

BARNT GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

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Biodiversity Plan 2026/27

This document outlines Barnt Green Parish Council's plan for 2026/27. Progress against this plan and issues arising from its implementation will be addressed as part of normal Council business via the existing programme of Council Meetings.

Background

New duties have been placed on Public Authorities in England to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. The overall intention is to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England and as such Parish Councils must take biodiversity into account in their decision making. A summary of the new requirement can be found attached to this paper (Annex A). Biodiversity is defined as "the variety of all life on Earth: genes, species and ecosystems. It includes all species of animals and plants, and the natural systems that support them. Biodiversity matters because it supports the vital benefits humans get from the natural environment. It contributes to the economy, health and well-being, and it enriches our lives" (Source Gov.UK)

Biodiversity in Barnt Green

The geography of Barnt Green Parish is such that it contains a rich variety of environmental features. These include farmland (both arable and pastoral), woodland, water (including Lower Bittell Reservoir and the Canal) as well as urban/built-up areas.

There are already biodiversity initiatives underway within the Parish. Worcestershire County Council's Biodiversity Action Plan (2018-2027) identifies 17 habitats and 26 species, or species groups, which are of particular conservation priority in the county. A number of these are relevant and applicable to Barnt Green (see Annex B for the full list of WCC Action Plans in place).

There are also a number of other organisations responsible for managing land in Barnt Green Parish who *should* also be taking steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Examples include Network Rail, Canal and River Trust, Barnt Green Waters Ltd although no attempt has been to ascertain the existence or contents of any such Action Plans.

The Parish Council already owns and maintains a Pollinator Site off Hewell Road which firmly supports the biodiversity agenda. It also has maintenance responsibilities for Bittell Lane Playing Fields and Millennium Park.

Action Plan

In order to meet both the requirements placed upon Public Authorities and to conserve and enhance Biodiversity in Barnt Green, the Council plans to undertake the following activities in FY26/27:

Ref	Action	Description and Current Status	Status	Target Completion Date
1	Governance	Produce and agree Biodiversity Action Plan (this document)	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
2	Governance	Insert Biodiversity as a standing agenda item at all future Parish Council meetings	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
3	Planning	Ensure that all Planning Applications are reviewed by Council members from a biodiversity (as well as other) perspective	ONGOING	ONGOING
4	Grounds Maintenance	Review the Council's existing contracts/Statements of Work with the Outdoor Parish Caretaker and/or other contractors charged with maintaining or performing works on Council owned land; the Council needs to ensure that work it commissions is undertaken in a manner that supports biodiversity (e.g. cutting of grass on playing fields, planting new trees).	ONGOING	ONGOING
5	WCC Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	Review and respond as appropriate to LNRS consultation (Feb '24) and draft strategy (Sep '24).	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
6	LNRS Local Habitat Map	Ensure land owned and managed by the Parish Council is included on the LNRS Local Habitat Map which provides a map of areas that <i>could</i> become of particular importance for nature recovery	COMPLETE	COMPLETE

7	Third Party Organisations	Confirm the existence and review the content of Biodiversity Action Plans owned by 3rd Party organisations that are responsible for land within the Parish (e.g. Barnt Green Waters Ltd, Network Rail, Canal and River Trust)	OPEN	Dec 26
8	Pollinator Site	Manage and develop the Pollinator site off Hewell Road	ONGOING	ONGOING
9	Communications	Produce an article for the Council Newsletter to inform Parishioners about Biodiversity within Barnt Green and how they could help	ONGOING	ONGOING

Chairman

Date

Cllr R Cholmondeley, Barnt Green Parish Council

Date of next review: September 2027

Biodiversity Policy Requirement

Biodiversity Policy Requirement

Section 40 of the 2006 Act, in force 1 January 2023, places a duty on all local authorities, including parish councils, to from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take to further the general biodiversity objective. The general biodiversity objective is the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England so all parish councils must take biodiversity into account in all their decisions and actions. The government has issued [guidance](#) on complying with the duty.

