Harbury Parish Council Biodiversity Statement

Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity in Harbury Parish

Biodiversity Vision Statement

Harbury Parish will protect, restore and enhance its natural environment through practical local action, community involvement and sustainable land management, creating a healthier and more connected landscape for wildlife and people.

Statutory Requirements

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) explains (Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK) that under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, as amended by the Environment Act 2021, each public authority operating in England

"must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity".

To achieve this, public authorities must:

1. **Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity;**
2. **Agree policies and specific objectives based on that consideration;**

and

3. **Act to deliver those policies and achieve those objectives.**

Although parish councils are not currently required to publish formal biodiversity reports, Harbury Parish Council recognises the importance of protecting and improving the local natural environment and wishes to demonstrate leadership in supporting nature recovery.

Harbury Parish Council has, therefore, prepared a Biodiversity Policy in response to this strengthened biodiversity duty introduced by the Environment Act 2021

What is Biodiversity?

According to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA Biodiversity 2020 (The Government Workplace Design Guide - GOV.UK), 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. 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. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

A Biodiversity Policy for Harbury

The Harbury Biodiversity Policy explains how the parish will manage its affairs and carry out various activities in order to meet the statutory requirements of the Environment Act 2021.

To support the policy, the Harbury Nature Recovery Strategy and Action Plan sets out the parish council's priorities and a framework of practical, community-led steps to restore, enhance, and connect nature across the parish of Harbury over the period 2026–2031.

The biodiversity policy also supports the objectives and policies of the Harbury & Deppers Bridge Neighbourhood Plan 2018 - 2031 and aligns with national planning policy, Warwickshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the wider ambitions for nature recovery across Warwickshire.

The council acknowledges that biodiversity underpins healthy ecosystems and farming and food productivity; it also improves community wellbeing, supports our rural character and the environmental quality of the parish. The changing climate and other pressures on the environment are having severe negative impacts on our natural ecosystems and biodiversity. Harbury Parish also has a Environment & Climate Policy aimed at addressing some of these issues, such as climate resilience and flood management. That policy should be read in conjunction with the parish biodiversity policy.