

# Biodiversity Strategy

2012 - 2015



Stafford  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

[www.staffordbc.gov.uk](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk)



*Astonfields Local Nature Reserve*

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## Foreword

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In 2000, Stafford Borough Council launched its first Biodiversity Strategy. This forward thinking document, one of the first in the country for a Borough Council, aimed to take account of the rich wildlife assets within the Borough and promote their protection and enhancement. As a result the Council undertook a wide range of initiatives including the appointment of a Biodiversity Officer, the declaration of six Local Nature Reserves and a programme of managed works to them.

Since 2000, protecting the environment has become an even greater concern with issues such as loss of habitat, planning laws, farming

and climate change dominating the headlines. Government has responded with a raft of new policies and guidelines including a new White Paper on the Environment. This stated that, *“A healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing.”*

It is an opportune time to revisit and renew the Council’s Biodiversity Strategy with the hope that we can continue to conserve the Borough’s natural resources for present and future generations.



*Barlaston and Rough Close Common Local Nature Reserve*



# Biodiversity

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Biodiversity is a word that means 'the variety of living things'. It indicates not just the vast array of life but also its inter-connectedness. Protection of biodiversity is important for many reasons.

- › there is a moral argument for conserving that which exists for its own right.
- › it provides us with what is known as ecosystem services - that is food, fresh air, clean water, insects that pollinate our crops, medicines and addresses climate change.

- › it is known that a green and healthy environment is good for our own personal wellbeing, both physically and mentally.

We know we are losing our biodiversity with many species of animals and plants decreasing in the UK and across the world. It is becoming clear that only through coordinated policy and action will we halt these losses. It is now more important than ever that we conserve and enhance what remains.



*Created Meadow at Ferndown Local Nature Reserve*



## Our Strategy

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Stafford Borough Council in conjunction with its partners will work towards creating a greener Borough, rich in wildlife for residents to enjoy, which will contribute to their prosperity, health and wellbeing.

## Our Aim

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*“To conserve and enhance the characteristic biodiversity of Stafford Borough for present and future generations.”*

## Our Objectives

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Our objectives relate to three key areas:

- 1 | Land Management** > To halt the loss of biodiversity on our land and continue to reverse previous losses through targeted action for species and habitats enhancement
- 2 | Integration and Co-ordination** > To encourage the consideration of biodiversity both in policy and practice across the Council's services
- 3 | Awareness** > To increase understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity and to engage more people in its conservation and enhancement



*The National Trust's Downs Bank Reserve*



## Biodiversity in Stafford Borough

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Stafford Borough is a mainly rural area with a wide range of habitats that include many sites of local, national and some of international importance. There are three rivers, the Penk, Sow and Trent that eventually meet to the west of Stafford. In the northwest are the woodlands of Hanchurch and Bishop's Wood. To the southeast is the heathland of Cannock Chase, designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As part of the Meres and Mosses landscape, there are a variety of wetlands in the west of the borough such as Cop Mere, Loynton Moss and Aqualate Mere. To the east of Stafford is Chartley Moss, Britain's largest example of a Floating Bog. On the southern border of the Borough can be found Motte Meadows, one of the best-preserved floodplain meadows in the country. In total there are 15 Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI), two of which are also National Nature Reserves.

The 'Natura 2000 network' consists of sites that are of exceptional importance for the protection of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within the European Community. These sites are also referred to as European sites, and effectively comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and

Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance also extends the protection to 'Ramsar sites' of international importance for wetland habitats. Cannock Chase, Pasturefields Saltmarsh, Motte Meadows and Chartley Moss are all designated as SACs. Additionally Chartley Moss along with Cop Mere and Aqualate Mere are designated as Ramsar Sites.

There are also many Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) that are of county significance for their habitats and wildlife.

Key species in the Borough include: Otter, Barn Owl, Great Crested Newt, Small pearl-bordered Fritillary, farmland birds, reptiles and bats.

There are great pressures on Stafford Borough's wildlife including intensification of agriculture and development. Added to this is the unpredictable effect of climate change. It is more important than ever that we continue to help create a coherent and connected natural landscape that favours wildlife and helps assure its future wellbeing.



*Fallow Deer on Cannock Chase*

## Local Nature Reserves in Stafford Borough

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SBC manages seven Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and also assist with Stone Town Council's Crown Meadow making eight in total across the Borough. LNRs are designated by local authorities under the Natural Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949. They are places that support a rich variety of wildlife and are important to local people, by enabling contact with the natural world.

The reserves include examples of marsh, heath, reedbed, woodland and meadow. Many different plants, insects and animals live in these different habitats. Each site has its own five-year Management Plan, which can be viewed on our website. We are always looking at ways to improve our management and undertake an annual programme of maintenance work. The LNRs are:



**Astonfields Balancing Lakes | Stafford**  
Astonfields has a great diversity of habitats to discover including reedbed, open water, hedgerows and woodland. It is a good site for birdwatching with the chance to see Water Rail, Reed Warbler, Snipe and Kingfisher.



