

# **Aldenham Parish Council**

## **Open Spaces Biodiversity Policy**



## Forward

Aldenham Parish Council (APC) owns or leases over 69 acres of open spaces across the Parish.

Our Open Spaces are very varied and include over 1500 trees , parkland ,open fields, copses ,rivers, ponds and woods.

They front main roads, open fields and residential/ commercial properties.

We are committed as mentioned in the Radlett Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) 2020-2026 to provide public space improvements, Including the provision of community gardens and allotments, enhanced the biodiversity and mitigation of air pollution shall be supported.

This plan should be read alongside management plans for Fir Spring wood, Scrubbitts wood and KGV

The object of this biodiversity action plan is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity in the Parish Open Spaces.

## What is Biodiversity?

The term biodiversity comes from the words biological diversity and quite simply means variety of all living things, including fungi, plants, animals from single- celled organisms to the largest mammals and trees.

Biodiversity also refers to genetic diversity within species (essential for evolution) and also the diversity of the woodlands, wetlands and other habitats which provide the food, water and shelter for these species

Aldenham Parish Council refer to biodiversity as “wildlife “this includes mammals, plants, lichens, and fungi.

The places where wildlife lives such as woods, rivers, lakes, parks recreation grounds and open spaces.

## Why is biodiversity important

Biodiversity is vital to life and, in its simplest terms, enables life to exist on earth, it provides the air we breathe, the food we eat, the materials we use and the medicines we take.

These are all linked together in a complex web with every plant and animal having its own small part to play.

## APC Open Spaces

That we manage and maintain the grass areas in

- Phillimore Recreation Ground-includes, Children playground  
Open field, Wood, Pond, Allotment, Trees, Mixed Hedges, Naturalising Bulbs

- Scrubbitts Wood- includes -Trees, Mixed Hedges, Bluebells
- Tykeside-includes Trees, Shrubs, River
- Radlett Gardens-includes Trees, Shrubs, Hedges
- Letchmore Heath-includes Children playground, Trees, Shrubs, Pond
- King George V Playing Fields- includes Trees, Mixed Hedges, Woodland Dell, Grass Meadow areas and sports fields area for Cricket and Rugby
- Aldenham Green-includes -Trees, Naturalising bulbs.

#### Who are our partners

- Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Local Community/Schools
- Friends of Group
- Green Flag Award Scheme
- HertsmereBC (HBC)
- Radlett Youth Council
- Herts C.C
- Herts Constabulary Safer Neighbourhood Team

#### What are the benefits

- Improved open spaces
- Increased educational opportunities through events
- Increased health through walks and volunteering activities
- Greening the Parish through habitat management and creation
- Increased awareness of wildlife and conservation
- Increased populations of endangered species

#### What can APC do

Maintain and Manage existing biodiversity in its open spaces

- Carry out wildlife surveys in our Open spaces
- Look to identify new planting areas and create wildlife areas
- Look to increase our tree stock
- Look to restore the pond in Phillimore Recreation ground
- Maintain the pond in Letch more Heath
- Develop local partnerships to help maintain and improve biodiversity
- Whilst carrying out tree works, look to leave wood on site to create good habitat tree log piles
- Identify grass meadow areas
- Raise awareness of biodiversity to the local community
- Create a community orchard on our allotment site
- Give an annual report on our biodiversity actions and improvements to the local community
- Influence HBC draft local plan to ensure creation of more open space in development with increased biodiversity.

## **Create and maintain existing wildlife rich habitats**

APC will look to create habitats that benefit wildlife. There is an existing wildflower garden on the allotments at Phillimore Rec. APC have also started to create wildflower areas on the banks between Phillimore Rec Ground and the allotment drive.

APC will look to create more area that support bees and other wildlife on edges of Phillimore Rec Ground.

In Fir Spring & Scrubbitts Wood any trees that are cut down are left as log piles to encourage wood lice etc.

As part of the management plan native species of bluebells have been planted and scrub reduced in order to allow these plants to survive.

## **KGV**

On Salters Field the grass has been allowed to grow with paths being cut in-between. This has allowed flowers to thrive such as poppies and orchids.

## **Amenity Grass**

There are a number of areas where APC has amenity grass. Whilst there is very little opportunity to enhance these areas with regards to bio-diversity especially on the sports pitches. However, APC will investigate whether sensory gardens could be created in the two children's play areas which will enhance the diversity of what is available in these areas.

## **Naturalised bulbs in grass**

Daffodil bulbs have been planted in Phillimore Rec, Aldenham Green & Letchmore Heath. There are also bulbs planted annually in the Radlett Centre raised beds. These provide a flash of colour in spring. These have medium value of biodiversity providing pollen and nectar early in the season. APC will look to enhance the variety available with say crocuses and snowdrops.

## **Trees**

Trees are of high value to biodiversity due to having a huge range of habitat niches. APC have wooded areas and copses in Fir Spring & Scrubbitts Wood and trees on all other open spaces which total in all some 1500 in number.

Both Fir Spring and Scrubbitts Wood have management plans designed to ensure sustainability of the areas for generations to come. So far, these plans have reduced the dense tree cover to allow new trees to be planted and grow. The scrub has been cut back and will be managed. Pathways have been opened up directing footfall in these areas rather than the whole wood which will again allow young plants to flourish. APC will update these management plans.

On KGV the trustees have commissioned a report to plant trees on Salters and the Picnic Field over a ten-year period, thus planning for the future.

To allow single trees to remain undamaged by strimming etc, a buffer zone of 50cm will be created where the grass will remain uncut. In this area bulbs will be planted to add colour in the spring.

### **Ponds & Wetlands**

Ponds are a great value to biodiversity. APC will look to create a pond in Fir Spring Wood and investigate what can be enhanced at Letchmore Heath, along with a maintenance programme.

### **Allotments at Phillimore Rec**

Where there are unused areas on the allotment's APC will look to plant native fruit trees to increase the visiting pollinators.

### **Scheduled vegetation, tree and hedge works**

All scheduled works on APC land to vegetation (scrub clearance), tree works and hedge trimming will be scheduled outside the bird breeding season from March to September.

### **Reduce pesticide and herbicide use**

APC are committed to not use pesticides and herbicides now, tree stumps previously 'killed off' by insect pellets are now ground out below ground level, levelled off and seeded. Any compost purchased will not be 'peat' based.

### **Remove invasive non-native plants**

Fortunately, there are limited occurrences of non-native species on APC land. APC will continue to monitor and remove (using contractors) any non-native species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

### **Communication**

It is important that APC use signage, Around Radlett and social media to inform the public where it changes the appearance of a certain area. This includes using expertise at Radlett Horticultural Society and including Friends of Scrubbits Wood in any plan for Scrubbits Wood.

APC will continue to work with Fair Field School on the bio-diversity of the school garden as well as bat boxes, planting and bat walks in Fir Spring Wood.