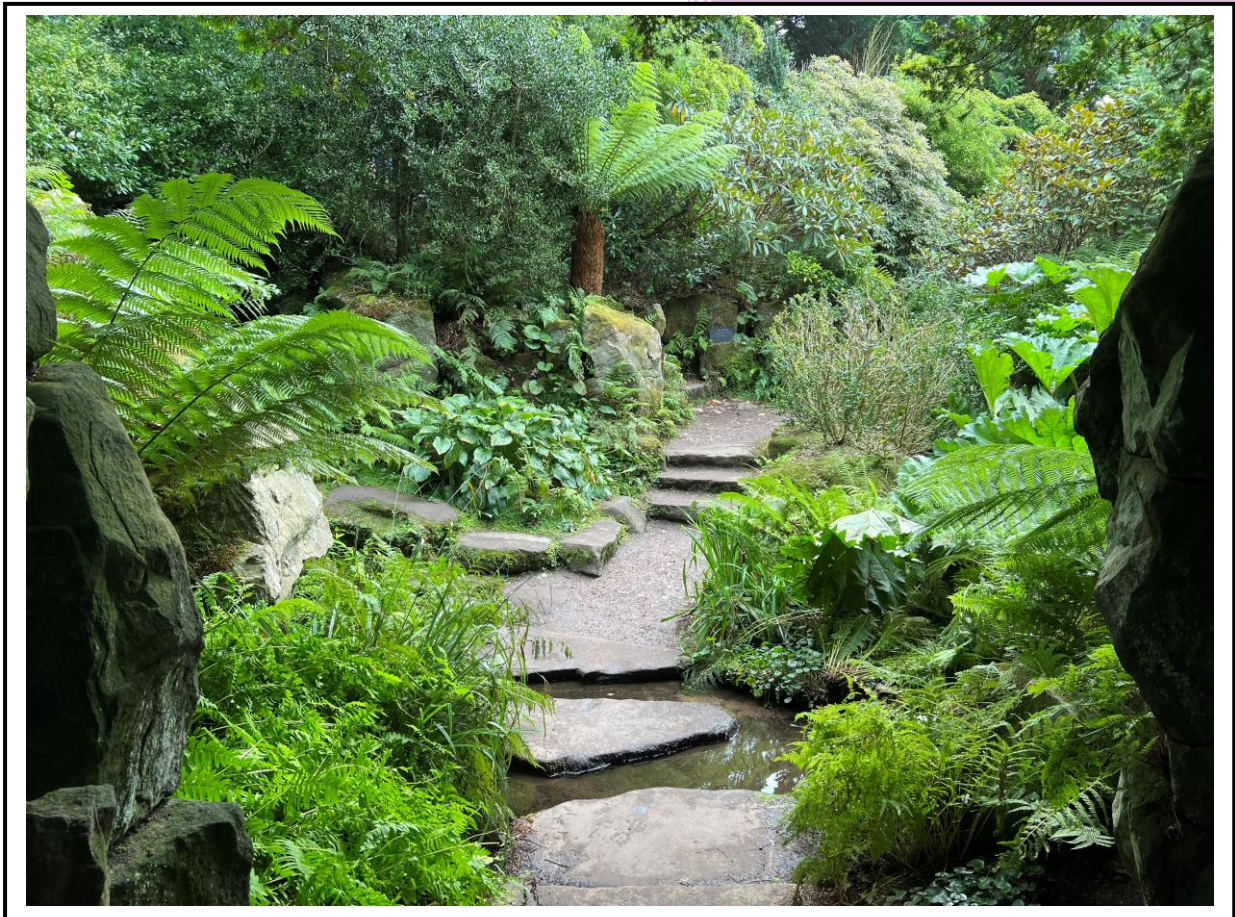


2025-
2028

Biddulph Town Council Caring for our Environment



The Glen, Biddulph Grange Gardens



Biddulph Town Council



Caring for our Environment A Three-Year Plan

WRITTEN BY:

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INTRODUCTION

We have an important role to play in our community. As a Town Council, we do not have the same statutory powers or duties as some of our larger Council colleagues. But, as guardians of our town's assets and communities, we have an obligation to use our expertise, our time and our thought to protect the environment around us, enhancing wellbeing and creating a lasting legacy for our children.

This document supports the Town Council's Five Year Strategy, and has been developed following consultation with our community in relation to their environment and climate change priorities. The Plan aims to provide some local perspective in relation to a number of national and global agendas, whilst recognising the aspirations and the limitations of Town and Parish Councils, both in terms of geography and our ability to affect change. These areas of work are:

- The importance of Climate Emergency Declarations
- Net Zero ambitions

- Carbon Reduction and Carbon Literacy agendas
- Biodiversity: our duty and a clear policy
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) aspirations locally
- Aspirations for the award of an Environmental Quality Mark

This document provides an overview of these topics and their relevance to our work alongside the areas our community believe we should concentrate on, to form an action plan. This action plan will be reviewed annually.

