

Nature Recovery Plan for Witchford

Dated August 2025

Witchford Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee

Nature Recovery Plan: Witchford

August 2025

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Witchford Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee is passionate about reversing the decline of nature. We want to take action to protect what is special about Witchford, create new habitats and encourage more people to get involved in caring for and enjoying the natural environment which is all around us.

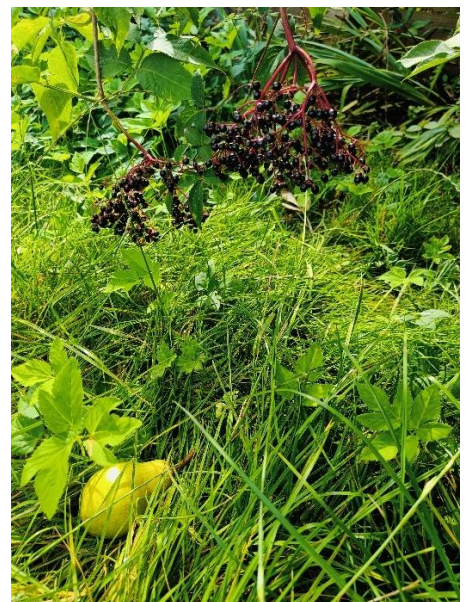
This Nature Recovery Plan sets out a medium-term plan for the creation of more nature rich habitats in Witchford. We have identified twelve themes covering eleven habitats that we have in Witchford and a theme on engagement, ie. how to encourage residents and landowners to get involved in achieving the goals in this Plan.

This Plan sets out what we want to achieve over the next ten years. To do this, the Plan has a section for each theme, setting out what we currently have, where we'd like to get to, and how we are going to get there via an Action Plan for each theme.

But to be a success, we will need your help! You can help by taking action in your own garden or perhaps volunteering to help tidy up or manage a public space – more details in section 12.

Our Five Point Recovery Plan Objectives

1. To make Witchford parish an even better place for nature and for local people, recognising that access to nature also helps improve our health and wellbeing.
2. To inform, inspire and encourage the active participation of the community in helping nature to flourish and biodiversity to increase in the parish.
3. To protect, and where possible enhance, the top 20 biodiversity spaces in Witchford as set out in Appendix 3.
4. To create new habitats.
5. To see measurable gains for wildlife, such as increases in bird numbers, more sightings of hedgehogs, a richer and more plentiful variety of butterflies, and an increase in tree cover and hedgerow quality.



Theme 1: Gardens

Introduction

In the UK the area covered by gardens is larger than all of the National Nature Reserves combined. Gardens play a key role in connecting habitats, especially across urban areas, and provide safe refuges for wildlife in an ever-busier environment.

Gardens do not have to be large to benefit wildlife and any wildlife-friendly activity, however small, will help. It is not necessary for individual gardens to offer everything a species needs if nearby gardens contribute too; for example, a blackbird will nest in one garden but forage and bathe in others.

What do we have in Witchford?

There are approximately 1180 homes in Witchford, therefore we have approximately 1180 gardens, each of which can be a mini oasis for wildlife. The photos below shows some great examples of habitats for wildlife, all of which were found in private gardens.



Gardens: Action Plan

Witchford Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will aim to:

1. Encourage home owners to create wildlife friendly gardens
2. Use the community notice boards and Witchford Residents Facebook group page to promote monthly wildlife gardening information throughout the year.
3. Promote wildlife gardening schemes as they arise e.g. linking to ECDC's Hedgehog Recovery webpage
4. Provide information for the Parish Council newsletter on a quarterly basis
5. Monitor, and seek to benefit from, external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.

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As a local resident, ***you can help*** by:

1. Find alternative ways of keeping pests at bay rather than resorting to chemical pesticides. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/mar/04/planet-friendly-rhs-to-no-longer-class-slugs-and-snails-as-pests>
2. Choose native plants whenever possible
3. Choose bee and insect friendly flower garden – more information from <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/best-plants-bees-and-pollinators>
4. Install a bird, bat or hedgehog box – more information from <https://www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/build-a-birdbox>
5. Make sure there are gaps in the boundary wall or fence, so wildlife can roam freely.
6. Purchase or construct a compost heap, but make sure it is turned regularly to prevent it becoming a home for unwanted pests.
7. Other features can include log piles and rock piles (or a combination of both), leaf piles, bundles of canes or drilled logs for solitary bees, and upturned/partly buried flower pots for bumble bees.
8. Put in a small pond or other water feature, a real boost for wildlife – even something as little as an old washing up bowl will attract wildlife.
9. Let the grass grow in part of your garden – this could be a mini-meadow or part of your lawn mown less frequently.
10. If you have space, plant a native tree or hedge – fruit and berry-bearing trees will provide the best returns.
11. If you have hedges and/or trees in your garden, resist trimming them between 1st March and 1st September, unless you are able to see that there are no nests present. If you trim them at any other time, you run the risk of disturbing nesting birds. If your tree or hedge is berry bearing, wait until the berries have been eaten by birds and other wildlife before resorting to trimming.



