

Hambleden Parish Council
Biodiversity and Climate Change Policy

Statutory Duty:

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 placed a duty on authorities in England, including Parish Councils to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making.

Environment Act 2021 public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This means, a public authority must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration
- Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Definitions:

Hambleden Parish Council (HPC) (1) recognises the existence of both a climate and a biodiversity crisis. We recommend that HPC formally aligns with Buckinghamshire Council (BC) and commits to achieving net zero by 2050 and pledges to consider the effects on climate change and biodiversity in all its decision making.

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on Earth, including in the air, on the land – in hedgerows, trees, fields, gardens, roadsides etc; within the soil and in our rivers and seas. (2)

Climate change refers to long term changes in our temperature and weather patterns driven mainly by human activity, including reliance on fossil fuels (3)

Biodiversity loss and climate change are linked, so if we act on one, improvement is likely in the other.

Land Managed By The PC:

HPC owns or has responsibility for:

- The wildflower meadow on Ellery Rise, Frieth
- The adjoining playground
- Common land in front of St John Evangelist, Frieth
- Maintaining the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin, Hambleden
- The maintenance of Pheasants Hill Common
- Devolved responsibilities for various open spaces around the parish from BC
- Advisory responsibilities on planning decisions
- Can be a conduit between residents and Buckinghamshire Council

How the PC Can Help:

Resilience:

The Met Office paper – Effects of Climate Change, states that “In the future we project that the UK will see: warmer and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers, more frequent and intense weather extremes.” The Parish could therefore be impacted.

Government Advice is available at: [Community Resilience](#)

Actions:

- *Identify and prepare for risks to the community*
- *Liaise with Local Authority, Fire Service and NHS to ascertain our role in an emergency*

- *Identify local venues that can be used as emergency shelters*
- *Identify local persons with equipment, tools and vehicles that would be useful in an emergency.*
- *Consider drawing up an emergency plan*

Planning:

[The National Housing Federation 2021 report](#) “England’s 25 million homes – which produce 58.5 million tonnes of CO2 every year – are emitting the equivalent of the average annual use of 28 million cars”.

The government initiated The [Skidmore Progress Report](#) to Parliament 2023, which states that all building should “be in line with net zero.”

Actions:

- *Identify risks/threats to biodiversity*
- *assess planning applications based on the environmental impact of any building work, in terms of design, insulation, light pollution, energy source, impact on surrounding area of potential increased traffic on wildlife, air quality, greener travel and tranquility in the National Landscape.*
- *Lobby BC to allow only new builds in line with net zero.*

Management of the Rural Environment:

[The UK’s State of Nature Report for 2023](#) reports that because of climate change and loss of habitats, across the UK species studied have declined on average by 19% since 1970 and 16% (nearly one in six species) are threatened with extinction from Great Britain. The UK is now one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth. “Changes in the way we manage our land for farming, and climate change were the biggest causes of wildlife decline on our land, rivers and lakes”.

Actions:

In order to conserve, restore and improve habitats under its control, HPC will endeavour to:

- Audit the biodiversity and landscape of the parish in order to use our local knowledge to support conservation efforts.
- Take professional advice to follow best practice to manage the land that we care for.
- Liaise with landowners, The Chilterns Conservation Board and the Local Wildlife Trust to promote the creation of wildlife corridors.
- Avoid chemical treatments except in exceptional circumstances.
- Contractors employed by HPC to be made aware of professional advice and best practice and follow recommendations given.
- Commence a dialogue with BC about our policy and what more they and we can do together to manage open spaces and restore biodiversity.
- Form a working partnership and consult with local farmers on their successes to improve biodiversity and climate change set out in the Environmental Land Management (ELM) Schemes, and how they feel they can best contribute to preserving and improving our unique landscape for the future.