**Kingsmead Marsh | Stafford**  
Near the centre of town this marsh is home to many species of wetland plants such as reed grasses, sedges, Purple Loosestrife and Gipsywort. Management includes control of willow growth to maintain the open marsh.



**Kingston Pool Covert (South) | Stafford**  
This wet woodland site has many species of woodland bird including Treecreeper, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Green Woodpecker. Five species of Fern are found on site as well as many woodland plants. The site has required extensive tree works for safety reasons.



**Goodall Meadow - Stone**  
Grazing is the preferred management for these old floodplain meadows. The remnant channels to control water levels can still be seen today. Work is underway to create new sections of flower rich meadows.



**Southern Meadow | Stone**  
An area of wet woodland runs along the western boundary and provides wet flushes of Rush and Sedge. The rare native Black Poplar tree can also be found along with a group of Aspen. The site will be enhanced through the addition of native wildflowers.



## Local Nature Reserves in Stafford Borough



### Crown Meadow | Stone

Managed by Stone Town Council, this site has new wetland scrapes, pathways and a footbridge. The management aims are to enhance the meadows and create a flower rich hay meadow.



### Ferndown | Clayton

A popular site with its own 'Friends of' group, this reserve offers created flower rich meadows, scrub and small areas of woodland. Recent works include a drainage ditch system, access improvements and wetland marsh area. The rare White-letter Hairstreak butterfly feeds on elms in the old hedgerows.



### Barlaston & Rough Close Common | Rough Close [see opposite]

The largest LNR, this site features good areas of heathland, including wet heath on the lower common. Conservation grazing is undertaken by a small herd of cattle on the lower common.

More information on our LNRs can be found on the Council website -[www.staffordbc.gov.uk/biodiversity-and-nature-conservation](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/biodiversity-and-nature-conservation)



Red Poll Cattle

### Barlaston Common Grazing Project

For centuries, livestock grazing helped to maintain the character of some of our familiar landscapes, such as heathland.

On Barlaston and Rough Close Common Local Nature Reserve, the principal habitat is wet heathland. Left unmanaged, wet heath becomes dominated by closely packed tussocks of grass and suffers from scrub invasion. Eventually, this process will result in the loss of the heath as the habitat reverts to woodland. Re-instatement of grazing should gradually reverse this situation. After a lengthy public consultation and application process to DEFRA permission was granted to fence the common in order to graze it. The project received funds from SITA Trust, through the Landfill Communities Fund and through Countryside Stewardship payments from Natural England.

In 2008 we first welcomed cattle on to the site. Our grazier brings the Red Poll cattle on site every April. Around ten cows are present until the autumn. Red Polls are a hardy breed of cow with the reputation of a gentle temperament. After four years of grazing a number of plant species have been recorded for the first time on the site. Long term monitoring is taking place and so far the indications are really positive with plenty of newly regenerating heather.



## Sites of Biological Importance

In Stafford Borough there are 173 sites designated for their wildlife value known as Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs). Nationally these areas are generally referred to as Local Wildlife Sites. These sites have a wide variety of good quality habitats and a range of species of county importance. They provide the backbone to Stafford Borough's rich natural environment. The recent Government report, **'Making space for Nature'** (2010) highlighted the importance of Local Wildlife Sites for providing refuges for wildlife and acting as, "stepping stones and corridors to link and protect nationally and internationally designated sites."

SBIs provide services not just for nature but also for social, economic and health benefits such as green infrastructure, recreation, water and air quality and climate change adaptation. It is therefore important to have up to date information on the condition of these sites within the Borough. This will help identify any sites that are at risk, provide the correct long-term management and evaluate key sites. Work will continue with partner organisations in the resurveying of the Borough's SBIs. This will allow appropriate management through stewardship agreements and help ensure the long term conservation of these sites. Ideally this work will be undertaken every ten years.

SBIs are assessed against set criteria by a panel belonging to Staffordshire Wildlife Sites Partnership, comprised of members of relevant organisations and hosted by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. Most of the council's own SBIs are already designated as Local Nature Reserves however there are two sites that are managed differently for their biodiversity. Both these sites are in a Higher Level Stewardship agreement that pays for annual management. The Council worked in partnership with the Wildlife Trust and Natural England to achieve this.



Tittensor Site of Biological Importance

### SBI's with a Higher Level Stewardship Agreement

#### Hough Drain

Situated in Stafford, near Radford and Baswich is a remnant flood plain meadow. The field still has a good range of wildflowers such as Great Burnet, Valerian and Cuckooflower.

#### Tittensor

This attractive area is managed for its marsh and includes uncommon plants like Wood Club-Rush, Tussock Sedge and Water Figwort. The habitat attracts many butterflies and dragonflies.