More reading:

Wild About Gardens – Encouraging wildlife to your garden with RHS and the Wildlife Trusts [Wild About Gardens / RHS Gardening](#)

RSPB – Gardening for Wildlife <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/>

National Trust - Nine ways to build a wildlife friendly garden
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/discover/gardening-tips/nine-ways-to-build-a-wildlife-friendly-garden>

Theme 2: Allotments

Introduction

Allotments often have many of the same features as gardens but without the physical boundaries between plots, so offer a large area for wildlife to utilise. Allotments can be managed to encourage natural pollinators. A benefit to growing your own vegetables is the drastic reduction in air miles, as well as all the unnecessary packaging that is evident on fresh produce purchased in supermarkets. The taste of “home grown” fruit and vegetables is also far superior to store bought produce. As well as the environmental benefits, the health benefits (both physical and mental) of having an allotment are significant.

What do we have in Witchford?

We have two sets of allotments in Witchford, at Broadway and at the north end of Manor Road.



Allotments: Action Plan

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will aim to:

1. Seek to work with the management teams at both allotment areas to identify what parts of them are good for nature, and what parts have potential for enhancement.
2. Work with the Parish Council to source new locations for more allotments in Witchford parish.

As a local resident, ***you can help*** by:

1. Consider taking up an allotment plot, if one is available, or register your interest.
2. When you have a plot, think about planting flowers that will attract bees or butterflies. Leave one or two ‘misshapes’ or bolting vegetable to flower naturally. For example, don’t cut and throw away a bolting leek – let it flower, and it will attract a host of bees and insects; if you have fruit trees or bushes, leave fruit on the trees or on the ground, for the benefit of various insects.
3. Go organic
4. Manage the periphery for wildlife - boundary hedge to allow flowering and fruiting, or grass strip to encourage wildflowers
5. Consider purchasing fresh vegetables from local farm shops rather than supermarkets.

More reading:

National allotment society - <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/>

Theme 3: Churches and Their Grounds

Introduction

Churches and their grounds have been a focus for communities for thousands of years and can be refuges for many species when managed appropriately. Bats often roost in churches where they can find undisturbed nooks and crannies.

The ancient stonework can be rich with lichens and mosses while the ledges and roofs can be ideal places for nesting birds. Witchford church provides conditions to host a breeding colony of swifts, so important as swift numbers have declined dramatically in recent years. Church grounds have often escaped the damaging effects of fertilisers and ploughs so may contain remnants of ancient grassland where fungi thrive and wildflowers flourish. Churchyards often contain ancient trees which provide a rare and important habitat.

What do we have in Witchford?

St Andrew's Church and Churchyard is actively managed by the Churchyard Manager and a team of volunteers to support biodiversity in a way that is appropriate for the site. This work has already achieved the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust Conservation Churchyard Award scheme Silver award. The team continues to investigate and implement actions to conserve and promote biodiversity in the Church grounds



Churches and Their Grounds: Action Plan

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will aim to:

1. Support the Church and Churchyard management team where appropriate.

As a local resident, ***you can help*** by:

1. Visiting the Church grounds, and note what you see and hear
2. Help with any survey work or actions set up by the Church

More reading

Caring for God's acre: <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/>

Wildlife Trust Wild Churchyards: <https://www.wildlifebcn.org/about-us/advice-landowners/wild-churchyards>

Bats in churches: <https://batsinchurches.org.uk/>

Theme 4: School Grounds

Introduction

School grounds can offer an opportunity for encouraging environmental awareness among school students. Nature areas and school gardens can offer areas of habitat.

What do we have in Witchford?

The playing fields at Witchford Rackham Primary School and Witchford Village College both adjoin green space, which gives the opportunity for joint working with the schools and landowner/councils to develop cross-boundary wildlife habitats.

School Grounds: Action Plan

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will aim to:

1. Incorporate feedback from Nature Recovery contacts at Rackham and WVC and build on these.

As a local resident, *you can help* by:

1. Responding to any requests for help with wildlife or environmental schemes at your children's schools.
2. Encouraging your children with their wildlife or environmental education

Theme 5: Amenity Areas

Introduction

By managing public buildings and public spaces for wildlife wherever possible, these areas can be made to provide useful areas of habitat and green corridors, as well as contributing to community well-being, and modelling 'greening' ideas for residents.

What do we have in Witchford?

Witchford village hall in Bedwell Hey Lane has an outdoor seating area and large playing field. The Open Spaces Group has created a green corner on the playing fields. A native hedge 60 m long has been planted by members of Witchford Guiding to enclose an area where young families can gather to watch the junior football. The small area (approximately 20 m by 20 m) contains around 50 planted trees and shrubs, a patch of sown native wild flowers as well as natural woodland vegetation, and a bug hotel built by the Brownies and Rainbows. For the children, volunteers have placed a tree trunk trail of 40 tree trunk sections, and there are two picnic tables installed by the Witchford Playing Fields Association (WPFA). The Green Corner has been created as a place where wildlife can thrive alongside young families and is an example of co-operation between the WPFA, an amenity organisation, and conservation volunteers.

