

Resolution: DECLARATION OF A BIODIVERSITY EMERGENCY – June 2022

Otley Town Council notes with concern the results from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) which shows that biodiversity is declining faster than at any other time in human history, and that the UK has about half its biodiversity left which places it in the bottom 10% globally and last amongst the G7 Group. The State of Nature report in 2019 suggested that 15% of species in the UK are now threatened with extinction.

The House of Commons Environment Committee has noted that the downward trend can be reversed but only through urgent transformational change, and that the UK failed to meet 14 of the 19 Aichi Biodiversity Targets and is not on track to achieve its goal of providing the next generation with a better natural environment.

Our Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of biodiversity, but Councils across the UK are responding by declaring a 'Biodiversity Emergency' and committing resources to reverse the decline and deliver measurable net gain for the good of their residents, visitors and businesses as well as improving the well-being of people worldwide.

Policy and Resources Committee resolves to:

1. Declare a 'Biodiversity Emergency'
2. Pledge to do everything within the Town Council's power to deliver measurable net biodiversity gain
3. Call on the UK Government to provide the power and resources to make measurable net gain possible
4. Continue to work with Leeds City Councillors and local naturalist groups to promote schemes that will improve biodiversity in Otley
5. Support the extension of the Leeds Habitat Network within Otley
6. Work with local partners to measure the current level of biodiversity within Otley using Englands biodiversity matrix* and develop an action plan to deliver biodiversity net gain based on scientific evidence

*It is the recognised criteria used by Councils and Government Agencies and as such has a legal basis.

Proposer:

Cllr Paul Carter

Seconder:

Cllr Richard Hughes

References:

1. House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee report on the [state of biodiversity in the UK](#)
2. [Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?](#) Published on 30th June 2021
3. Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services ([IPBES](#))
4. State of Nature 2019 [Report](#)
5. [Aichi Biodiversity Targets](#)
6. Wildlife Friendly Otley reports on the Biodiversity Emergency, Biodiversity Restoration and Benefits of Rewilding.