Argent and Sable - Chartley Moss National Nature Reserve

# Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan

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Stafford Borough Council is a partner in the Staffordshire Biodiversity Partnership and plays a role in the county Biodiversity Action Plan.

## Ecosystem Action Plans

Since 1998, Staffordshire Biodiversity Partnership has managed a biodiversity action plan that has been in place to look at key habitats and species in Staffordshire.

The third edition of the plan (2011) has a landscape scale approach and features Ecosystem Action Plans (EAPs). Landscape based EAPs look beyond just maintaining existing nature reserves and designated sites and include work in partnership with organisations, planners, landowners and farmers to enhance and manage the whole landscape in a more sympathetic way for wildlife.

Our natural landscape has become fragmented and it is hoped that this new approach will create a more resilient ecological network. Each EAP consists of similar landscape characters and features key habitats and species within it. Stafford Borough is divided into six different EAPs.

**Cannock Chase Heaths** | the largest area of heathland in Central England, Cannock Chase supports a wide range of rare species including Nightjar and Woodlark

**Central Farmland** | priority habitats within this zone include hedgerows, arable field margins and rivers. Species to benefit from improved management here are Barn Owl, Brown Hare and Harvest Mouse. This area runs from Stone in the central area of the Borough down to the west of Stafford.

**Central Heaths and Woods** | cover an area of woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh from Barlaston in the northwest down to Gayton and Stowe in the south-east. Important species here include Common Lizard, solitary Bees and Wasps and the White-letter Hairstreak Butterfly.

**Meres and Mosses** | includes four sites within the Borough, Cop Mere, Chartley Moss, Loynton Moss and Aqualate Mere. These wetland/fen areas include many rare species such as Water Shrew, Grasshopper Warbler and White-faced Darter Dragonfly.

**Wooded Quarter** | in the northwest of the Borough are good areas of native woodland. Priority species found here include Bats, Dormouse and Spotted Flycatcher.

**Urban** | built up areas can still contain a diverse number of habitats and species. In Stafford, for example, can be found gardens, church and school grounds, allotments and also brownfield sites. Key species include Otter, House Sparrow and Slow Worm.



Cannock Chase



## National Policy and Guidance

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In order to demonstrate good stewardship of biodiversity the Council must take into consideration the following national guidance:

The framework for considering Biodiversity is provided by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Section 40 states, *“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”* The Act’s guidance states that *“In demonstrating that it has implemented its Duty a public authority is likely to be able to show that it has:*

- › Identified and taken opportunities to integrate biodiversity;
- › Considered into relevant service areas and functions, and ensured that biodiversity is protected and enhanced in line with current statutory obligations;
- › Raised awareness of staff and managers with regard to biodiversity issues;
- › Demonstrated a commitment and contribution to Biodiversity Action Plans, where appropriate;
- › Demonstrated progress against key biodiversity indicators and targets.

In 2008, Stafford Borough Council signed the **West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership Pledge**, showing acknowledgement of the importance of biodiversity and expressing the Council’s commitment to biodiversity conservation, protection and enhancement. Signing the pledge commits the Council to:

- › Ensure the conservation of biodiversity is incorporated into all relevant corporate strategies, plans and programmes.

- › Protect and enhance biodiversity within the planning system and deliver the key principles for biodiversity set out in national planning guidance.
- › Seek to ensure that up-to-date biodiversity data is available and used appropriately and support the maintenance and development of Local Record Centres.
- › Work in partnership with others to identify, protect and enhance Local Sites of Importance for Biodiversity, taking them into account within the planning and land management systems.

### Additional European and UK law and guidance documents include:

- › The Habitats Directive (EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna).
- › Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)
- › The Protection of Badgers Act (1992)
- › Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)
- › National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- › UK Biodiversity Action Plan
- › Making Space for Nature (2010)
- › UK National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA)
- › Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services (2011)



Green Tiger Beetle

# Measuring Biodiversity Progress

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It is important to have mechanisms in place to measure, monitor and review biodiversity conservation to ensure we fulfil our duties, as set out above. At Stafford Borough Council these include:

## Biodiversity Steering Group

In order to monitor progress on biodiversity and to share best practice, Stafford Borough Council holds a quarterly Biodiversity Steering Group. This group includes representatives from the County Council, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Cannock Chase AONB and the Environment Agency, as well as internal officers from the Council.

The meetings discuss and advise on current environmental policy, management works and planning issues. The minutes are posted on our website at: [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/biodiversity-and-nature-conservation](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/biodiversity-and-nature-conservation).