The focus at the Parish Council owned play areas at Bedwell Hey Lane and Common Road is on play. However, the Parish Council is hoping to take over the play area at Victoria Green from ECDC, and perhaps there could be opportunity for new planting or even investigating innovative biodiversity themed play options when this play area is redeveloped.

Amenity Areas: Action Plan

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will aim to:

1. Work with the WPFA to create further wildlife refuges planting on the periphery of the playing fields.
2. Survey the bus shelters to see what options there are for making these more wildlife friendly and work toward implementing these.
3. Use the 8 Parish Council notice boards to publicise ongoing wildlife initiatives and to invite residents to help.
4. Work with Witchford Parish Council to review options for incorporating measures to make the play areas in Witchford more wildlife friendly.
5. Work with Witchford Parish Council and County Highways towards providing planters at suitable locations on the pavement/highway verge and recruit volunteers to maintain them.
6. Monitor, and seek to benefit from, external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.

As a local resident, ***you can help*** by:

1. Helping to keep the village environment attractive by using waste bins provided.
2. Volunteering to help maintain wildlife friendly amenity spaces, e.g. looking after planters.



Theme 6: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

Introduction

Trees, woodlands and hedgerows provide a wealth of benefits both for biodiversity (habitat for pollinators, connecting habitats, shelter and food for wildlife, protection for soil) and for climate change mitigation (carbon absorption, urban cooling, and shade).

What do we have in Witchford?

We have an annual tree planting programme funded by the Parish Council and implemented by the Tree Warden and other village volunteers. In 2024-25 62 trees are scheduled to be planted. Volunteers have planted over 700 m of native hedging in Witchford, of which 165 m will have been laid by the winter of 2024-25. All the planted hedgerows are managed, mostly by the Open Spaces Group, but some of the older more mature hedges are cut by WPC contractors. Hedgerows on WPC land at the Old Recreation Ground and along Sandpit Drove are also cut by contractors, usually on

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a 2-3 year cycle.

The Millennium Wood is a plot of 0.3 ha and was planted with 300 trees and 300 shrubs, all native species but predominantly oak and ash, in 1999. Edna's Wood and Fairchild Wood are privately-owned woodlands with permissive access for the public. The woods were planted with native trees in 2011 and have been added since with additional planting. The Millennium Wood is managed on behalf of Witchford Parish Council by the Woodland Group. Edna's Wood and Fairchild Wood are managed on behalf of the owner by Open Spaces Group volunteers. Pamby's Plantation is a small area of native trees planted on one side of a public path. There are hedgerows on the droves and footpaths on the outskirts of the village and north of the A142, almost all privately owned.



Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows: Action Plan

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will :

1. Contact landowners with hedgerows on public land and public rights of way to establish their willingness to enhance their hedgerows with the aim of improving biodiversity. eg. via reinforcement planting or modification of management methods. The Committee would be very happy to discuss ways in which community volunteers may be able to participate.
2. Publicise the tree planting programme and encourage take-up of the adopt-a-tree scheme
3. Publicise tree and woodland related events in the local area.
4. Monitor, and seek to benefit from, external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.
5. Share knowledge and best practice with other conservation groups based in other villages in the area.

As a local resident, ***you can help*** by:

1. Join the village adopt-a-tree scheme.
2. If you need to create or renew a boundary, consider planting native hedgerow instead of a fence.
3. Join village conservation volunteers in planting and managing trees and hedgerows

More reading

Woodland Trust Trees woods and wildlife <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

Wildlife Trust wildlife explorer <https://www.wildlifebcn.org/wildlife-explorer/trees-and-shrubs>

Theme 7: Orchards

Introduction

Orchards are open areas of mainly fruit trees, grasses, shrubs and wild flowers, supporting a wide range of wildlife. As fruit trees age quickly, they create the perfect habitats for invertebrates and birds, as well as absorbing carbon and offering shade and fruit for people and wildlife. Orchards can provide a focus for community events and encourage an understanding of nature.

What do we have in Witchford?

Witchford Community Orchard (approx. 1.2 ha) is situated on the Old Recreation Ground in the south of the parish. Its establishment in February 2013 was realised when over forty Witchford residents planted 76 fruit trees and cobnuts with funding by Witchford Parish Council and by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Project Fund. The fruit trees consisted of mostly apple, pear, and plum, with damson and cherry. The orchard has been expanded slowly since then under the management of the Open Spaces Group to include quince, sweet chestnut and walnut to a total of over 90 trees. There is also a small private orchard in Kevin's Place adjacent to the Community Orchard, consisting of a number of ancient apple and pear trees with a few recent additions.



Orchards: Action Plan

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will aim to:

1. Increase areas of orchard by supporting efforts by residents to establish private orchards on their land
2. Support residents who wish to plant fruit trees in their gardens
3. Publicise orchard related events in the local area
4. Monitor, and seek to benefit from, external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.

