Spelsbury Parish Council Biodiversity Duties

Adopted by Spelsbury Parish Council on 07 November 2023
Last approved on 06 January 2026

Overview

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England, including Parish Councils to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy and decision making. This was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021, so that public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

This means a public authority must:

- Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on this consideration;
- Act to deliver the policies and achieve the objectives.

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth[1].

Biodiversity is everywhere: in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains, rivers and the sea.

Spelsbury Parish

Spelsbury Parish is in rural West Oxfordshire within the Cotswold AONB, with one small village and three hamlets. Spelsbury, Dean and Taston are in Conservation Areas.

Much of the parish is farmland and woodlands (including Ancient Woodlands), with hedges, ditches, streams and the River Evenlode as part of the parish border.

Parish Council responsibilities

The Parish Council is responsible for the playground in Spelsbury.

What the Council will do

- Consider the impact of biodiversity when making Council decisions
- Consider the impact of biodiversity when commenting on planning applications
- Promote biodiversity via the Parish Council website
- Consider the Environment Act local nature recovery strategy when created and how the Council can contribute
- Review how the Council manages the playground. This may include, but is not limited to:
    - Leaving leaf litter and dead vegetation around the edges where possible to provide a habitat for invertebrates
    - Removing invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna
    - Reduce the area of mowing to allow a margin of longer grasses and flowers to grow
    - Not using pesticides or herbicides wherever possible

[1] As defined in "Biodiversity 2020: a strategy of England's wildlife and ecosystems" by DEFRA