Raising Awareness Locally:

“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make. The greatest danger to our future is apathy. You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you.” Dr. Jane Goodall

Actions:

- *Build on the good work already achieved, and use the website to provide a ‘greener living’ resource hub to disseminate information for its residents about energy saving, recycling opportunities, wildlife -friendly gardening, local events / organisations, repair cafes, grants, existing schemes etc.*
- *Involve residents in activities that benefit the whole community: e.g. asset sharing, litter picking, giving residents some responsibility for managing PC field for biodiversity.*
- *Investigate HPC providing enhanced recycling facilities.*

- *Work with BC on what more it can do to help individuals reduce their carbon footprint and help BC reach their target of net zero by 2050.*

Transport:

Government official statistics 2023 state: “transport is the largest emitting sector of greenhouse gas emissions, producing 26% of the UK’s total emissions in 2021”.

Action:

HPC does not have a specific responsibility for transport, but given the sector’s high emissions, encouraging BC to improve its transport infrastructure to normalise and make greener methods of travel easier in rural areas, will add pressure to BC to achieve its aim of net zero by 2050.

For example, in our area, possibilities include:

- *Lobbying BC to provide a school bus from Lane End.*
- *Encourage BC to adopt 20 mph through villages, and adopt traffic slowing methods.*
- *Lobby BC to make road safety for pedestrians in our villages and visitors a priority; and improve public education to drive considerately on country lanes, mindful of vulnerable road users.*
- *encourage BC to promote greener travel e.g. safe cycling routes*
- *Local EV charging points*
- *Use potential school bus to extend their ‘pick-me-up’ service for the public (particularly the elderly) on e.g. Market days.*

Collaboration:

Developing partnerships and alliances with wider communities is now standard for charities and becoming an increasingly effective way to effect change.

Action:

HPC will strive to work with residents and other local Parish Councils, ward councilors, and the Community Board to identify areas of mutual benefit such as potential economic efficiencies, creating wildlife corridors, spreading awareness locally, and making our roads safer, to ensure we all play our part in limiting climate change, and restoring and protecting our unique and precious biodiversity.

Policy Adopted: March 2024

To be reviewed as necessary

Appendices:

1. The Local Area

The Hambleton Civil Parish comprises a group of rural villages and hamlets, within a landscape containing important habitats for nature; including beechwoods with yew and holly, hedges, arable fields, pasture, water meadows, a significant winterbourne (the Hamble Brook) and the River Thames. The Parish lies entirely within the designated Chilterns National Landscape and mostly within the Hambleton and Wormsley Valleys Biodiversity Opportunity Area. It contains one Site of Special Scientific Interest (Fayland Bank SSSI) and 11 Local Wildlife Sites (a non-statutory designation). Over 40 per cent of the Parish is under National Trust protection (The Greenlands Covenant).

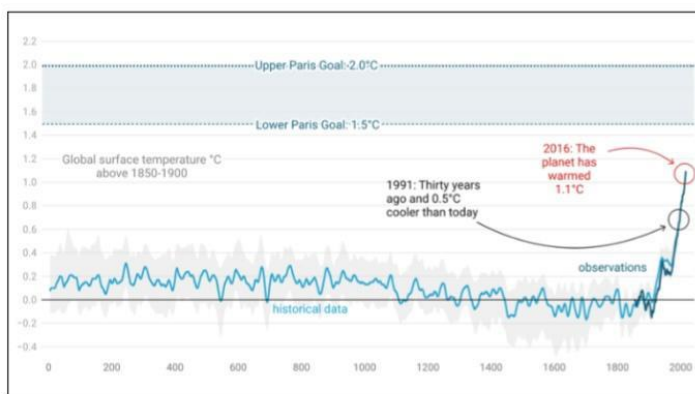
2. Biodiversity

The UK is one of the most nature depleted in the world. Since 1970 UK species have declined by about 19% on average, and nearly 1 in 6 species (16.1%) are now threatened with extinction ([State of Nature Report](#) September 2023).

3. Climate Change

Since the 1800s, the Earth has been getting hotter:

1. Global Warming Thus Far



The scientific consensus is that global warming has increased because of human activity and the use of fossil fuels. 2023 has been the hottest on record with a number of weather events and there is a danger that we may exceed the 1.5C, deemed safe by [The Paris Agreement](#). The latest [IPCC report 2023](#) states “Governments, the private sector, civil society and individuals must all step up to keep the future we desire in sight. A narrow window of opportunity is still open, but there is not one second to waste.” Hence the imperative to do more.

2. Future Warming Pathways