As a local resident, ***you can help*** by:

1. If you have a large garden or spare land, setting up an orchard, even a small one.
2. Planting fruit trees in your garden

More reading

East Anglian Apples and Orchards Project <https://www.applesandorchards.org.uk/>

The Wildlife Trusts orchard habitats <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/habitats/farmland/orchard>

Theme 8: Grasslands and Road Verges

Introduction

Across the UK there are around 300,000 miles of road verge, which, if managed for wildlife while keeping road safety in mind, can provide a huge network of corridors and refuges for nature. Road verges and open grassed areas are particularly important during the spring and summer when a huge range of wildflowers and grasses provide a rich habitat for wildlife.

What do we have in Witchford

Areas of road verge on Main Street/Sutton Road, Common Road, Manor Road, Field End and Ely Road in particular, could potentially be better managed for wildlife. Highway verges are generally only cut three times during the season; the wide verge on Ely Road hosts a good variety of wild flowers and is an indicator of what can be achieved with reduced mowing. Grassed areas owned by public or semi-public bodies include the Common, Ward Way and Orton Drive Open Spaces, open spaces in new housing developments in the village and the playing field at Bedwell Hey Lane. The simplest way to increase biodiversity on grass spaces including verges is to reduce mowing, to allow mowing-tolerant species to flower and seed. This will result in self-sustaining perennial grassland with a good number of species. Reducing mowing has been very successful on the village sign green on Main Street.

Grasslands and Road Verges: Action Plan

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will:

1. Work with the Parish Council and County Highways to reduce mowing frequency where possible on village highway verges to improve the floral diversity.
2. Work with County Highways to improve the wildlife value of road verges (while understanding the need for grass cutting in line with road safety), including applying for any suitable sections of verge to be registered as Protected Road Verge.
3. Work with ECDC, Witchford Parish Council and consult with local residents to see how the open spaces at Ward Way and Orton Drive can be managed to encourage wildlife while also understanding that these sites are also important for children's play.
4. In the new housing developments, work with the relevant management bodies responsible for open spaces to see how they can be managed for wildlife.
5. Seek to benefit from external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.

As a local resident, ***you can help*** by:

1. Understanding the benefits to biodiversity of reduced mowing

More reading

The Wildlife Trusts managing road verges for wildlife <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/managing-road-verges-wildlife>

Plantlife transforming Britain's road verges <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/our-work/road-verges/>

Theme 9: Biodiversity Sites in the Village

Introduction

The formal or informal designation of local natural spaces indicates that these spaces are important to local people for their wildlife value and natural beauty.

What do we have in Witchford?

The Witchford Neighbourhood Plan has identified twenty key sites in Witchford parish that are locally important for wildlife, and which are accessible or viewable by the public. A map of these sites is included as Appendix 2 to this Nature Recovery Plan. Other land in the parish may also be important for wildlife but is not accessible by the public.



Biodiversity Sites in the Village: Action Plan

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will:

1. Encourage landowners to manage their sites sympathetically for biodiversity and the environment. Develop methods and agree a baseline for measuring change in biodiversity at each site.
2. Seek to benefit from external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.

As a local resident, ***you can help*** by:

1. Join village conservation volunteers in looking after public open space.
2. Help preserve areas designated for nature by, for instance, keeping to paths and taking your litter home.

Theme 10: Farmland

Introduction

Government figures show that 68% of the area of land in England is agricultural land.

What do we have in Witchford?

Arable land makes up most of the parish north of the A142 and most of the parish between the village development envelope south of Main Street to the parish boundary at the Grunty Fen Catchwater Drain. Grazing land is also present within the parish envelope. Tenants and/or landowners are very welcome to contact the Committee via the Parish Clerk for help and support with any biodiversity actions they wish to undertake.

Farmland: Action Plan

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will:

1. Support tenants and/or landowners who are interested in enhancing biodiversity on their land.

As a local resident, ***you can help*** by:

Using and enjoying the public paths through farmland in the parish and being aware of the importance of habitat for the biodiversity that you observe.

More reading

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre <https://www.cperc.org.uk/>

The Wildlife Trust Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire <https://www.wildlifebcn.org/contact-us>

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/toolkit-help-farmers-help-nature>

Theme 11: Water (Streams, Ponds and Ditches)

Introduction

Waterways and water bodies have an important role for biodiversity and for drainage, flood protection, water supply and transport. Major features consist of main rivers, often heavily modified, to canals for transporting people and goods, and other artificial channels created for land drainage, water transfer and flood protection. On a smaller scale we have land drainage channels and streams, down to roadside and field ditches

Water bodies such as reservoirs have been built to store water for domestic and industrial use, for irrigation, and for storm water attenuation. The latter features can be large-scale flood prevention features or small ponds on new developments. At the lower end of the scale we have farm and garden ponds, whose main benefits are to biodiversity, supporting a huge variety of wildlife and plant life.

What do we have in Witchford?

Waterways in Witchford vary from Grunty Fen Drain and the north and south catchwater drains that are managed by the

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Internal Drainage Boards, through the Award drains managed by ECDC, highway drains managed by County Highways, drains to housing and industrial developments (including SuDS swales) to private land drains in and alongside fields gardens.

