Harbury Parish
Nature Recovery Strategy and Action Plan
2026–2031
Prepared by Harbury Parish Council

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1. Introduction

This Nature Recovery Strategy and Action Plan sets out Harbury Parish Council's vision, priorities and examples of some practical community-led actions for conserving and enhancing nature within the parish between 2026 and 2031. The goal is to move from passive conservation to active recovery, creating a "living tapestry" of habitats that support local biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and community well-being.

The Strategy supports the council's Biodiversity Policy and responds to the biodiversity duty placed on public authorities under the Environment Act 2021. It is complementary to the Harbury Parish Environment & Climate Policy.

The Parish Council recognises that nature recovery is essential for:

- Protecting local wildlife and habitats;
- Improving climate resilience;
- Safeguarding pollinators and healthy ecosystems;
- Supporting farming and food productivity;
- Enhancing landscape quality and local character;
- Improving public health and wellbeing;
- Strengthening community engagement with the natural environment.

The Strategy and Action Plan aims to deliver practical, realistic and locally appropriate actions that contribute to wider nature recovery across Warwickshire. The Parish Council recognises that this is an ambitious agenda; the outcomes will only be achievable over time and with support from members of our Parish community.

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2. Vision

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.

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3. Strategic Objectives

The Parish Council has identified six strategic objectives:

1. Protect existing habitats and biodiversity features;
2. Improve habitats for wildlife and pollinators;
3. Increase tree and hedgerow cover using native species;
4. Improve ecological connectivity across the parish;
5. Encourage community participation in nature recovery;
6. Embed biodiversity considerations into local decision-making.

The plan aligns with:

- The Warwickshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and The Environment Act 2021
- Stratford-on-Avon District biodiversity and climate objectives
- The Harbury and Deppers Bridge Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

The Harbury and Deppers Bridge Neighbourhood Development Plan recognises the importance of protecting landscape character, green infrastructure, biodiversity, local distinctiveness, and sustainable development.

The Action Plan supports the NDP through:

- Protection and enhancement of green spaces.
- Conservation of landscape character.
- Enhancement of public rights of way and green spaces.
- Sustainable drainage and flood management.
- Biodiversity enhancement linked to new development.
- Protection of hedgerows, trees, and wildlife corridors.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan forms part of the statutory development framework for the parish (harbury-pc.gov.uk).

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4. Local Environmental Context

Harbury Parish lies within Stratford-on-Avon District in south Warwickshire. The parish is predominantly rural in character, centered on the village of Harbury and the smaller settlement of Deppers Bridge. It is characterised by a rural Warwickshire landscape including:

- Agricultural land;
- Hedgerows and field margins;
- Mature trees and small woodlands;
- Grass verges and public open spaces;
- Green spaces, gardens and allotments;
- Watercourses, ponds and drainage features;
- Railway and roadside corridors.

The Parish contains and adjoins a number of ecologically important sites and landscape features that make a significant contribution to local biodiversity and habitat connectivity. These landscapes, characterised by its limestone geology and its position bordering the River Itchen catchment, provide opportunities to strengthen wildlife networks and contribute to Warwickshire's wider Nature Recovery Network.

The Council acknowledges the importance of designated and non-designated sites within and around the parish, including:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);
- Local Nature Sites and other locally designated wildlife areas;
- Ancient and species-rich hedgerows;
- Traditional farmland habitats;
- Riparian habitats associated with the River Itchen corridor.

The Council recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing the ecological value of these areas through sensitive land management, habitat restoration and careful consideration of development impacts.

These habitats support a variety of species including:

- Pollinating insects such as bees and butterflies;
- Farmland and garden birds;
- Bats and small mammals;
- Amphibians and reptiles;
- Native wildflowers and hedgerow plants.

The Parish faces a number of environmental pressures including:

- Habitat fragmentation;
- Decline in pollinators;
- Loss of hedgerows and mature trees;
- Climate change impacts;

- Development pressures;
- Intensive land management practices.

The Council recognises that local-scale improvements can collectively make a significant contribution to ecological recovery. In addition, that nature recovery must occur alongside farming, housing, recreation, and economic activity. It therefore promotes practical, achievable actions that support both biodiversity and local livelihoods.

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5. Strategic Priorities and Actions

Priority 1 – Protect Existing Habitats

Aim

Safeguard important existing habitats, designated wildlife sites and biodiversity features within the parish.

Actions

- Identify and map key biodiversity assets on Parish Council-owned or managed land;
- Recognise and support the protection of SSSIs, Local Nature Sites and other designated habitats within and adjoining the parish;
- Protect mature trees, hedgerows, grasslands and ponds where possible;
- Avoid vegetation clearance during bird nesting season;
- Encourage sympathetic management of verges and public spaces;
- Promote retention of wildlife habitats through planning consultations.
- Consider opportunities to designate land valuable to wildlife as Local Wildlife Sites;
- Monitor the occurrence of invasive species and plant diseases (e.g., Japanese Knotweed, Asian Hornet, Ash dieback etc.).

