

WHADDON BIODIVERSITY PLAN

Plan drawn up by the Sustainable Whaddon Group to assist Whaddon Parish Council in adopting a plan. January 2026

BACKGROUND

Following studies showing decline in Britain's wildlife, loss of species and the resulting damage to our environment, the Government has taken action with the passing of the Environment Act, updated in 2021. This means that Whaddon Parish Council now has a duty to consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and it is permitted to spend funds in order to achieve its aims.

In the 2023 Whaddon Parish Plan a high percentage of residents valued Whaddon as a good place to live, and environmental issues, including promotion of biodiversity, were among the key recommendations.

Whaddon Parish Council has declared a Climate Emergency and all its decisions should include consideration of impact on climate change.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this plan is to identify steps that Whaddon Parish Council can take to satisfy both its legal duty, and the wishes of the majority of its parishioners, to enhance biodiversity and to improve the environment of the village.

In line with Government guidance (17 May 2023) the Parish Council must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Agree specific objectives based on their consideration
- Act to achieve their objectives

DEFINITION

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.

Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. Biodiversity is the building block of our 'ecosystems' that in turn provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

Whaddon is a small community of about 230 dwellings, just over 150 of which are situated within the central area of the village. Also within the centre of the village are extensive green areas made up of the recreation ground, the churchyard and the Golf Centre. These are surrounded by low lying farmland with frequent drainage ditches, and the parish is bounded by the River Cam. There are a number of mature hedgerows, and an area of mixed woodland planted in 1996. A second large area of 58 houses, Cardiff Place, is situated on the western edge of the parish.

It is also relevant to note that the Parish Council itself has limited scope for direct action as it only owns the recreation ground and the village hall, while also having control over verge cutting. Delivering some aspects of the plan is likely to require the Parish Council to work with other parties (eg County Farms, the Army for the communal land at Cardiff Place, St Mary's PCC for the churchyard etc) and local residents.

ACTION PLAN

Below is a table of possible initial actions, followed by a list of projects which may be considered in the future.

ACTION	OUTCOME	ACTION BY PARISH COUNCIL	INPUT FROM OTHER BODIES	TARGET COMPLETION
Identify a list of species currently present in Whaddon	Create a baseline for the Biodiversity Plan to inform decisions on what we have that we wish to conserve or enhance, and to use as a comparison when reporting outcomes		Led by Sustainable Whaddon with input from local residents	December 2026
Verge cutting	Identify areas rich in wild flowers and agree a beneficial cutting schedule, which considers both highway safety and biodiversity, to be included in the tender documents for the next contract	When tendering for verge cutting adopt guidance provided by Plantlife in their "Managing Grassland Road Verges" document	Sustainable Whaddon to provide advice to Parish Council as required	Before the next grass cutting contract is due
Tree planting	Increase the number of trees in the parish	Continue to take up offers of native and sustainably sourced trees for planting within the parish.		Ongoing
Planning approvals for development	To ensure that planning applications deliver appropriate levels of biodiversity enhancement	Work with the District Council on all planning applications approved within the parish	South Cambridgeshire District Council	Ongoing

Bug hotel	Encourage local residents to add to the fill of suitable material, possibly on a pre-advertised day.	Continue to support the bug hotel on the recreation ground	Sustainable Whaddon	Ongoing
Swift Corridor	Support the 'Swift Corridor' scheme by providing suitable nest boxes to attract swifts to use Whaddon as a link to adjoining villages.	Parish council to encourage Village Hall Trust to site a swift box on the north gable of the Village Hall	Village Hall Trust and Sustainable Whaddon	Prior to the next nesting season
Churchyard	Improve biodiversity	Work with PCC	St Mary's PCC to continue registration with A Rocha and to seek opportunities to further enhance biodiversity in the churchyard	Ongoing
Private gardens	Improve biodiversity in private gardens by means of, for example, water butts, hedgehog corridors, home composting, bird feeders, nest boxes, avoiding pesticides.	Encourage local residents	Local residents Sustainable Whaddon to provide advice	Ongoing

- Draw up a detailed map of land and buildings in Whaddon - The map would identify ownership (Parish Council, public bodies, private estates, private individuals), and provide further baseline information. It would show how different classes of land are distributed throughout the parish, and assist in identifying key habitats for biodiversity and potential wildlife corridors in Whaddon.
- Look at opportunities to enhance biodiversity on the recreation ground.
- Invasive species – identification and possible early eradication.
- Ditches – maintenance to enhance biodiversity and reduce pollution.
- Trees – Consider tree preservation orders for exceptionally iconic trees within the parish, for example the Purple Beech on the verge corner outside the Old Rectory and the lone White Poplar on the bridleway between St Mary's Close and the Wimpole Avenue.
- Providing suggestions of plants and small trees for private gardens which could have the potential of attracting new species.
- Run a moth trap session for interested residents.

Date adopted:

Review due: *Suggest 18 months after initial adoption, then at least every 3 years thereafter*