The Town Council's vision is:

Biddulph is loved for its beauty, with a distinctive identity and independent retail experience. Biddulph is a good place to live, attracting investment and tourism, providing services that support our residents. Biddulph is innovative and proactive with environment and climate change projects, working to enhance and protect our community spaces.

Underpinning this vision are four pillars; this Caring for our Environment Plan aspirations are part of each of these areas of work:

1) Efficient and responsive services

We endeavour to provide excellent customer service, ensure repeat business, high levels of satisfaction and low numbers of complaints. We will ensure our existing services continue to improve and adapt to the changing needs of our community. We will support public and community transport schemes.

2) Growth and development of our community spaces

We will seek to grow the role of the Town Council by enhancing our community facilities whilst addressing climate change issues and protecting and improving leisure and recreational facilities.

3) Excellent Governance

We work to ensure effective planning and robust systems of financial control as a result of high levels of knowledge acquired through experience and training. Good leadership gives confidence in service delivery and decision-making.

4) Appropriate and meaningful community engagement and support

We will strengthen local democracy, encouraging inclusivity and seeking to engage with communities using a wide range of methods, providing feedback and the opportunity for comment and involvement in decision-making. Keeping health and well-being aspirations at the forefront of our planning.

More information about Biddulph and our strategic direction can be found in the Five-Year Strategy.



The view from Knypersley Hall towards Mow Cop

WHAT WE CAN DO- NATIONAL AGENDAS

A Climate Emergency

Biddulph Town Council initially declared a climate emergency in 2019. At the Annual Meeting of the Town Council in May 2023, Councillors reaffirmed this declaration, remaining committed to climate action through effective planning and leading by example through excellent community leadership.

A climate emergency is a declaration by governments and scientists that the world is in a climate crisis and that urgent action is needed to reduce or stop climate change. The first climate emergency declaration was made by a local government in December 2016.

For Biddulph Town Council, this declaration was about recognising the impact of climate change and acknowledging the need to act. This is something that we will **keep at the forefront of our planning and actions**.

Net Zero

The UK is committed to reaching net zero by 2050. This means that the total greenhouse gas emissions would be equal to the emissions removed from the atmosphere, with the aim of limiting global warming and resultant climate change.

Locally, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has committed to meeting net zero by 2030 across all buildings and activities.

For Biddulph Town Council, consideration of net zero should be split into two categories: day-to-day activities and management of assets. **A key priority for 2025/26 will be to understand the carbon usage of the Town Council** in both areas.

The Town Council took on the management of the Town Hall, Visitor Centre and Bus Hub/ Public Toilets in 2020. Achieving net zero across these assets presents a challenge as responsibility for the structures was not always given to the Town Council, or the structures are not always suitable for installation of solar panels, for example. When we have a clear picture of carbon usage/ emissions, **the Town Council will develop a short and medium-term decarbonisation plan for the management of activities and buildings**. The Town Council aspires to reach net zero by 2035.

Carbon Literacy and Carbon Reduction agendas

Three Town Council Officers became 'Carbon Literate' in 2024. They completed training to understand the carbon cost and importance of reducing emissions. The Carbon Literacy Project supports individuals, communities and organisations to become carbon literate.



The Town Council has **committed to improving knowledge through increased information sharing and training. We will become a Carbon Literate organisation and work to develop Climate Champions in our community.**

As stated previously, understanding our carbon usage is key to reducing it. **As part of our consideration of carbon reduction, we will evaluate the effectiveness of our recycling and management of single-use plastic.** The Town Council will also **develop a Heating Policy** to ensure consistency in relation to heating and cooling across our assets.

Biodiversity: our duty and a clear policy

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Town Council is required to agree their policies and objectives, although there is no obligation to publish a report. Biodiversity is an issue that the Town Council has considered regularly. At its simplest, biodiversity is about life and how it exists together; biodiversity enables nature to be productive, resilient and adaptable.

