisory capacity)
- Supported **community-led environmental initiatives** where resources allow

3. Actions Considered

The Council has considered, or may consider in the future:

- Adjustments to **grounds maintenance regimes** where compatible with safety and land use
- Retention of **habitat features** where appropriate
- **Native or wildlife-friendly planting schemes**
- **Sharing information with residents** on biodiversity matters

4. Constraints and Limitations

The Council recognises several constraints including:

- **Limited land ownership**
- **Health and safety responsibilities**
- **Financial and staffing resources**

The Council considers its approach to biodiversity to be **reasonable and proportionate** in accordance with its statutory duties.

5. Review

This report will be **reviewed and updated at least every five years**.

Version number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
0.1	Draft	Alan Youel	27/03/26

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