## Environmental Management Steering Group

Stafford Borough Council has been at the forefront of many initiatives to protect the environment, promote more sustainable lifestyles and tackle major issues such as climate change, energy efficiency and, not least, loss of biodiversity. It has made commitments to do so through signing up to public declarations on both climate change and biodiversity. To help steer and monitor the Council's biodiversity programme, an Environmental Management Steering Group meets regularly, supporting both practical and strategic efforts to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

## Local Sites in Active Management

The former National Indicator 197: 'Improved Local Biodiversity' measured the performance of local authorities for biodiversity by assessing implementation of active management of Local Sites (Sites of Biological Importance). This indicator has been retained under the new Local Authority Data Requirement list and will continue to raise the profile of Local Sites or Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) and encourage their sympathetic management.

## Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan

The SBAP includes the targets by which we measure progress in habitat management and creation. It draws attention and focuses work on to priority habitats and species. Our LNRs contribute to the larger landscape scale based work of which they are a part.

## The Borough's Biodiversity Action Plan

Located at the back of this document our Action Plan set out the methods by which we intend to carry out our biodiversity programme of works. The Action Plan has three sections reflecting the objectives of this Strategy. Where there is an external action the Biodiversity Steering Group will monitor it. Where there is an internal action, the Environmental Management Steering Group will monitor and report it. This will be on a quarterly basis.



*Weasel's Snout - Ferndown Local Nature Reserve*



## Parks and Open Spaces

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Stafford Borough Council manages just over 316 hectares of open space land. These sites range from the formal parks of Victoria Park, (Stafford) and Stonefield Park, (Stone), to large areas of public open space such as the Meadows, Castlefields and Creswell Manor Farm, to grass verges, rough grass land, trees and flower beds.

Our sites contribution to biodiversity includes varied trees, areas of long grass, wildflowers and flowering shrubs and habitat for animals such as Badger, Water Vole, Otter, birds, bats and bees.

### Flowers and Shrubs

Every year the Council plants thousands of summer and winter bedding plants. These plants provide food for insects and in turn birds and bats, as well as keeping our parks and town centres brightly decorated. Along with the seasonal bedding plants our parks contain a range of plants and shrubs that provide food in terms of nectar and berries throughout the year.

### Rivers and Ponds

Across the Borough, the Council manages numerous ponds, ditches and sections of the River Sow. These water bodies provide habitat for fish, insects, birds, amphibians along with nesting sites for Wildfowl and the graceful Mute Swan.

The River Sow, which runs through the heart of Stafford, is managed by the Council along the section that runs from Sainsbury's and up to and including Victoria Park. The river contains water lilies, Purple Loosestrife, Yellow Iris, along with some regionally rare aquatic plant species. The river links directly with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Doxey and Tillington Marshes Reserve and acts as a significant wildlife corridor.

Many people prefer to see rivers with no aquatic channel vegetation. To undertake a programme of removal however would reduce the biodiversity of the river by removing natural spawning and shelter sites, reducing the insect, bird and fish populations.



Victoria Park, Stafford

# Parks and Open Spaces

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## Trees

Across its sites the Council manages over 18,000 trees covering newly planted trees and whips to veteran trees including Oak, Ash, Beech, Sweet Chestnut and Horse Chestnut. Our policy is to only fell a tree when it is absolutely necessary in terms of safety or when the tree is proven to be causing damage and there is no other management option. Where trees are felled the Council replaces these trees in suitable locations across the Borough. By adopting this approach we ensure that trees are planted in the most appropriate location, spreading the tree cover across the Borough.

The species chosen for replanting varies depending upon the site and where possible native trees are planted. In more formal areas exotic ornamental trees are mixed in to provide variation and landmarks. Victoria Park contains no less than 41 different species of tree.

Many of the UK's traditional trees are at risk from the changing climate and warmer wetter winters. As a result Horse Chestnut, Ash and London Plane are coming under greater attack from disease. Unlike some authorities we still continue to plant these trees where possible to ensure that they do not disappear from our local landscape.

We keep a constant watch on our tree stock to ensure that diseased trees are removed as soon as possible to prevent further spread. At present we do not plant any sycamore across any of our sites. On new developments we work with developers to produce a varied planted scheme and ensure that the right tree is planted in the right location.

Stafford Borough Council protects trees with amenity value by designating Tree Preservation Orders. A Tree Preservation Order or TPO is an Order made by the Council that gives legal protection to trees or woodlands which make a significant impact on local surroundings. A TPO makes the felling, lopping, wilful damage or destruction to trees without the written permission of this authority a criminal offence.

## Hedgerows

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 require notification for the removal of most rural hedgerows. It is a criminal offence to deliberately remove a hedgerow without permission. A hedgerow is important if it satisfies a number of criteria set out in the Regulations. Further information can be found at: [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/hedgerows](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/hedgerows)

## Access to Open Space.

The vast majority of our open spaces are freely accessible to the public to roam wherever they like. In addition to this, many of the Council's play areas are also provided on these large natural open space providing a link between formal play and free nature play.