There are water bodies that have been created for storm water attenuation, for example along the bypass and on developments at Orton Drive, Field End, and south of Ward Way There are three ponds on land owned or under the control of WPC, namely at the Old Recreation Ground, Sandpit Drove and New Pond on Manor Road, plus there are many ponds on private land and gardens. Successful nature recovery depends on people wanting to play their part in making Witchford parish a better place for nature and biodiversity. This also depends on people feeling confident, enabled and welcomed to take action to help wildlife and biodiversity, on whatever scale.

Water (Streams, Ponds and Ditches): Action Plan

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will:

1. Work with the IDBs and other drainage managers including the County and District Councils to encourage practices for land drainage infrastructure that will benefit biodiversity. (See the biodiversity manual at <https://middlelevel.gov.uk/conservation/idb-biodiversity-manual/>)
2. Work with landowners to achieve a management plan for each site. Ponds and ditches will have very different management needs so each site will have to be separately listed.
3. Monitor, and seek to benefit from, external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.

As a local resident, ***you can help*** by:

1. Join village conservation volunteers in helping to manage ponds and ditches on public open space in line with management plans.
2. Not putting plants or animals into a watercourse, pond or stream.
3. Enjoy pond-dipping from the pond-dipping platform at the New Pond on Manor Road.
4. If you have a garden, put in a small pond or other water feature, a real boost for wildlife – even something as little as an old washing up bowl will attract wildlife.
5. Reporting any wildlife you see in a watercourse, pond or stream to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC) or the Wildlife Trust.

More reading

The Wildlife Trusts ponds habitats <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/habitats/freshwater/ponds>

Farm Wildlife ditches <https://farmwildlife.info/how-to-do-it-5/field-boundaries/ditches/>

Theme 12: Wildlife Aware Witchford

Introduction

Successful nature recovery depends on people wanting to play their part in making Witchford parish a better place for nature and biodiversity. This also depends on people feeling confident, enabled and welcomed to take action to help wildlife and biodiversity, on whatever scale.

What do we have in Witchford?

Village conservation volunteers give many hours each month to maintain and improve open spaces in the parish, but recruiting new volunteers including younger people can be a challenge. Groups from both Scouting and Guiding and a Forest School introduce their members to open spaces in the parish.



Wildlife Aware Witchford: Action Plan

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee will:

1. Seek to produce a village map showing biodiversity sites, public rights of way as well as village layout and amenities
2. Promote opportunities for volunteering with conservation schemes in the village
3. Set up a village conservation garden scheme – show - prize

As a local resident, ***you can help*** by:

1. Join village conservation volunteers in their regular organised conservation events and support Witchford's green spaces and its biodiversity.
2. If you have a garden, garden in a wildlife-friendly way.
3. Find out about ways you can help wildlife and biodiversity in your daily life – start by using the Witchford Walks to learn more about the Witchford countryside and appreciate what it has to offer.
4. Look at Witchford Parish Council's Open Spaces information on their Website – www.withfordparishcouncil.gov.uk/open-spaces
5. If you have ideas and suggestions for ways the community can act together to help wildlife and biodiversity, think about asking the Parish Council for support. The Parish Council can fund community schemes and can help with finding out more information for suitable

Appendix 1: Summary Action Plan

The following table sets out some of the key actions the Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee intends to take over the period July 2025-May 2031

Theme	Description	By Whom / Cost	Additional comments
Gardens	Encourage home owners to create wildlife friendly gardens	CCB	Ask WPC about using the Climate Change area on WPC website
Gardens	Use the community notice boards and Witchford Residents Facebook group page to promote monthly wildlife gardening information throughout the year.	CCB/ Parish Clerk	CCB to approve reliable source of monthly information, Clerk to post on notice boards and FB
Gardens	Promote wildlife gardening schemes as they arise e.g. linking to ECDC's Hedgehog Recovery webpage	CCB/Parish Clerk	Post details of reliable external schemes and sources of information. Act as a channel for practical support from external sources
Gardens	Provide information for the Parish Council newsletter on a quarterly basis	CCB OSG rep to provide information/Clerk to write newsletter	
Gardens	Monitor, and seek to benefit from, external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise	Members of CCB	Members of CCB to contact Clerk at any time to ask for agenda items re opportunities
Allotments	Seek to work with the management teams at both allotment areas to identify what parts of them are good for nature, and what parts have potential for enhancement.	CCB	Contact management teams for each allotments area
Allotments	Work with the Parish Council to source new locations for more allotments in Witchford parish.	CCB	Write formally to WPC
Churches and their Grounds	Support the Church and Churchyard management team where appropriate.	CCB	

