

# **WATLINGTON GREEN PLAN**

## ***POSITION STATEMENT ON BIODIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT***

*17 January 2021*

Watlington's Green Plan is being developed by a partnership of local organisations including Watlington Climate Action Group, Watlington Environment Group and Watlington in Bloom.

### **The aims of the Green Plan:**

- To protect and enhance biodiversity and green assets within the parish of Watlington.
- To help tackle climate change through carbon sequestration.
- To improve the resilience, connectivity, and management of local habitats.
- To improve access to local green spaces.
- To communicate with the local community to increase local awareness and understanding of biodiversity and natural carbon solutions.

### **Position statement**

The Green Plan Group seeks to ensure that biodiversity and green spaces within Watlington Parish are enhanced through better habitat management and by working with developers to create green infrastructure that connects to and expands the existing ecological network.

New development can play a role in helping to deliver new green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements that take account of locally relevant priorities.

This document has regard to Policy P3 of the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan in order to achieve consistency between the various parties making comments on this topic.

### **The Watlington Green Plan will seek to support the parish to achieve this by:**

1. Commenting on planning applications to ensure that:
  - there will be no negative impacts on biodiversity; development should result in a net gain in biodiversity wherever possible, with a particular focus on creating wildlife corridors and linkage of habitats within and beyond the identified development sites
  - protected species and habitats are not impacted by development
  - ponds, streams and the springs and groundwater sources of streams are protected and enhanced
  - flood risk is assessed where necessary, and the natural management of water flows is improved to benefit areas identified in flood zones
  - the local environment is protected and enhanced regarding air quality, light, and noise pollution. Good design should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on areas surrounding new development
  - natural landscape features, landforms and views, (eg; hedgerows, woodlands, individual trees, waterways etc) are protected and enhanced
  - views of and from the Chilterns AONB are protected, especially from public viewpoints on Watlington Hill National Trust land and the White Mark
2. Ensuring that existing ecological networks in the parish are maintained, enhanced, buffered and extended and that habitat connectivity between green spaces is improved.

3. Ensuring that those responsible for all new developments
  - draw up appropriate plans for incorporating green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements and improving habitat connectivity within the parish
  - implement these plans to deliver on commitments
  - have suitable and sustainable long-term plans in place for ongoing management of these sites in terms of financial resources and practical know how, and that these are delivered.

**In particular, we seek the following:**

- **Protecting existing habitat features within the parish**, most notably:
  - The brook, its tributaries and its chalk stream habitat should be a priority, given the rare nature of this habitat type, in particular to reduce the risk of run off or flooding affecting water quality.
  - The two Conservation Target Areas in the parish – the Chilterns Escarpment North CTA & Chilterns Dip Slope & Plateau CTA
- **Creating wildlife corridors** and linkage of habitats within and beyond new and existing development, so that the town is permeable to wildlife, allowing movement between and to / from the surrounding areas of countryside
- **Linking habitat types**, in particular:
  - hedges / woodland
  - flower-rich grassland and hedgerow margins
  - ponds and other wetland features
- **Features for inclusion in all new build:**
  - the incorporation of bird (especially swift) and bat boxes
  - hedgehog highways
  - to consider rainwater capture from roofs for garden use or for grey water use in homes
- **Features to consider for extensions and alterations to existing buildings:** safeguarding of existing bird / bat breeding opportunities (which may require replacement provision of artificial sites where holes are having to be filled for energy conservation / carbon reduction purposes); and where possible incorporation of additional breeding opportunities.
- **Features to incorporate in landscaping:**
  - Provision of nectar sources for a range of locally important pollinator species in all amenity planting.
  - The creation of new wildflower meadows and enhancement of amenity grassland areas for biodiversity, including by building in wildflower margins and road verges.
  - To plan early on for the planting of native street trees where appropriate.
  - To include green spaces for community use as well as for biodiversity; eg; community orchard, allotments or natural play areas.

*Fiona Danks on behalf of Watlington Climate Action Group, Watlington Environment Group and Watlington in Bloom*

[www.watlingtonclimateaction.org.uk/](http://www.watlingtonclimateaction.org.uk/)