For more information on the Council's Parks and Open Spaces download a copy of the Park Life Brochure at [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/parks](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/parks)



Victoria Park, Stafford



# Planning

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Planning can contribute in many ways to the conservation of biodiversity. Development Control has to give consideration to protected species, habitats and designated sites. Forward Planning pays regard to the provision of green infrastructure, land use and future development.

## Development Control

The Planning Authority has a duty to consider the conservation of biodiversity when determining a planning application; this includes having regard to the safeguard of species protected under national and European law. New pre-application advice ensures that applications have adequately considered biodiversity issues before registration.

Where a proposed development is likely to affect protected or priority species, the applicant must submit a Protected and Priority Species Survey and Assessment. This is based upon habitats and features, and should be carried out by an appropriately qualified ecologist at the correct time of year. Surveys should also include a records search from Staffordshire Ecological Record Centre (SER).

Natural England now provides standing advice, which gives guidance on when to survey for protected species. If protected species surveys were required then Natural England would advise that the application should not be validated until all relevant information is received. This information can be found at [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

Government guidance within the new National Planning Policy Framework, Section 11, also makes clear that developments should build in features beneficial for wildlife as part of the overall design. These enhancements should be proportionate to the scale of the development proposed and could range from the installation of nest boxes or bat bricks in a small scale development through to the creation of areas of habitat for larger applications.

A leaflet entitled, Biodiversity and your Planning Application was produced by the Council and can be found on the council's website in the Biodiversity section [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/biodiversity-and-nature-conservation](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/biodiversity-and-nature-conservation)



Brunswick Terrace, Stafford

## Forward Planning

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Forward Planning is responsible for Planning Policy in the Borough and the preparation of the Local Plan (LP), known as the Plan for Stafford Borough. The LP sets out the development strategy for the next 20 years to 2031 as well as the policies that will be used to assess planning applications. The framework will help deliver national planning policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework which states that local authorities should aim to:

- › require to maintain, enhance, restore or achieve a gain in biodiversity,
- › base decisions on up-to-date information,
- › adopt a strategic approach to conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, incorporate biodiversity within the design of new developments and
- › to support development schemes that contributes to local biodiversity.

Local Development Frameworks should also set out policies that will aim to prevent harm to biodiversity, through considering alternative development sites and through requiring adequate mitigation or compensation.

The adoption of such a proactive approach to the conservation of biodiversity interests through the LDF is consistent with the biodiversity duty placed upon local authorities. The most effective implementation of these policy areas is likely to be achieved through collaboration or partnership working with other agencies and organisations, such as Natural England and the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

The Plan for Stafford Borough makes reference to Green Infrastructure as part of Policy - N4 - The Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure (GI) which is defined as:

*“The network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. It is the open spaces, waterways, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage and open countryside”*

These networks will be enhanced and created to protect the setting of the landscape, heritage and natural assets, reverse habitat fragmentation, provide recreational opportunities for new and existing communities and provide planned and designed open breaks between neighbouring residential areas and business developments.

GI will also create sustainable commuting by providing attractive cycling and walking links. The network can also aid in alleviating the effects of climate change by allowing green links for species to move across.

SBC have a Green Infrastructure Strategy that sets out the framework for developing the Borough’s green infrastructure now and in the future.

More information can be found at [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/green-infrastructure-strategy](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/green-infrastructure-strategy)



Collegiate Church of St Mary's, Stafford



## Community Involvement

There are many ways in which people have a part to play in helping preserve biodiversity. There are volunteering opportunities on many of the nature reserves in the Borough, including those owned by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. There are many wildlife organisations to join like the RSPB, Plantlife or the Wildlife Trust.

The Eco-schools programme is a vibrant network of schools that undertake a range of green initiatives. Farmers and land managers can be advised on conservation management including Stewardship Schemes. Many businesses now have environmental management systems in place or provide volunteers for conservation.

Even in our own gardens we can, as local residents, all make a difference by adding wildlife friendly features

### 'Friends of' Groups

We encourage community involvement on our Local Nature Reserves some of which now have active 'Friends of' groups such as Astonfields and Ferndown.



Studying Derrington's Millennium Green



Mammal Walk, Ferndown Local Nature Reserve

### The Friends of Ferndown

A partnership approach with the local community has been a great success at Ferndown LNR. By the time the reserve was declared in 2008 it already had a "Friends of" group who had helped raise £10 000 from the Breathing Places award. This money was used to undertake restoration work turning the drab fields into flower rich meadows. The group applied for a further £5000 that was used to hold a summer fun day in September 2009. Over 600 local people attended this event, still the biggest crowd recorded on any of our LNRs. Not resting on their laurels another successful bid was made for £50 000 to Groundwork's Community Spaces fund for large scale access improvements and biodiversity areas.

Regular nature walks are held on site and are always popular. We have organised walks for flowers, birds, mammals, butterflies and evening walks for bats and moths.

The community have also helped install bat and bird boxes, plant hedges and wildflowers, sow green hay, litter pick, plus run a bird feeding station all year round.

