

Sandford St Martin Parish Council Biodiversity Duties

Adopted by Sandford St Martin Parish Council on XXXXX

Overview

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 that public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

This means a public authority must:

- Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on this consideration;
- Act to deliver the policies and achieve the objectives.

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth¹.

Biodiversity is everywhere: in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains, rivers and the sea.

Sandford St Martin Parish

Sandford St Martin Parish is a small parish in rural West Oxfordshire, with one small village, Sandford St Martin, and one hamlet, Ledwell. The majority of Sandford St Martin and Ledwell are in Conservation Areas.

- Much of the surrounding areas are agricultural and open landscape with many hedges and stone walls. Some areas of land are managed under Countryside Stewardship Schemes or Environmental Stewardship Schemes.
- There are footpaths and bridlepaths.
- There are some areas of woodlands, including three areas of Ancient Woodland and four woodland corridors.
- The river Dorn runs through the south of the parish. There are streams, brooks, ponds, ditches and springs throughout the parish, plus a lake.
- Natural England's Priority Habitat Survey records areas of deciduous woodlands and traditional orchards in the parish.
- There is a churchyard in Sandford St Martin.

Parish Council responsibilities

The Parish Council is responsible for the Village Green and area around the well in Ledwell, and for some land adjacent to the Parish Hall in Sandford St Martin

What the Council will do

- Consider the impact of biodiversity when making Council decisions
- Consider the impact of biodiversity when commenting on planning applications
- Promote biodiversity via the Parish Council website
- Consider the Environment Act local nature recovery strategy when created and how the Council can contribute
- Review how the Council manages its green areas. This may include, but is not limited to:

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

- Leaving leaf litter and dead vegetation around the edges where possible to provide a habitat for invertebrates
- Removing invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna
- Reduce the area of mowing to allow a margin of longer grasses and flowers to grow
- Not using pesticides or herbicides wherever possible

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