

Marske & New Forest Parish Council

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

May 2026

Marske & New Forest Council formally adopted this policy on 21st May 2026 in response to the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' placed on local authorities introduced by the Environment Act 2021. Marske & New Forest Council will take biodiversity into account in all its decisions and actions.

Background

All local authorities had to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024. Policies and objectives had to be agreed as soon as possible after that date. The Council should reconsider its actions on a quarterly, annual or regular basis as agreed and must reconsider the actions it can take within five years of when it completed its previous reconsideration.

According to the Act, the Council needs to check if a number of strategies affect how it complies with its biodiversity duty including:

- Local nature recovery strategies
- Species conservation strategies
- Protected site strategies.

The Council will strive to understand how or if they are relevant to its work, be aware of how these strategies affect land that is owned and managed by the Council, or actions it could take to conserve or enhance biodiversity and consider how it can contribute to the strategy where appropriate.

Biodiversity is the collective term for the variety and abundance of forms of life found in an area, including animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms like bacteria. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems to maintain, balance and support life. Biodiversity supports everything in nature that we need to survive including, food, oxygen, clean air and clean water.

Commitment

Marske & New Forest Council will:

1. Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions it makes in council, its committees, sub-committees and task and finish group meetings. It will seek to minimise adverse impacts on biodiversity as a result of its activities and will identify opportunities to increase biodiversity when practicable.
2. Encourage practices and projects beneficial to biodiversity through grants it makes to local groups.
3. Communicate information and raise awareness of biodiversity through its website and newsletters.
4. Work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the parish.
5. Wherever possible, raise public awareness of biodiversity issues as part of its leadership role within the local community.
6. When commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats. It will support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.
7. Monitor its internal policies and processes to enhance biodiversity.

As a landowner, Marske & New Forest Council will consider how land it manages could improve biodiversity.

It will:

1. Proactively remove invasive species as required under appropriate legislation in order to prevent harm to native species.
2. Avoid the use of herbicides except in exceptional circumstances.
3. Properly scale and time grounds maintenance work or vegetation removal such that the impact on biodiversity is minimised. Maintenance practices that are beneficial to biodiversity will be taken into consideration when contracts are placed.
4. Create dedicated spaces to attract and enhance wildlife.
5. Improve the buildings it manages and land around them to enhance biodiversity.

Marske & New Forest Council, will not produce a biodiversity report and there is no legislative requirement to do so.

End.