

MISSON PARISH COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

First adopted 2nd July 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The world is facing biodiversity loss at an unprecedented scale. Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Government guidance published May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, a parish council should:
 - consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
 - agree policies and specific objectives based on its consideration.
 - act to deliver its policies and achieve its objectives.
- 1.2 Whilst it has not previously adopted a written policy, Misson Parish Council (MPC) has engaged in the active practice of addressing biodiversity for over ten years, being an early adopter of initiatives promoted by national government and Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) to encourage an increase in biodiversity across Misson Parish, including supporting the NCC initiative to leave verges uncut outside the village boundary. MPC also has a long history of working closely with Natural England, the Forestry Commission, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, River Idle Management Partnership, and the Environment Agency. In addition MPC has enjoyed a positive long term involvement with Heidelberg Materials on the restoration of the Newington Quarry into a significant bird and other wildlife site.
- 1.3 Previous biodiversity initiatives have included leaving hedgerows uncut, allowing swathes of the Village Green to be unmown, establishing a wildflower meadow in The Pinfold, establishing a biodiversity protection area (undertaking selective mowing) in the churchyard, and achieving and delivering two Countryside Stewardship Schemes (woodland and wetland) to restore and improve the overall biodiversity condition of SSSI Line Bank which has included increasing natural light into the site by removing trees and scrub through a managed scheme of works. Furthermore, only last year MPC trialled taking part in No Mow May.
- 1.4 MPC does not cut dense vegetation or hedgerows during the bird nesting season (end of February to the end of August) in order to support the wild bird population. It actively discourages the use of chemical insecticides, herbicides, and pesticides, mindful also that the parish shares borders with a major organic farm. It identified, and continues the protection of, two long term colonies of wild bees in the Churchyard. For many years MPC has supported the monitoring and protection of threatened wildlife and their habitats undertaken by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Pollybell Farm. Further, MPC supports the Environment Agency in their aim of protecting water voles as their habitats are destroyed along the river bank by the large wakes created by fast boats, and the water voles are themselves eradicated by wild mink. MPC historically supports the work of Natural England and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust which work together to reduce and manage the wild mink population along the River Idle.
- 1.5 This Policy puts into writing that which Misson Parish Council has supported and practiced for many years.

2. Why Biodiversity is Important

- 2.1 According to Defra (Biodiversity Paper 2020, published 2015), 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 key to the survival of life on Earth. Its loss deprives future generations of irreplaceable genetic information and compromises sustainability. Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. Biodiversity is the building block of our 'ecosystems' that in turn 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.
- 2.2 Biodiversity is everyone's business and everyone's responsibility. MPC agrees it is crucial to engage local people in biodiversity issues so they personally value biodiversity and know what they can do to help. MPC recognises that as a civil society organisation, it plays a front line role in directly engaging and enthusing the public about biodiversity, working to engage more people and empowering them to make a difference.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish a written commitment to conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of Misson Parish in the areas where Misson Parish Council has influence. In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the Parish by committing to :

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support residents, community groups, and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

4. Actions

4.1 **MPC will consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning application;**

- when commenting on planning applications, MPC will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats,
- by supporting the protection of sensitive habitats from development and considering whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife,
- considering what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain, and
- including statements in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.

4.2 **MPC will manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity by;**

- supporting projects which undertake biodiversity audits (species and habitats) both of its landholdings and across the wider area where Misson Parish Council has influence,
- continuing to consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces, including beneficial practices regarding cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work, and
- considering biodiversity issues and the implementation of proposed changes when managing its buildings.

4.3 **MPC will support residents, community groups, and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity;**

- raising public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters,
- engaging with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community might assist and make a difference, and
- where feasible, involving the community in biodiversity projects on its land including, for example; biodiversity audits, tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

5. Working with other agencies.

5.1 Like the stated view of the UK Government, MPC recognises the importance of people in helping to arrest the loss of species on our planet. MPC supports the view that the value of nature's services must be ever better understood by society, and acknowledges it has a duty to enhance people's personal connection with wildlife and nature. Ultimately, conservation efforts can only truly succeed with society's support.

5.2 MPC will work in partnership with other agencies to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area. It will review annually, any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies (in respect of the local Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) and actively consider how it may become ever more involved in action to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Misson Parish in the areas where Misson Parish Council has influence.

REVIEW

The commitment of Misson Parish Council to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Misson Parish is live and active. This policy was first adopted 2nd July 2025 , Minute reference 2025-71.12 and will be reviewed at the AGM of MPC, or sooner should legislation dictate. A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually, with reference to any audits of biodiversity (species and habitats) undertaken, in order to demonstrate progress.