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School Grounds	Incorporate feedback from Nature Recovery contacts at Rackham and WVC and build on these	CCB	Contact schools
Amenity Areas	Work with the WPFA to create further wildlife refuges planting on the periphery of the playing fields		
Amenity Areas	Survey the bus shelters to see what options there are for making these more wildlife friendly and work toward implementing these.	CCB	CCB to carry out survey and develop plans for bus shelters as appropriate
Amenity Areas	Use the 8 Parish Council notice boards to publicise ongoing wildlife initiatives and to invite residents to help.	CCB/Parish Clerk	
Amenity Areas	Work with Witchford Parish Council to review options for incorporating measures to make the play areas in Witchford more wildlife friendly.	CCB	Formally write to WPC
Amenity Areas	Work with Witchford Parish Council and County Highways towards providing planters at suitable locations on the pavement/highway verge and recruit volunteers to maintain them.	CCB	Write formally to WPC
Amenity Areas	Monitor, and seek to benefit from, external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.	CCB	Members of CCB to contact Clerk at any time to ask for agenda items re opportunities
Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows	Contact landowners with hedgerows on public land and public rights of way to establish their willingness to enhance their hedgerows with the aim of improving biodiversity. eg. via reinforcement planting or modification of management methods. The Committee would be very happy to discuss ways in which community volunteers may be able to participate.	CCB	
Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows	Publicise the tree planting programme and encourage take-up of the adopt-a-tree scheme	CCB	

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Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows	Publicise tree and woodland related events in the local area.	CCB/Parish Clerk	
Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows	Monitor, and seek to benefit from, external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.	CCB	Members of CCB to contact Clerk at any time to ask for agenda items re opportunities
Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows	Share knowledge and best practice with other conservation groups based in other villages in the area.	CCB	
Orchards	Increase areas of orchard by supporting efforts by residents to establish private orchards on their land	CCB	
Orchards	Support residents who wish to plant fruit trees in their gardens	CCB	
Orchards	Publicise orchard related events in the local area	CCB/Parish Clerk	
Orchards	Monitor, and seek to benefit from, external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.		Members of CCB to contact Clerk at any time to ask for agenda items re opportunities