Outcomes

- Reduced habitat loss;
- Improved protection of existing ecological features;
- Increased awareness of local biodiversity assets.

Priority 2 – Enhance Habitats for Wildlife and Pollinators

Aim

Create and improve habitats that support local wildlife.

Actions

- Establish areas for wildflower planting on suitable Parish land;
- Introduce reduced mowing regimes where appropriate;
- Encourage pollinator-friendly planting schemes;
- Install bird boxes, bat boxes and insect habitats where feasible;
- Promote wildlife-friendly gardening and allotment management within the community;
- Transition towards Integrated Pest Management (IPM[1]) methodologies for maintaining Parish Council amenity land, with the phased introduction of pesticide-free areas;
- Examine the potential to create and improve aquatic habitats.

Outcomes

- Increased pollinator habitat;
- Greater biodiversity within public spaces;
- Improved nesting and shelter opportunities for wildlife.

Priority 3 – Trees, Hedgerows and Climate Resilience

Aim

Increase tree and hedgerow cover to support biodiversity and climate resilience.

Actions

- Plant native trees suitable for the local landscape;
- Support hedgerow restoration with traditional methods and improved management;
- Encourage replacement planting where trees are lost;
- Seek opportunities for community tree planting initiatives;
- Introduce coppicing where appropriate;
- Prioritise climate-resilient native species.

Outcomes

- Increased canopy cover;
- Enhanced wildlife corridors;
- Improved carbon sequestration and shade provision.

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[1] IPM is an ecosystem-based strategy that manages pests, weeds, and diseases by combining cultural, biological, physical, and chemical tools while keeping chemical pesticide use as a last resort. For this purpose, pesticides also include chemical herbicides and fungicides

Priority 4 – Improve Ecological Connectivity

Aim

Create better-connected habitats across the parish.

Actions

- Identify opportunities to link green spaces and habitats;
- Encourage wildlife corridors through planting and habitat management;
- Promote connectivity between hedgerows, gardens, open spaces and water features;
- Support sustainable drainage features that benefit wildlife;
- Protect and enhance the ecological value of the River Itchen corridor and associated habitats where opportunities arise.

Outcomes

- Improved movement of wildlife species;
- Reduced habitat fragmentation;
- Improved protection and resilience of river corridor habitats;
- Stronger local ecological networks.

Priority 5 – Community Engagement and Education

Aim

Encourage residents and community groups to participate in nature recovery.

Actions

- Organise or support community nature events and volunteering activities;
- Share biodiversity information through Parish communications;
- Encourage schools and youth groups to participate in environmental projects;
- Promote citizen science initiatives and wildlife recording;
- Support local environmental partnerships and campaigns;
- Liaise with local environmental and other community groups and participate in regional initiatives where possible.

Outcomes

- Increased public participation;
- Greater environmental awareness;
- Stronger community stewardship of local nature.

Priority 6 – Biodiversity in Planning and Decision-Making

Aim

Ensure biodiversity is considered in Parish Council decisions and planning responses.

Actions

- Include biodiversity considerations in planning consultations;
- Encourage developments that provide biodiversity net gain;
- Support retention of trees, hedgerows and green infrastructure;
- Encourage wildlife-friendly development features, such as integral swift nesting bricks, bat boxes, hedgehog highways;
- Consider biodiversity impacts in Council projects and procurement.

Outcomes

- Better environmental outcomes from development;
- Greater integration of biodiversity considerations into local governance.

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6. Delivery Plan

The Parish Council will seek to deliver the Strategy through:

- Annual work programmes;
- Community partnerships;
- Volunteer activities;
- Collaboration with landowners and local organisations;
- Grant funding and external support where available.

The Council recognises that implementation will depend on available resources, land ownership, volunteer capacity and partnership opportunities.

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7. Potential Projects

Potential projects during the life of the Strategy may include:

Project	Potential Benefits
Wildflower and verge management	Improved pollinator habitat
Community tree planting	Increased canopy cover and carbon capture
Bird and bat box schemes	Additional nesting opportunities
Insect and bee ‘hotels’	Increase pollinator species

Project	Potential Benefits
Hedge planting and restoration	Improved habitat connectivity
Pond enhancement projects	Support for amphibians and aquatic species
Revitalise the Hall Lane allotments	Safeguard village green infrastructure and creation of a biodiversity 'hotspot'.
Nature interpretation signage	Increased public awareness
Community biodiversity surveys	Better understanding of local species

A list of potential actions and projects, showing priorities, timescales and lead partners is in the annex to this document.