# Community Involvement

## Schools

School grounds are ideal places to get children involved, in a hands-on way, with the natural environment. They offer a safe, practical and exciting opportunity for outdoor learning that can complement classroom-based activities.

In Stafford Borough, lots of our schools are doing great work on biodiversity, many of them supported and encouraged through the Stafford Borough Eco-Schools Network (see below for more information on our Eco-Schools Network).

Biodiversity projects can support learning across all areas of the school curriculum, from science to geography, music to citizenship.

### Eco-Action Day at the Wildlife Trust

Each year we organise an Eco-Action Day for Schools and last year children enjoyed making 'mini-beast hotels' from materials gathered in the beautiful grounds of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Wolseley Centre.

### Cooper Perry Primary School

Children, parents, helpers and staff planted an orchard in the school grounds recently, to encourage wildlife, healthy eating, local food production and help understand the concept of 'food miles'.



Children with Elliot the 'eco-bat'

## Eco-schools

The Network aims to provide mutual support for members of the network through sharing of ideas and best practice, enabling schools to progress through the Eco-Schools Award Scheme and to become more Sustainable Schools. The Stafford Borough Eco-Schools Network- aims to:

- › Encourage sustainable development activity in schools, especially through the Eco-Schools Programme
- › Provide advice and access to expertise/give a pointer to other sources of help
- › Provide practical assistance eg biodiversity conservation work
- › Develop resources and disseminate information eg through the Eco-Schools web pages
- › Run an annual Eco-Action Day
- › Look after the Eco-Schools Mascot 'Elliot the Eco-Bat' and his blog!
- › Generate mutual encouragement!
- › Link to other initiatives: Stafford Borough Green Awards; involvement in our Local Nature Reserves; Fairtrade activities; Doorstep Walks for Health etc.



Making bird feeders



# Community Involvement

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## Residents

### Gardens and Allotments

In urban areas especially, gardens and allotments have an important role in supplying habitat for biodiversity. Increasingly people are realising that gardening can be a way of both enjoying and helping nature. There are a number of features that can be incorporated into a garden to help make it greener and more attractive to wildlife.

- › Ponds
- › Log pile
- › Rockery
- › Compost heap
- › Water butt
- › Bird feeders
- › Nest boxes / bat boxes

There are also several things to avoid using including pesticides and herbicides. There are now good alternatives to peat - whose continued harvesting is damaging the environment.



*Bird box making at Derrington*

## Wildlife Friendly Planting

Any nectar rich flowers and berry producing shrubs will attract wildlife into the garden. A good variety of plants that will flower across the whole season will help bees, butterflies and other insects. This is particularly important because many bee species are now in decline. Some of the best plants include traditional herbs such as Rosemary, Lavender, Thyme, and Marjoram. Perhaps the most popular plant for butterflies is the Buddleia. By planting flowers like Sweet Cicely or Fennel many aphid-eating insects will be encouraged, for example Hoverflies. Hebes and Cotoneasters will both attract bees and butterflies.

If you have a paved area in your garden then removing a couple of slabs and planting low growing plants in the gaps would add interest. Herbs such as Thyme and Chamomile are suitable but any size of plants in the gaps will attract wildlife successfully. A trellis will add vertical space and many climbers are good for wildlife, especially Honeysuckle which will attract nighttime visitors like moths.

Lawns can have low growing perennials added to them, for example Speedwells, Daisy, Self-Heal, Bird's-foot Trefoil. If you feel more adventurous and have the space, then allowing a meadow area to develop would really help wildlife. There are now many suppliers who specialise in providing native seeds and plants.

Containers or hanging baskets are also ways of adding plants where space is limited. Even if you have no garden a window box can still add interest.

# Action Plan

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE | Land Management > To halt the loss of biodiversity and aim to restore losses through targeted action for species and habitats

Initiative	Measure	Target			Outcome by 2015	Partners
		Number of species introduced				
		13/14	14/15	14/15		
1.1	To improve the management for biodiversity of the Borough Council Local Nature Reserves	FD 0 SM 0 GM 0 BC 0	FD 2 SM 2 GM 2 BC 2		There are more species and/or habitats in each Local Nature Reserve for residents to enjoy  Biodiversity has improved in the Borough	SBC, Friends of Groups, Environment & Health, Planning & Regeneration, Leisure
1.2	To manage the Local Nature Reserves in order to achieve Special Biological Importance status	5	6		Ferndown LNR will be designated an SBI	SBC, Friends of Groups, Streetscene, Leisure
1.3	Continue to work with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust in the resurveying of SBI's	15	15		30 SBI's resurveyed and appropriate management implemented where necessary	SBC, Stafford College, SWT

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO | Integration and Co-ordination > To develop an effective framework that ensures biodiversity is considered in decision making

