

**JUNE 2025
SPECTRUM ENTRY**

BIODIVERSITY

What is Biological Diversity and why does it matter?

The more diverse our ecosystems are, the more species - flora and fauna - are able to resist changes to the environment, such as climate change. Strong, well established ecosystems support a rich variety of life which is essential to our own well being and health. A decline in biodiversity and long established habitats can lead to an impact on the production of food, vulnerability to the effects of climate change and even our own resilience as a species. Looking after our own environment matters, locally and globally. Paying attention to biodiversity is something we can all do.

Did you know that 98% of our traditional meadows in this country have disappeared ?

Taking hundreds of years to develop, once lost (to building or intensive farming, for example) the diverse range of wildflowers and the pollinating insects that depend on them are gone forever.

Essential to the production of fruit and vegetables that we take for granted, insects and habitats that support them are both vital for biodiversity and a sound ecological environment. It is in all our interests to protect and enhance the precious landscape that we have around us to encourage a resilient biodiversity.

Did you know that we have many areas of Ancient Woodland in the Parish?

An Ancient Woodland is a wood which is identified as having been in existence since 1600. Home to long established trees, including veteran oaks, undisturbed soils and rare plants, they also form an important part of the landscape. Ancient Woodlands are not automatically protected but they are critically important to wildlife and the undisturbed biodiversity they support.

Almost all the parish lies within what is now called The North Wessex Downs National Landscape (previously AONB). Within the Parish we have numerous Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and 41 Biosites which are surveyed and recorded by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC). Whilst these and other bodies are very useful in identifying both the broader and the more particular attributes of our Parish's geographical, geological and ecological status, they do not offer statutory protection.

What are we doing to help biodiversity ?

The Hampshire Parish Pollinator Project has been instrumental in helping volunteers throughout Hampshire pursue projects - often first small steps - with the aim of understanding and enhancing local biodiversity. Drawing on their knowledge, EWPC has successfully trialled small areas of native wildflowers in the Parish Field and is continuing to increase their establishment.

Three oak trees as well as several small trees have been planted. The small trees have been chosen for their blossom and berries, good for pollinators and wildlife.

Hedging is already abundant in the wider Parish, recognised as vital to the formation of wildlife corridors and contributing to the rural nature of the landscape in our Parish. Although there are well established hedges to parts of the Parish Field, there are places where we intend to add suitable native hedging in the autumn to improve the wildlife environment.

Last year in Garvard's Copse (to the west of Trade Street) a group of volunteers cleared swathes of invasive Himalayan Balsam. Over the winter a major project has been taking place to completely renew the boardwalk and path between Trade Street and Fullers Lane. The woodland here (part of which is noted as being 'Ancient') is recognised as being a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and is home to large areas of wild daffodils, thriving in the semi shade of the site. The new path gives a safe and dry route through this special habitat without risk of damage to its ecological integrity.