

# LOXWOOD PARISH COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY POLICY

## Background

Biodiversity is the whole variety of life on Earth, all species of plants and animals, their genetic variation and the habitats and ecosystems they are part of. It includes not just the rare or the threatened, but also the wildlife that is familiar to us in the places where we live and work. Biodiversity is everywhere: in our gardens, fields, hedgerows, ponds, and ditches.

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England, including Parish Councils<sup>1</sup> to have regard to conserving and enhancing biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. This duty was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021.

## The Local Area

Loxwood is a rural parish, It is within the zone of influence of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It has rich biodiversity, which is characterised by dense networks of woodlands, including ancient semi-natural woodland and old woodland pasture; shaws and hedges with mature hedgerow trees; mature and over-mature oak trees; farmland and rolling pasture. The parish has part of The Wey & Arun Canal. The parish is home to rare wildlife such as the Barbastelle Bats.

## The Council's responsibilities

The Council is responsible for the provision and updating of the Loxwood Neighbourhood Development Plan whose Policies adhere to this Biodiversity Policy

## How the Council's will meet its duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity?

The Council can demonstrate compliance with this duty by ensuring it considers biodiversity whenever it: -

- Develops policies and strategies and puts them into practice.
- Acts in its capacity as a statutory consultee in the planning process.
- Manages any land it owns and/or acts as Sole Trustee.
- Develops community infrastructure.
- Makes procurement decisions.
- Implements social, economic, and environmental programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> S.40(4) & (5) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Aim	Objective
Decision making - consider the impact of all decisions on parish biodiversity.	Standing <i>aide memoir</i> on meeting agendas.
Conserve and enhance parish biodiversity via the planning process.	Specific consideration of biodiversity when commenting on planning applications e.g., regard for direct loss of habitats and commuting / foraging wildlife paths; light pollution; and construction/ operation noise and vibrations.
Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)	The Council will ensure that biodiversity is conserved and enhanced within the NDP.
Land management	<p>It will consider a review of how it manages land which may include, but is not limited to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides.</li> <li>○ Leave standing and fallen dead wood as habitat.</li> <li>○ Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as habitat.</li> <li>○ Remove invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna as required.</li> <li>○ Consider reducing the number of grass cuts.</li> <li>○ Hedge cutting outside of the bird nesting season.</li> <li>○ Consider installing bird and bat boxes in Council owned/managed trees and buildings.</li> <li>○ Consider tree planting.</li> <li>○ Consider creating habitat rich, biodiverse areas where appropriate with planting schemes and expert support where necessary.</li> </ul>
Litter picking to reduce dangers to wildlife	The Council will support community litter picking, which will improve wildlife habitat condition and fewer wildlife deaths from litter.

Community infrastructure

The Council will consider bird and bat boxes for bus shelters and other buildings that it owns.

Promote and encourage biodiversity within the community.

The Council knows that most of the parish's biodiversity is in private ownership (gardens, ponds, streams, woodland, hedges etc). The Council will consider educating, advising, raising awareness, and supporting the community to understand biodiversity and why it's important to conserve and enhance it.

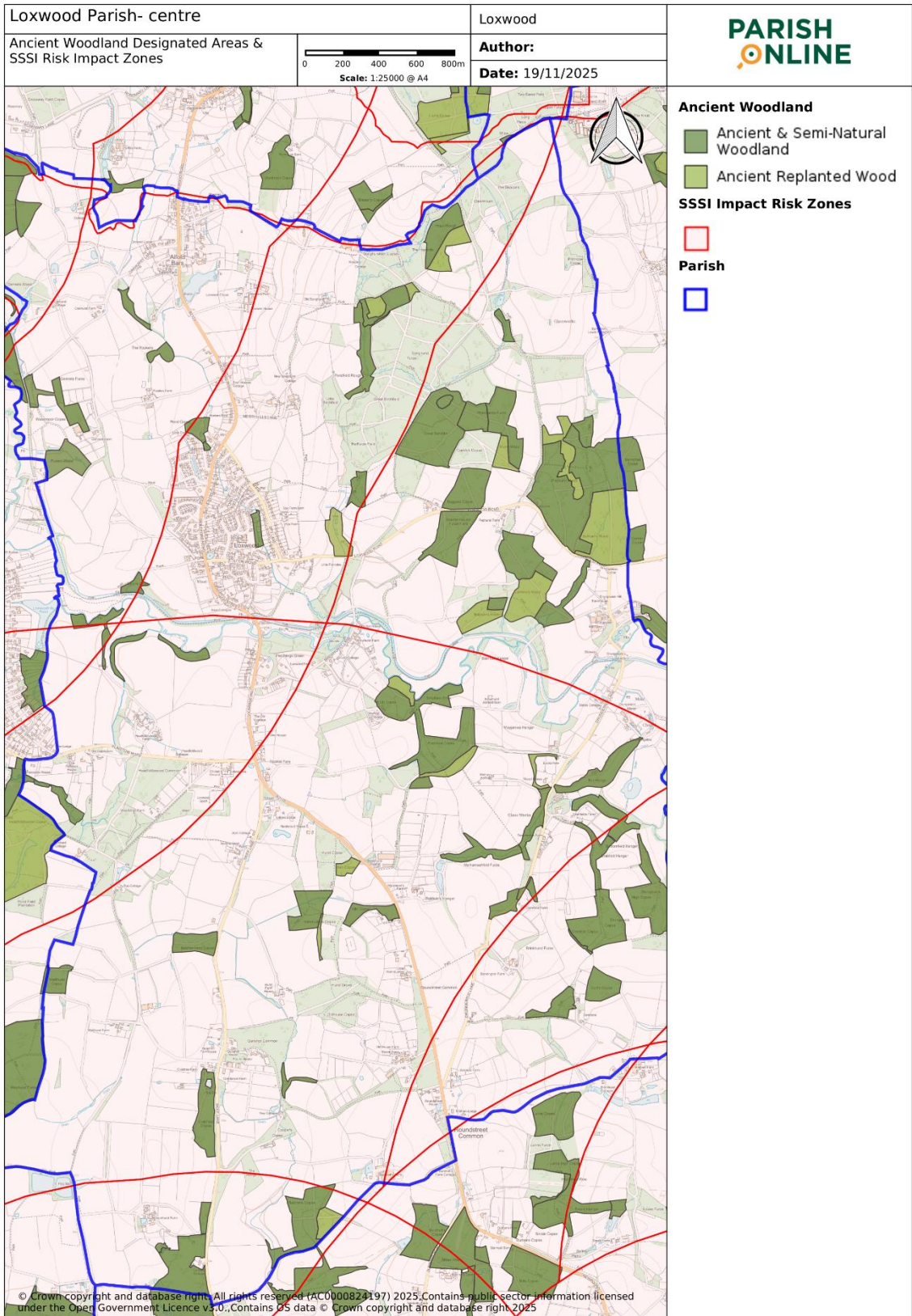
The Council will consider the following: -

- Include the public and community partners in projects to improve biodiversity.
- Feature biodiversity in public communications.
- Put information boards in green spaces.
- Raise public awareness of how their gardens can support biodiversity.

Review policies and processes

The Council will look to make changes, where necessary and appropriate, to ensure its policies and internal processes support biodiversity, which may include, but is not limited to: -

- Procurement – buy sustainable materials and supplies to reduce the demand on natural resources.
- Water – improve water efficiency to reduce the effect water abstraction can have on sensitive habitats and species.
- Support community projects which promote biodiversity (grant support).



*Loxwood Parish map showing Ancient Woodland (brown) & SSSI Impact Risk Zones*