Initiative	Measure	Target			Outcome by 2015	Partners
		12/13	13/14	14/15		
2.1	To fully comply with PPS9 and its accompanying circular in respect of enhancing biodiversity through major developments in the Borough	1 Kingsmead Marsh identified	1 Subject to development	1 Subject to development	Reduction in biodiversity loss from development and increase in the number of significant developments where biodiversity is enhanced throughout the Borough	SBC, Planning & Regeneration, SWT, LXB
2.2	Implement the Biodiversity Strategy and continue to continuously improve, monitor and review the action plan	Strategy implemented	Completed	Draft new Strategy	Increased awareness of the need to protect, enhance and develop Biodiversity	All SBC Service Areas via the Environmental Management Group



## Action Plan

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE | Awareness raising > To increase understand and enjoyment of biodiversity in our communities

Initiative	Measure	Target			Outcome by 2015	Partners
		12/13	13/14	14/15		
3.1	To work with local communities when considering biodiversity	2	3	3	An increase in community members contributing towards the protection, enhancement and management of biodiversity in the Borough	SBC, Friends of Groups, SWT
3.2	To improve signage and information regarding Local Nature Reserves	4	5	6	All visitors and user groups are better informed when they visit the Local Nature Reserves	SBC, Friends of Groups, SWT, Environment & Health
3.4	To work with the Eco-Schools Network to encourage participation in biodiversity activities	15	20	25	School children are more aware of how to protect biodiversity in the Borough and are aware of the key issues	SBC, SCC-Education
3.5	Keep Local Nature Reserve Management Plans up to date	7	7	7	3-year work programme for Local Nature Reserves has been completed	SBC, Friends of Groups, Planning & Regeneration, Leisure
3.6	Review and update SBC website page content for biodiversity	430	470	520	Residents are more informed about Council activities in relation to biodiversity and how they can be involved	SBC, Stafford College
3.8	To continue to support environmental enhancements in Derrington	50	50	50	There will be an increase in the number of bird and bat species in the Borough	SBC, Friends of Groups, SWT
3.9	To support and encourage the development of wildlife activities in Penkside	2	2	2	Residents living in the area are more aware of wildlife activities and different species and habitat in the area	SBC Friends of Groups, SWT

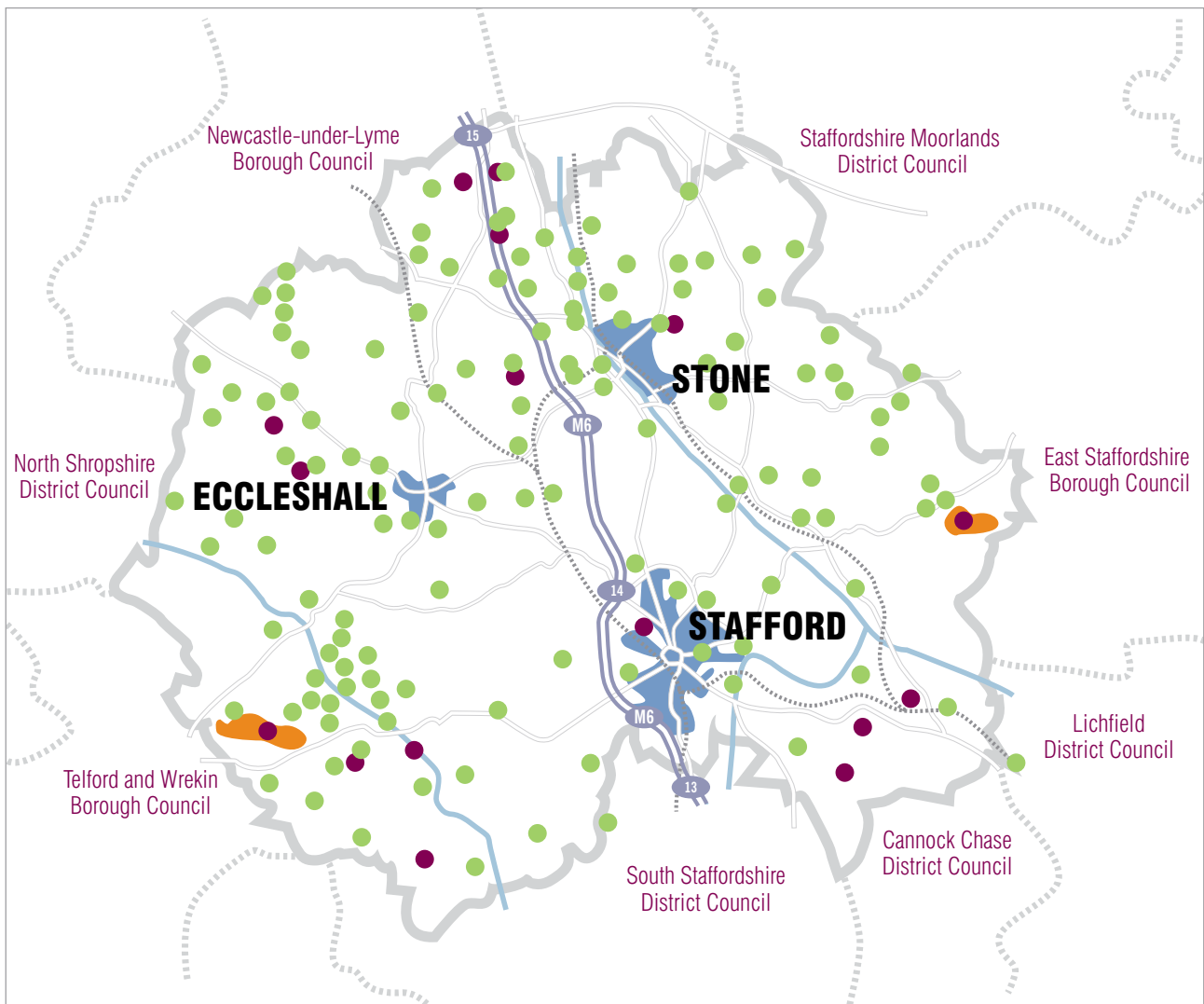
# Annex 1: Further Information and Guidance

