BIODIVERSITY DUTY POLICY

Background

Pett Parish Council has a statutory duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as amended by the Environment Act 2021, to consider actions that conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Purpose

Pett Parish Council recognises the importance of biodiversity to the parish's landscape, environment and quality of life. The Council is committed to considering biodiversity when making decisions, managing land and assets, developing policies and engaging with the community.

Biodiversity Considerations

When carrying out its functions, the Council will, where relevant:

- Protect and enhance habitats, species, trees and hedgerows.
- Seek opportunities to create and improve wildlife habitats.
- Reduce pollution and support habitat connectivity.
- Use environmentally sensitive management practices.
- Seek specialist ecological advice when appropriate.

Land and Asset Management

Where the Council owns, manages or influences land, it will support biodiversity by:

- Maintaining wildlife-friendly areas.
- Using native planting where practical.
- Protecting valuable habitats and mature vegetation.
- Minimising chemical use.
- Ensuring contractors understand the Council's biodiversity objectives.

Any actions will take account of public safety, accessibility, recreation and operational requirements.

Planning and Development

When commenting on planning applications, the Council will consider:

- Protection of habitats and ecological features.
- Biodiversity enhancement opportunities.
- Wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity.
- Biodiversity Net Gain requirements where applicable.
- The cumulative impact of development on biodiversity.

Dark Skies

The Council supports measures that minimise unnecessary lighting and protect wildlife and the coastal rural character of Pett and Pett Level.

Community Engagement

The Council will encourage residents, community groups and local organisations to support biodiversity through education, wildlife-friendly practices and nature recovery projects.

Procurement

Environmental and biodiversity impacts will be considered, where proportionate, when procuring goods and services or appointing contractors.

Local Nature Recovery

The Council will have regard to relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategies and seek opportunities to support nature recovery and habitat connectivity within the parish.

Responsibilities and Monitoring

The Council is responsible for fulfilling its biodiversity duty. The Clerk will highlight relevant biodiversity matters, and the Council will maintain a record of significant biodiversity actions. Progress and objectives will be reviewed at least every five years.

Statement of Commitment

Pett Parish Council recognises biodiversity as an important part of the parish's environment and community wellbeing and is committed to taking reasonable and proportionate action to conserve and enhance it.

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____