Section 40A of the 2006 Act places a duty on principal authorities (but not parish councils) to produce biodiversity reports.

To comply with the guidance, town and parish councils could as a minimum:

- Have biodiversity as an agenda item for a meeting before the end of 2023.
- Note what action in respect of biodiversity is already taking place locally.
- Agree what further steps to take at this stage.

Such steps may include:

- Reviewing what biodiversity or nature recovery plans are already in place from other local authorities.
- Making contact with local voluntary groups working on nature conservation.
- Carrying out a biodiversity audit of council landholdings and/or the whole council area
- Gathering expert advice on possible actions in support of biodiversity.
- Drafting an action plan that covers action that the council will take itself as well as support for the actions of other local bodies.

Whatever action is agreed, as a minimum local councils could ensure they address biodiversity concerns when commenting on planning applications.

All these steps may inform an agreed biodiversity policy for which a model example is attached.

Guidance for town and parish councils on developing a [local nature action plan](#) has been published by South Gloucestershire Council, as well as a [field guide](#) for those with little or no ecological background.

NALC's *Climate Emergency Network* has produced a draft policy for Councils to adopt and is available on our website. [Biodiversity Policy \(worcsalc.org.uk\)](http://worcsalc.org.uk)

Current WCC Biodiversity Action Plans

- H1 Arable Farmland Habitat Action Plan
- H2 Traditional Orchard Habitat Action Plan
- **H3 Hedgerows Habitat Action Plan**
- H4 Scrub Habitat Action Plan
- **H5 Woodland Habitat Action Plan**
- **H6 Ancient Veteran Trees Habitat Action Plan**
- H7 Wet Woodland Habitat Action Plan
- H8 Reedbed Habitat Action Plan
- H9 Fen and Marsh Habitat Action Plan
- H10 Wet Grassland Habitat Action Plan
- **H11 Grassland Habitat Action Plan**
- H12 Lowland Heathland Habitat Action Plan
- **H13 Road Verges Habitat Action Plan**
- H14 Urban Habitat Action Plan
- H15 Canals Habitat Action Plan
- **H16 Ponds and Lakes Habitat Action Plan**
- H17 Rivers and Streams Habitat Action Plan
- S1 Otter Species Action Plan
- S2 Dormouse Species Action Plan
- **S3 Bats Species Action Plan**
- S4 Water Vole Species Action Plan
- S5 Noble Chafer Species Action Plan
- S6 Nightingale Species Action Plan
- S7 Shad Species Action Plan
- S8 Adder Species Action Plan
- S9 Slow-worm Species Action Plan
- S10 Great Crested Newt Species Action Plan
- S11 White-clawed Crayfish Species Action Plan
- S12 High Brown Fritillary Species Action Plan
- S13 Brown Hairstreak Species Action Plan
- S14 Common Clubtail Species Action Plan
- S15 Stag Beetle Species Action Plan
- S16 Violet Click Species Action Plan
- S17 Hornet Robberfly Species Action Plan
- S18 Black Poplar Species Action Plan
- S19 True Service Tree Species Action Plan
- **S20 Farmland birds Species Action Plan**
- S21 Wood White Species Action Plan
- S22 Grizzled Skipper Species Action Plan
- S23 Pearl-bordered Fritillary Species Action Plan
- S24 Common Fan-foot Species Action Plan
- S25 Drab Looper Species Action Plan
- S26 Grayling Species Action Plan

NB Barnt Green Parish lies mostly within the North Worcestershire Hills area as defined in WCC's Biodiversity Action Plans. As such the following Action Plans (also highlighted in bold above) are recommended by WCC as being *most* relevant for the Parish - H3, H5, H6, H11, H13, H16, S3 and S20. Any or all of the remaining Action Plans may be relevant but considered much less likely to be so.