



Biodiversity Policy

Council meeting when approved: Full Council Meeting
Date: 14th December 2023

1. Background

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 public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This means Lymm Parish Council must, by 1st January 2024;

- a. Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- b. Agree policies and specific objectives based on its consideration.
- c. Act to deliver policies and achieve agreed objectives.

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth¹. Biodiversity is everywhere: in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains, rivers and the sea. The natural environment is fundamental to well-being, health and economy, and provides a range of ecosystem services such as food, water, materials, flood defences and carbon sequestration – and biodiversity underpins most, if not all, of them.²

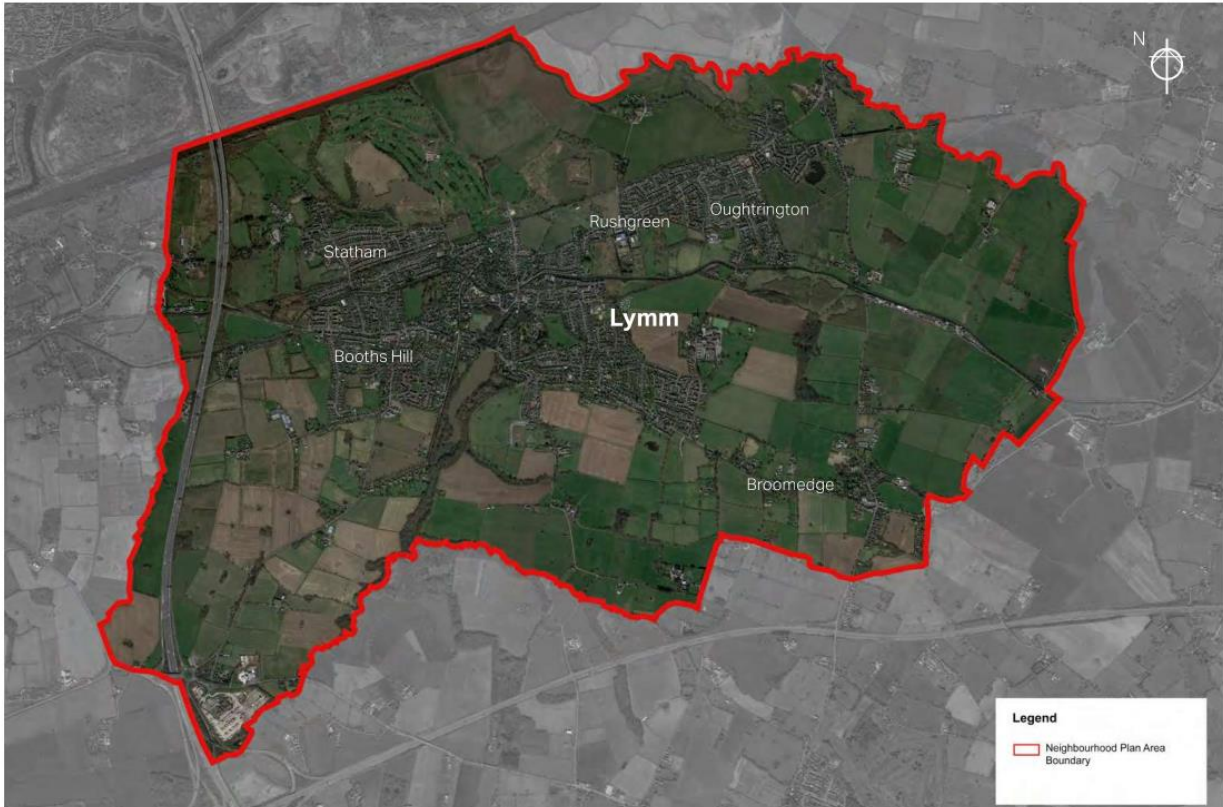
2. The Local Area

Lymm Parish Council is a large village, with a considerable number of areas which support, or can support, biodiversity. This includes woodland (including ancient woodland and ancient trees), hedgerows, ditches, farmland, allotments, a golf course, parks, sports fields, heritage assets, brooks, streams, a river, Heatley Mere, Statham Ox-bow, a Dam (upper, middle and lower), a section of the Trans Pennine trail, footpaths, cemeteries, two canals, flood plain and privately owned gardens. It has a considerable greenbelt area and a large Conservation Area.

3. Lymm Parish Council's responsibilities:

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

² Protecting and Enhancing Lymm's Natural Environment – July 2021 – Cheshire Wildlife Trust, pg 4



4. Biodiversity Objectives and Action Plan

Lymm Parish Council’s Biodiversity Policy is to work towards completing the objectives set out in the table below. The objectives will also be kept under review and updated as necessary, with approval for the updates at Full Council.

