Biodiversity

Background

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England, including Parish Councils to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. This was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021 so 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 policies and achieve objectives .

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth1. Biodiversity is everywhere: in gardens, fields, hedgerows, mountains Rivers and the sea.

The Local Area

Cam Parish Council is a rural village, with a considerable number of natural areas, including hedges, ditches, farmland, and the River Cam. In addition, just on the border between Dursley is Holywell Orchard.

Parish Council responsibilities

The Parish Council owns a number of pieces of land

Jubilee Field
Cam Green Playing Field
Woodfields Playing Field

Lark rise – 2 parcels of land
Cam Pitch War memorial 2 sections
Jubilee Tree – 3 sections
5 allotment sites – Westend, Woodfields, Upthorpe and Ashmead 1 & 2
Hopton Village Green
Grass Keep & Ashmead

The Parish Council is also responsible for the grass cutting of some verges, along with the cutting of a number of hedges within the village. The main grass cuts at all play areas are the responsibility of the parish council

The Parish Council is also responsible for the provision and updating of the Cam Neighbourhood Development Plan.

What the Parish Council will do

* Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made through the Parish Council, especially when commenting on planning applications.
* It will reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides used on Parish Council owned land
* It will review how it manages its land holdings, this may include, but is not limited to.
	+ Leaving standing and fallen dead wood as a habitat for invertebrates
	+ Leaving leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates
	+ Removing invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna as required.
	+ The Parish Council will consider reducing the number of cuts in the and allowing the grasses to grow.
	+ The Cam Parish Council NDP is being reviewed in the coming year and the working group will ensure that biodiversity is discussed and added to the plan as necessary.

As owners of the play areas, the Parish Council will

* + Ensure that there is a margin of uncut grass around the hedges to allow longer grasses to grow
	+ Allow fallen tree branches to remain, if safe, to allow invertebrates to habitat
	+ Hedge cutting takes place twice a year, and is very much a balancing act as the Parish Council hedges run alongside narrow, well used footpaths so require cutting. All hedges are cut outside of the bird nesting season.
	+ The hedges around the playing field are cut twice a year, outside of bird nesting season, however some of the cut hedging, is placed on the ground to encourage use by respective animals and invertebrates
	+ The Parish Council will look to purchase and install bird boxes in the Parish Council owned trees.
	+ The Parish Council will look to promote biodiversity via the Parish Council website.