

HAUGHLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Bio-Diversity Policy

Adopted 17th September 2024

1. Background

- i. Haughley Parish Council set up a Biodiversity Working Group in 2020 which has been actively exploring ways to increase Haughley's biodiversity. Practical examples of this include working with Haughley Parish in Bloom, the Parish Church and willing residents to develop and enhance wildflower areas on the Village Greens and in the Churchyard and The Cricket. New areas to protect have been identified because rare plants were found at Tot Hill and the Little Moat.
- ii. An example of success is the increased number of Swifts in the village, aided by the growing number of Swift boxes installed. Part of this success has been achieved by members of the group participating in a WhatsApp Group called Haughley Naturewatch which includes many interested parishioners. Members of the group also take an active interest in the practical management of Gallowsfield Wood and the adjacent wildflower meadow.
- iii. An advantage of having a specific policy for biodiversity in Haughley is not only to increase the variety of wildflowers, birds, bees and insects now but also as a way of reducing the negative impact of any future development in Haughley Parish. This opportunity arises due to recent legislation requiring developers to demonstrate that any new development leads to an improvement in biodiversity by a measurable amount of at least 10% (this may be increased locally to 20% by the District Council).
- iv. To satisfy the requirements of the legislation a detailed scientific assessment of any proposed site must be carried out as part of the planning application to establish the existing level of biodiversity. Once this has been completed a "biodiversity baseline" is established. Developers then have to describe in their planning application how their proposals lead to an increase of at least 10% in the richness of the biodiversity in the immediate area of the proposed development. Haughley Parish therefore has the opportunity to take action now to protect and enhance our biodiversity, which will bring immediate benefits but will also have the advantage of securing improvements for future generations.

2. Recommendations

- i. Housing, or other development, in Haughley Parish will be expected to conform to the agreed proposals arising from the Parish Neighbourhood Plan (or similar policies)

and with the Biodiversity Net Gain legal requirements and this local Biodiversity Policy.

- ii. Haughley Parish should begin a process of planned improvement to the richness of its biodiversity to raise the baseline measurement that developers will have to use, upon which they will have to show a 10% improvement.
- iii. This planned improvement should be in the key Parish areas, including the Village Greens, The Cricket and Gallowsfield Wood and the edges of existing biodiverse-rich areas. The margins of the Parish, alongside existing housing and infrastructure should also be included as these are the areas most likely to be affected by future development.
- iv. Once adopted this policy should seek to gain the consent of the whole Haughley community so that the policy and the reasons behind it are fully understood, approved and celebrated. This will require active promotion and presentations at Parish events and to Parish organisations, groups and the school. These presentations may be provided by organisations from outside the Parish such as Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Swifts etc.
- v. The existing Biodiversity Group should seek to extend its membership to include other Parishioners, especially those with relevant expertise.
- vi. As a first step towards establishing this new policy a draft record of Haughley Parish's current "Biodiversity Assets" is produced below in the Appendix. This baseline record should be reviewed annually as more information comes to light and as improvements are made arising from this policy.

3. Practical Suggestions for initial actions

- i. Review Haughley Parish's existing assets by inviting public comments.
- ii. Place the record of Biodiversity Assets on a new page on the Parish Council website
- iii. Identify areas within existing habitats and adjacent areas that have the potential to support more protected species.
- iv. Identify specific areas for nature conservation.
- v. Encourage scrub
- vi. Increase diversity and age of trees in existing hedgerows by actively managing hedgerows

- vii. Increase the number of trees, shrubs and wildflowers planted
- viii. Seek opportunities to create ponds and survey existing ones were invited by private owners.
- ix. Erect hedgehog, bird and bat boxes and create “bug hotels” (school activity?)