Objective	Action	Timeframe
Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made through the Parish Council	Review all policies and governing documents including Standing Orders and Terms of Reference for Committees and Working Groups	
	Review how it manages the village hall and its impact on biodiversity through utilities, supplies and cleaning products.	
	All committees are to consider what steps can be taken to enhance biodiversity and to add an item to their agenda at the next possible meeting in 2024 and report back at the next Full Council meeting following that meeting.*1	



	Carbon-offsetting plans are to consider investing in actions and activities that enhance biodiversity, either at home or abroad.	Ongoing
	Ensure that the NDP includes consideration of the improvement of biodiversity - in particular having regard to the July 2021 Cheshire Wildlife Trust report and ensuring it includes all of its relevant recommendations.	
Encourage biodiversity at allotments	Allotment tenancy will be updated and tenants will be reminded of the requirement not to use herbicides or pesticides and not to use old tyres and carpet.	
	Allotment holders will be encouraged to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) plant for pollinators in areas unsuitable for food production (for example can wildflowers be seeded in nutrient poor soil) (b) report concerns with officers, such as asbestos on plots; (c) to use peat free products in view of the impact that peat has on the wider UK biodiversity (d) Make themselves aware of invasive species and what they can do (such as balsam bashing at correct time of year, reporting giant hogweed, being directed to resources which explain how to avoid introducing invasive species etc) 	
Consider the impact of the Environment Team	Environment Team to produce a schedule of activities already undertaken which enhance biodiversity (including when undertaken) which will be made available to review on the LPC website. This includes wildflower planting, reduced hedge cutting (which avoids nesting season), reduced verge cutting (to encourage wildflowers), limiting use of herbicides (for example to used only for invasive species and in a manner in which reduces impact so far as possible).	



	Environment Team to review schedule of activities and identify additional steps that can be taken through their actions to protect and enhance biodiversity . It will be made available for review on the LPC website	
Have a communication strategy	Promote its biodiversity policy and objectives towards the protection and improvement of biodiversity via the Parish Council website, written media and social media.	
	Amend the LPC website to include a new page and heading, under Planning and Environment, of “Biodiversity”	
	Keep the “Biodiversity” website page updated with all relevant information, initiatives and relevant contact information	
	Utilise Parish noticeboards, social media pages and print media pages to promote activities relating to the biodiversity policy.	
Set up a Biodiversity Working Group	<p>A Working Group will be set up to encourage community engagement with the Biodiversity Policy and to oversee the implementation of the policy.</p> <p>The initial objectives of the group will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and liaise with groups within the village that can support the enhancement of biodiversity*2 - Seek additional volunteers for the working group from the Community and the groups identified - Set up a “Parish Pledge” to encourage 1) Lymm residents and 2) Lymm groups to sign up to at least one new biodiversity enhancing activity and record the results. *3 - Review and refine the biodiversity policy and action plan as necessary (for sign off at full Council meetings) 	



***1** Whilst the planning team can consider this in respect of development, other committees also need to review this. For example, in consideration of grant applications, can a question be raised in the application form as to what an applicant organisation is doing to enhance biodiversity or could there be active encouragement of applications for grants for activities that enhance biodiversity? In considering staffing, what support is being given to employees to enhance biodiversity through work allocation?

***2** Potential groups include:

- Environment Committee
- Public Rights of Way Working Group
- The Ranger service
- LEAF and its member groups
- Footpath Wardens
- Friends of Heatley Mere
- Lymm Open Gardens
- Green Churches
- Sports Clubs
- Lymm Sanctuary Hub
- Lymm In Bloom
- Keep Lymm Kleen
- Lymm Litter Network
- Lymm Wildlife Group
- Wirral & Cheshire Badger Group
- Lymm High School
- Lymm Primary Schools

***3** – Ideas for individuals include:

- Create a log pile
- Install a pond
- Remove plastic grass / commit to not installing it
- Create a 1 meter square (or more) wild patch at home
- Create a window box with pollinating plants
- Install nest boxes
- Create a hedgehog highway with neighbours
- Engage in no mow may,
- Commit to going peat free



- Plant for pollinators
- Commit to not using pesticides, herbicides & slug pellets
- Learn about invasive species
- Donate / become a member of a local wildlife group
- Volunteer with a local group in respect of supporting their biodiversity policies
- Regular litter picking