Grassland and Road Verges	Work with the Parish Council and County Highways to reduce mowing frequency where possible on village highway verges to improve the floral diversity.	CCB	Formulate specific proposals and then write formally to WPC and CCC Highways
Grassland and Road Verges	Work with County Highways to improve the wildlife value of road verges (while understanding the need for grass cutting in line with road safety), including applying for any suitable sections of verge to be registered as Protected Road Verge	CCB	Formulate specific proposals and then write formally to WPC and CCC Highways
Grassland and Road Verges	Work with ECDC, Witchford Parish Council and consult with local residents to see how the open spaces at Ward Way and Orton Drive can be managed to encourage	CCB	Formulate specific proposals and then write formally to ECDC copying in WPC

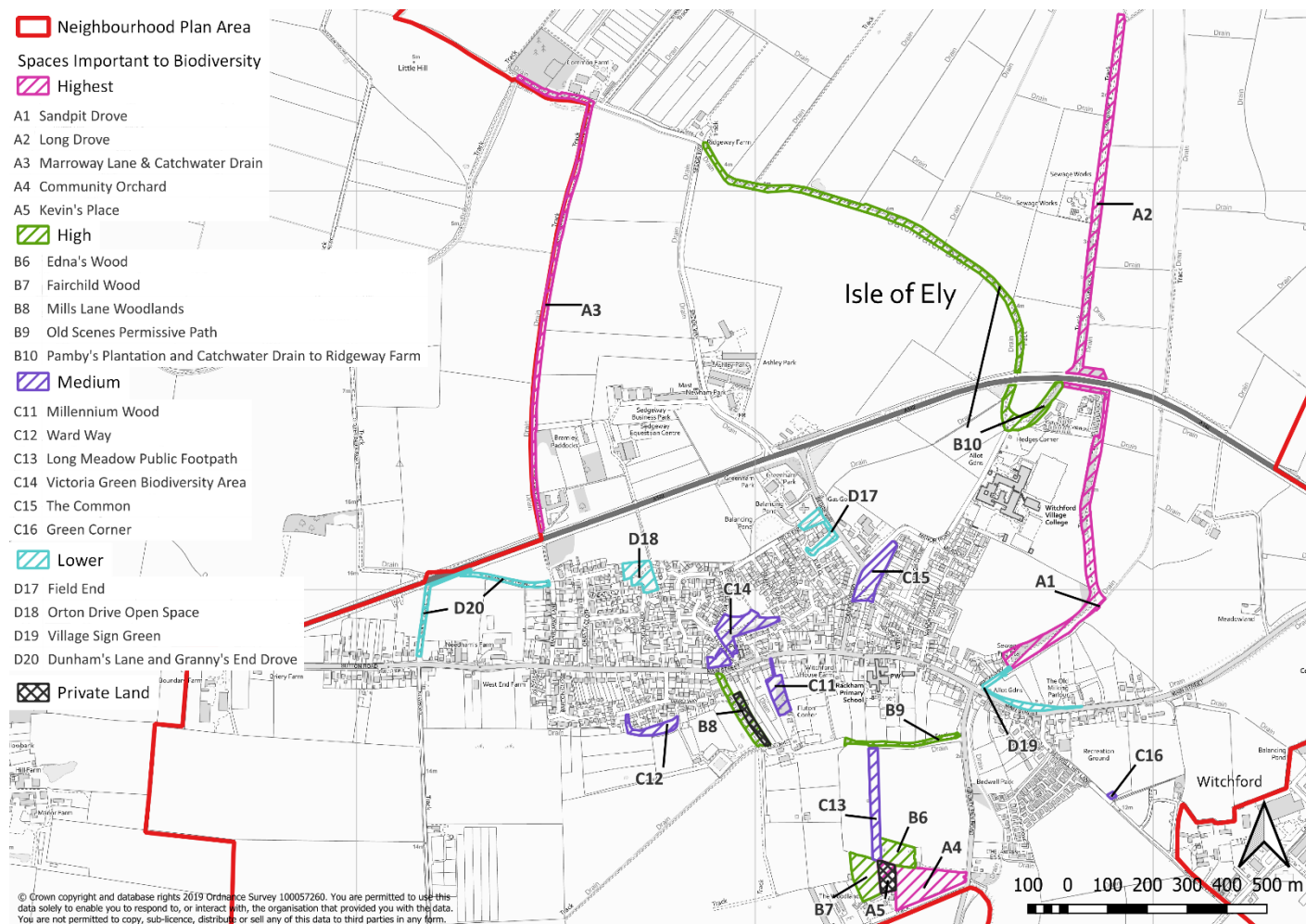
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	wildlife while also understanding that these sites are also important for children's play.		
Grassland and Road Verges	In the new housing developments, work with the relevant management bodies responsible for open spaces to see how they can be managed for wildlife	CCB	Formulate specific proposals and then write formally to development companies copying in WPC
Grassland and Road Verges	Seek to benefit from external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.	CCB	Members of CCB to contact Clerk at any time to ask for agenda items re opportunities
Biodiversity Sites in the Village	Encourage landowners to manage their sites sympathetically for biodiversity and the environment. Develop methods and agree a baseline for measuring change in biodiversity at each site.	CCB	
Biodiversity Sites in the Village	Seek to benefit from external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.	CCB	Members of CCB to contact Clerk at any time to ask for agenda items re opportunities
Farmland	Support tenants and/or landowners who are interested in enhancing biodiversity on their land	CCB	
Water (Streams, Ponds and Ditches)	Work with the IDBs and other drainage managers including the County and District Councils to encourage practices for land drainage infrastructure that will benefit biodiversity	CCB	
Water (Streams, Ponds and Ditches)	Work with landowners to achieve a management plan for each site. Ponds and ditches will have very different management needs so each site will have to be separately listed.	CCB	Map/list sites.
Water (Streams, Ponds and Ditches)	Seek to benefit from external opportunities for grants, improvement schemes and/or expertise.		Members of CCB to contact Clerk at any time to ask for agenda items re opportunities