## Useful Websites

Organisation	Weblink	Useful for
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust	<a href="http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk">www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk</a>	The Trust manages, conserves and enhances some of the best wildlife sites in the County -including 6 reserves in the Borough. They also provide training and educational resources.
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	<a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk">www.rspb.org.uk</a>	The RSPB protects, restores and manages habitats for birds and other wildlife. They manage 200 nature reserves and look for practical solutions for problems facing the environment.
The British Trust for Ornithology	<a href="http://www.bto.org">www.bto.org</a>	The BTO is a research institute measuring changes in bird populations to inform the public and policy makers.
British Dragonfly Society	<a href="http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk">www.british-dragonflies.org.uk</a>	The aim of the society is to conserve dragonflies and their wetland habitats.
Butterfly Conservation	<a href="http://www.butterfly-conservation.org">www.butterfly-conservation.org</a>	Information about British butterflies and moths, their habitats and conservation work.
Buglife	<a href="http://www.buglife.org.uk">www.buglife.org.uk</a>	Buglife is devoted to the conservation of all invertebrates, aiming to halt the extinction of species and to achieve sustainable populations.
Botanical Society of the British Isles	<a href="http://www.bsbi.org.uk">www.bsbi.org.uk</a>	The BSBI records plant distribution and produces national Atlases and county Floras. It supports all botanists and provides training and education.
The Wild Flower Society	<a href="http://www.thewildflowersociety.com">www.thewildflowersociety.com</a>	Created specifically for amateur botanists and wild flower lovers in the UK who enjoy learning more about field botany. A series of outdoor walks are organised each year.
Plantlife	<a href="http://www.plantlife.org.uk">www.plantlife.org.uk</a>	Plantlife carries out practical conservation work, manages nature reserves, and works to connect people with wild plants and promotes their conservation for the benefit of all.
The Mammal Society	<a href="http://www.mammal.org.uk">www.mammal.org.uk</a>	The only organisation dedicated to the study and conservation of all mammals of the British Isles and provide a hub of information and expertise.
Bat Conservation Trust	<a href="http://www.bats.org.uk">www.bats.org.uk</a>	Participates in the biodiversity action planning process, identifies conservation actions for bats and bat habitats in England; Advises and educate members of the public about bats and provides support to local bat groups.
Froglife	<a href="http://www.froglife.org">www.froglife.org</a>	Froglife is a national wildlife charity committed to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles - frogs, toads, newts, snakes and lizards - and saving the habitats they depend on.
Amphibian and Reptile Conservation	<a href="http://www.arc-trust.org">www.arc-trust.org</a>	Current activities include managing eighty nature reserves, working with schools, researching and monitoring species' populations in the wild, and working with other wildlife organisations, and the public, to influence wildlife legislation relating to amphibians and reptiles.
Wild About Gardens	<a href="http://www.wildaboutgardens.org">www.wildaboutgardens.org</a>	Information about wildlife gardening and how gardening for wildlife can make a difference to the UK's wild creatures.
Natural England	<a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk">www.naturalengland.org.uk</a>	The government's advisor providing advice on safeguarding the natural environment, managing reserves and green farming schemes.
Environment Agency	<a href="http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk">www.environment-agency.gov.uk</a>	Principle aims are to protect and improve the environment and to promote sustainable development.
Stafford Borough Council	<a href="#">Biodiversity Strategy 2012 - 2015</a>	



## Annex 2 : Map of Stafford Borough Showing Wildlife Sites



### Map Key

- Sites of Biological Importance
- National Nature Reserves
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest

**STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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If you need this information in **large print, Braille, other language** or on **audio cassette** please contact:

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