In addition to actions listed previously, our priorities are:

- **Encourage schools and community groups to complete nature audits, to fully understand our local green spaces.**
- **Investigate clean energy projects.**

- Promote sustainable planting, e.g. greater use of perennials.
- Create bee projects/ insect hotels on Town Council land.
- Seek to develop more pocket parks with the aim of reducing car use by enhancing linkages between estates and encouraging greater enjoyment of green spaces.
- Continue to complete tree planting in line with the Town Council's Tree Strategy
- Manage Town Council green spaces in a way that promotes wildlife, e.g. in relation to cutting, waste removal and weedkiller usage.
- Create a sample garden to show people how to create biodiverse spaces.
- In line with the Neighbourhood Plan, ensure that the Town Council Planning Committee comments on biodiversity issues in response to planning applications.
- Keep in mind the District Council's Plan for Nature, and support these activities, where possible.
- Develop plans in relation to our riparian duties, keeping waterways clean and managed appropriately.

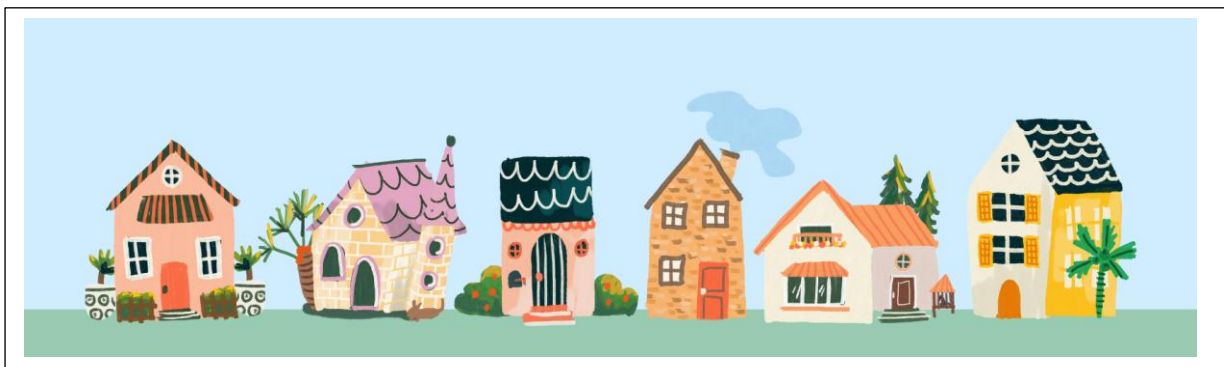


Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) aspirations locally

Net gain is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. This is administered via the Local Planning Authority, which is Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. Key features of the requirements, set out in the Environment Act 2021, are:

- A minimum 10% gain is required, calculated using an agreed formula and there should be approval of a net gain plan.
- The habitat must be secured for at least 30 years via planning conditions/ S.106 obligations/ conservation covenants.
- The gain must be delivered on-site, off-site or via a new statutory biodiversity credit scheme.
- There will be a national register for net gain delivery sites.
- The legislation does not change existing legal protections for important habitats and wildlife species.

The Town Council provides comments on all planning applications across the five wards. **We will seek to advise where BNG may be relevant, and use local knowledge to guide recommendations as to the delivery of the gain.** The Neighbourhood Plan will form the basis of these discussions.



Aspirations for the award of an Environmental Quality Mark

The Environmental Quality Mark (EQM) is an environmental award scheme that celebrates a passion for place and environment, and how that passion is shared with customers. There are five core principles that demonstrate sustainable practice:

- Business and economy
- Global environment
- Local environment
- People and communities
- Special qualities of your local area

Biddulph Town Council will work towards the principles set out within the EQM framework.



WHAT WE CAN DO- LOCAL PRIORITIES

The priorities in bold text above are important for the Town Council to ensure we contribute effectively to national agendas.

There are a number of specific local priorities, which must also form part of the action plan for the Town Council. These have been identified through formal consultation and as a result of our ongoing day-to-day work. These are:

- Work with partners to install electric charging points within the town.
- Focus on sustainable travel options through the development and promotion of enhanced infrastructure, walking and cycling options and safer routes to school.
- Support the circular economy with events at the Town Hall and through our own purchasing practices. This would also support local businesses and town centre sustainability.
- Hold events that promote our natural environment and effective/efficient energy usage.
- Work with trusted companies who have a proven track record of successful climate change mitigation, renewable energy usage, carbon reduction, and sustainable development projects.
- In addition to increased tree planting (as above), develop an inventory and plan for tree management (enhancing the existing Strategy), a planting programme and consider increasing the number of Tree Preservation Orders.
- Support flood management schemes.
- Through our Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Working Group, continue to monitor developments associated with environmental designations.
- Lobby partners to maintain their land appropriately and innovatively.
- Support schemes that support 'reduce, reuse, recycle' aspirations through the development of projects such as a Library of Things and a potential Men Shed. Promote the Repair Café within the town.
- Ensure that priorities are not adversely affected by any future local government reorganisation.