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Wildlife Aware Witchford	Seek to produce a village map showing biodiversity sites, public rights of way as well as village layout and amenities	CCB	Work with WPC
Wildlife Aware Witchford	Promote opportunities for volunteering with conservation schemes in the village	CCB	
Wildlife Aware Witchford	Set up a village conservation garden scheme – show - prize		

Appendix 2: Map of wildlife priority areas in Witchford



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Witchford's Top 20 Biodiversity Areas		
Map Ref	Features of area	Notes/Species Features
A1	Sandpit Drive	An ecological corridor approximately 2 ha in area containing continuous and established hedgerows with scrub and deciduous trees. While the Northern end of Sandpit Drive is affected by traffic and noise pollution from the A142, along its length, the Drive has a number of varied habitats of high value to biodiversity. It has established areas of native woodland and scrub which support many species including a rookery. The fungus and lichen that thrive on the woodland floor and logpiles where a stand of elm continues to survive provides fantastic autumn spectacle. The wildlife meadow which was sown in 2011 is lightly managed to protect biodiversity. This is a popular Witchford walk for residents and particularly for dogwalkers but as it occupies a large area, footfall is sustainable.
A2	Long Drive	This public footpath leading northwards past the Anglia Water Sewage treatment plant is bounded by scrubby woodland to one side and hedges on the other. The woodland is often waterlogged in the winter months and parts of it have a drain running adjacent to it. A family of foxes, flocks of starlings, owls and other predators species can often be seen, important indicators of thriving biodiversity.
A3	Marroway Lane (North of A142) & Catchwater Drain West	An area of low amenity value, this public byway is impassible by motorized vehicles (except tractors) for much of the year. It is used by dogwalkers and pedestrians at more accessible times of year where areas of tree cover, scrub, hedging and ditches are useful for encouraging biodiversity. The Catchwater Drain encourages dragonflies and some water birds although at many times of year it is subjected to high levels of pollution due to runoff from intensively farmed agricultural land with a gull blooms often in evidence.
A4	Community Orchard & Wildflower Meadow	A large area, lightly managed, with a footpath around its edge which can sustain the amount of footfall it attracts. The Community Orchard (aka The Old Rect) also has the advantage of a pond where frogspawn and newt activity is often seen, a meadow which is only mown once a year once wildflowers have had the opportunity to set their seed, plus a variety of fruit trees which attract a great many pollinators such as moths, hoverflies, bees, wasps etc. Thick hedging is maintained around the perimeter of the land and the other advantage of the Community Orchard is that it is adjacent to Kevin's Place, a privately owned area where a variety of wildlife abounds due to the lack of public access through its grounds.
A5	Kevin's Place	Privately owned land with no public access, Kevin's Place is a small area managed primarily for the wildlife that lives in and around it. It lies between Fairchild Wood and Edna's Wood, Long Meadow and the Community Orchard, providing one of the most effective wildlife sanctuaries within the Parish of Witchford. The habitat provides ideal environments for barn owls, turtle doves, slow worms, and grass snakes, all of which have been sighted here, as well as the more common species such as rabbits.
B6	Edna's Wood	An area measuring 0.43 hectares of mixed native trees and hedging which is lightly managed and provides a haven for wildlife. There is one path through it which enables the public to enjoy the woodland without straying too much into the undergrowth allowing biodiversity to flourish.
B7	Fairchild Wood	An area measuring 0.67 hectares of mixed native trees and hedging which is lightly managed and provides a haven for wildlife. There is one path around its edge which enables the public to enjoy the woodland without straying too much into the undergrowth allowing biodiversity to flourish.
B8	Mills Lane Woodland	Privately owned, Mills Lane Woodland is the only woodland in the parish which has remained untouched for many years with no vehicular nor public access and has therefore created ideal conditions for biodiversity to flourish. At least 6 of its mature and thriving elm trees have Tree Protection Orders on them and new trees and other vegetation are naturally regenerating on the undisturbed woodland floor.
B9	Old Scenes Permissive Path	A popular pathway joining Granty Fen Road to Long Meadow through wildflower strips, hedging and trees, through to Toad Corner with its wooden bridge next to an area of bullrushes. With a ditch running alongside its edge draining into the main catchwater drain, the close proximity to water at most times of year increases its value to biodiversity.
B10	Pembury Plantation and Catchwater Drain to Ridgeway Farm	Although intersected by the A142 whose traffic and noise pollution would otherwise reduce the value of this area for biodiversity, this varied area also contains 2 ponds and often has areas of standing water which encourage biodiversity as well as a byway that continues to run North of the A142 along the Catchwater Drain. Much of this byway is fringed with young elm and birches which together with the water in the Catchwater Drain, support countless species including waterfowl, foxes, dragonflies, bees and butterflies. The byway is impassible by traffic for much of year which makes it particularly valuable as habitat for wildlife.
C11	Millennium Wood	With recent accelerating population growth in the village and with no new centralised green spaces yet to be provided to compensate for recent housing development, Millennium Wood has become one of Witchford's open spaces of highest amenity value. An increasing number of residents utilise its accessible paths, picnic table, seating and fire pit. A popular amenity for Witchford residents but of reducing value for biodiversity as logpiles are redistributed, regular maintenance is required (eg. path maintenance & litter-picking etc) and dogs and children run free away from the woodland paths which disturbs wildlife and hampers the regeneration of trees and plants from the woodland floor.
C12	Ward Way	A small green bordered by grassland for grazing and hedging to its southern edge and garden hedges to the north. Ward Way provides trees and unknown areas which play their part in supporting biodiversity.
C13	Long Meadow Public Footpath	A meadow, measuring 0.62 hectares bounded by continuous and established hedgerows. A public footpath runs along one edge of the meadow and it is a popular dog walking area in the village.
C14	Victoria Green Biodiversity Area	Although an area of high amenity value accessed by concreted footpaths and much used by children playing, dogwalkers and pedestrians, tree cover on Victoria Green has been increased over the 25 years since it was established. This, and leaving some areas of reduced mowing with the recently introduced wildflower strips help to maintain a useful measure of biodiversity. There is also a small pond with reeds and vegetation which, although prone to drying out in the summer, is an added attraction for wildlife.
C15	The Common	An area of high amenity value much used by children playing and dogwalkers, the Common has areas of tree cover, scrub and wildflower strips, useful for encouraging biodiversity.
C16	Green Corner (Playing Fields)	Newly established, the Green Corner of the playing fields has been established primarily as a public amenity for supporters of the junior football matches, however, in time it will become an important open space with wildflowers, hedging and native trees, as well as providing seating and interest for its users.
D17	Field End	Biodiversity along the eastern end of Field End has been compromised by extensive construction during the building of Pemberton Park. However, 45 m of new hedging and the sowing of 2 wildflower strips at the eastern entrance to Field End will not only provide interest and new habitat for biodiversity but in time, will link up with the wild pear trees along Common Road, the trees on the Elm Close Green and hopefully, open spaces on the Bellway development to reestablish wildlife corridors in this part of the village.
D18	Orton Drive Green	This small green has mature ash trees at its northern edge which support a rookery. It also has a number of newly planted cherry and hornbeam trees as well as an annual wildflower strip. It is popular with dogwalkers and children.
D19	Village Sign Green	Although this wide wooded verge borders Ma in Street, (the main access road through Witchford), it is adjacent to a flat tennis site with hedges and unknown edges, allowing space for biodiversity to flourish at the heart of the village.
D20	Dunham's Lane and Granny's End	A much loved public right of way featuring an avenue of established trees that provides shade and access to Granny's End. Traffic and noise pollution reduce its value for biodiversity to thrive, as does the threat of development on the land adjacent to the avenue.
KEY to Diversity Value		
Highest		
High		
Medium		
Lower		