



Town Clerk: Caroline Leet

EDENBRIDGE
TOWN COUNCIL

Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Policy

Adopted by full Council 07 September 2026

*To be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains current and effective.
Any updates will be communicated to all council members and employees*

Introduction

Edenbridge Town Council recognises that biodiversity and nature recovery are fundamental to creating healthy, attractive and resilient communities. The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity across the land and assets it owns and manages, whilst balancing its responsibilities for public safety, recreation, accessibility and effective management of public resources.

The Council acknowledges that town and parish councils have an important role to play in supporting local biodiversity through the way they manage open spaces, trees, buildings and other community assets.

Rather than treating biodiversity as a standalone activity, Edenbridge Town Council seeks to embed biodiversity and environmental considerations into its day-to-day operations and future decision making.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Demonstrate the Council's commitment to biodiversity and nature recovery.
- Provide a strategic framework for considering biodiversity in Council activities and projects.
- Bring together the Council's existing environmental management practices.
- Complement the Council's supporting environmental policies.
- Encourage continual improvement where practical and financially proportionate.

Policy Statement

Edenbridge Town Council will, wherever reasonably practicable:

- Protect and enhance biodiversity on Council-owned and managed land.
- Consider biodiversity when planning improvements to Council land, buildings and infrastructure.
- Manage habitats in ways that support wildlife whilst maintaining safe and accessible public spaces.
- Seek opportunities to reduce the Council's environmental impact.
- Promote sustainable management practices across Council services.
- Comply with relevant environmental legislation and recognised good practice.
- Encourage continual improvement through practical, proportionate and affordable measures.

The Council recognises that biodiversity should be considered alongside its wider responsibilities, including public safety, heritage conservation, recreation, accessibility and sound financial management.

1. Delivering Biodiversity and Nature Recovery

The Council already undertakes a wide range of activities that contribute to biodiversity and environmental sustainability.

1.1 Trees and Woodland

The Council manages Millennium Wood, planted in 2000 and now comprising more than 2,000 trees, together with in excess of 550 additional trees across the town.

Tree management includes routine inspection, maintenance, replacement planting where appropriate, and identifying opportunities for new tree planting to strengthen the town's green infrastructure.

1.2 Parks and Open Spaces

The Council manages parks, recreation grounds, cemeteries, woodland and other public open spaces using practices that seek to balance public enjoyment with protection of wildlife and habitats.

Examples include:

- Wildflower areas;
- Bug hotels and insect habitats;
- Retention of suitable dead wood and habitat piles where safe to do so;
- Habitat-sensitive vegetation management;
- Mulching and reuse of green waste where appropriate; and
- Consideration of alternative and sustainable methods of managing vegetation.

The Council continually reviews opportunities to improve habitats whilst maintaining attractive, safe and functional public spaces.

1.3 Sustainable Management

The Council recognises that biodiversity and nature recovery are closely connected to wider environmental sustainability and climate resilience. The Council's approach to reducing energy use, emissions, waste and the consumption of natural resources is set out in its Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Policy.

The Council recognises that biodiversity and nature recovery are best achieved through continual improvement rather than isolated initiatives. Biodiversity considerations will therefore be taken into account, where reasonably practicable, in the management of Council land, buildings, procurement, grounds maintenance and future capital projects.

1.4 Responsible Land Management

The Council seeks to ensure that grounds maintenance activities are undertaken in an environmentally responsible manner.

This includes:

- Minimising waste wherever possible;
- Reusing green waste where practical;
- Responsible management of vegetation;
- Proportionate and controlled use of approved herbicides where necessary;
- Complying with current DEFRA guidance and industry best practice; and
- Reviewing management practices to identify opportunities for environmental improvement.

1.5 Working with the Community

The Council supports community involvement in protecting and enhancing the local environment.

This includes:

- Supporting community planting initiatives;
- Working with volunteers and community organisations where appropriate;
- Encouraging public appreciation of the town's natural environment; and
- Recognising the contribution biodiversity makes to the character and appearance of Edenbridge.

1.6 Recognition of Good Practice

The Council regards external recognition, including South and South East in Bloom, as an opportunity to benchmark its environmental management practices and identify further opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

It participates annually in the South and South East in Bloom Awards.

The judging criteria include environmental management, sustainability and biodiversity. The Council has consistently achieved Silver Gilt and Gold awards for its open spaces and, in 2025, was awarded **Conservation Area of the Year**, recognising the high standards achieved in managing the town's landscape for both people and wildlife.

2. Supporting Policies

This policy provides the strategic framework for biodiversity and nature recovery. The Biodiversity and Nature recovery Policy and the Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Policy together form the Council's overarching environmental framework, supported by the following operational policies:

- Vegetation Management and Bonfire Policy
- Waste Management Policy
- Weed Management Policy.

Together, these policies provide for how the Council manages and enhances biodiversity, protects the environment and promotes sustainable working practices. These documents should be read together rather than in isolation.

3. Future Commitments

The Council will continue to:

- Review opportunities to improve biodiversity on Council-owned land.
- Replace trees where appropriate and identify opportunities for additional planting.
- Support pollinators and native species through practical habitat management.

- Consider biodiversity when undertaking future improvement projects.
- Review environmental management practices in line with emerging good practice.
- Work with partners and the local community to enhance the natural environment where opportunities arise.

4. Monitoring and Review

Progress in delivering this policy will be demonstrated through the Council's ongoing management of its land and buildings, implementation of its supporting environmental policies, annual grounds maintenance programmes and consideration of biodiversity as part of relevant Council decisions and projects.

This policy will aim to be reviewed every three years by the Finance and Governance Committee, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or Council practice.