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8. Partnerships

The Parish Council will seek to work with:

- Stratford-on-Avon District Council;
- Warwickshire County Council;
- Warwickshire Wildlife Trust;
- Butterfly Conservation (Warwickshire Branch)
- Natural England;
- Local schools and community organisations;
- Landowners and farmers;
- Volunteer groups and residents.

The Council will also seek to align actions with the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Nature Recovery Strategy where relevant.

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9. Monitoring and Review

Progress against the Strategy will be reviewed periodically by the appropriate Working Party and reported to the Parish Council.

Monitoring may include:

- Biodiversity projects completed;
- Habitat improvements undertaken;
- Tree and hedgerow planting achievements;
- Community participation levels;
- Feedback from residents and partner organisations.

Annual progress updates should be reported publicly through the Parish Council. The Strategy will be formally reviewed every five years, or earlier if required.

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10. Funding and Resources

The Council will seek to identify external funding opportunities where appropriate, including:

- Biodiversity Net Gain funding.
- Environmental Land Management schemes.
- National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- Section 106 Funding.
- Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Charitable grants.
- Parish Council budgets.
- Local authority environmental grants;
- Warwickshire environmental initiatives;
- Lottery and community grants;
- Corporate sponsorship and partnership opportunities;
- Volunteer support and in-kind contributions.

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11. Conclusion

Harbury Parish Council recognises that restoring nature requires long-term commitment and collaboration.

This Nature Recovery Strategy and Action Plan provides a framework and suggestions for practical local action to protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the parish. Through partnership working, sustainable management, nature-sensitive planning, and community participation, the Council aims to contribute positively to nature recovery and environmental resilience in Warwickshire.

Supporting Documents and Guidance

- Harbury Parish Council Biodiversity Policy
- Harbury and Deppers Bridge Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Environment Act 2021
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended)
- Warwickshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- DEFRA Environmental Improvement Plan
- Warwickshire Wildlife Trust nature recovery guidance
- The National Allotment Society
- Pesticide Action Network
- Plantlife
- Royal Horticultural Society
- Garden Organic

Source material consulted includes Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust publications relating to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and parish planning. (warwickshire.gov.uk)

Annex: Suggested Potential Projects and Actions

Action	Timescale	Lead Partners	Priority
Map existing habitats and wildlife corridors	Short term	Parish Council / volunteers	High
Survey hedgerows in the parish	Medium term	Parish Council / volunteers	High
Restore priority hedgerows, using traditional methods where possible	Medium term	Landowners/ volunteers	High
Restore ‘lost trees’ to continue canopy cover	Medium term	Parish Council & Landowners	High
Create parish wildflower and spring bulb areas	Short-medium term	Parish Council	High
Introduce pollinator-friendly mowing regime	Short term	Parish Council	High
Plant native trees and orchard species	Ongoing	Community groups	High
Install swift and other bird nest boxes on public and private buildings	Short term	Parish Council	High
Install bat boxes on public buildings and mature trees	Short term	Parish Council	High
Develop school biodiversity projects	Ongoing	Schools	Medium
Create insect and bee ‘hotels’ in	Medium term	Parish Council	Medium

Action	Timescale	Lead Partners	Priority
appropriate locations			
Retain deadwood in appropriate locations when trees are felled	Ongoing	Parish Council	Medium
Record presence of Warwickshire Priority Species in the parish	Short term	Volunteers	High
Promote 'Hedgehog Highways' to link residential gardens	Short term	Parish Council/ Volunteers	Medium
Identify locations for new ponds or other aquatic habitats	Medium term	Landowners / WWT	Medium
Undertake annual wildlife surveys, such as 'Bio-Blitz Events'	Ongoing	Volunteers	Medium
Produce biodiversity guidance for residents	Short term	Parish Council	Medium
Improve green corridors along rights of way	Medium term	WCC / volunteers	Medium
Encourage wildlife-friendly gardening and allotment management	Ongoing	Community groups/ Allotment holders	Medium
Integrate wildlife-friendly features into allotments	Ongoing	Community groups/ Allotment holders	Medium

Action	Timescale	Lead Partners	Priority
Champion organic methods at the Hall Lane allotments to create a biodiversity 'hotspot' for the village	Medium term	Parish Council and Allotment holders	High
Support biodiversity enhancements in the churchyard and cemetery	Ongoing	Parish church and community groups	High
Promote sustainable drainage measures	Ongoing	Developers / planners	High
Monitor development to ensure BNG commitments are being met	Ongoing	Parish/District Council	High
Seek external environmental grants	Ongoing	Parish Council	High
Work with relevant partners to protect and enhance wildlife within the River Itchen corridor.	Long term	Parish Council and relevant partners	Medium