

## Hedgerow Policy

### Background

Hedgerows have been with us since at least Roman times (Rackham 1986). "Dead hedges" apparently used by Neanderthal communities are being revived in Devon and here creating a barrier between Siccaridge Woods and the road in Tunley. Hedgerow Regulations 1997 provide hedgerows with some protection. However only about one in three hedgerows are in good condition and some evidence shows that new hedges are being planted with single species which reduces wildlife habitat.

### Why are hedgerows important: -

- Their deep roots help sequester carbon, and the UK's Committee on Climate Change **2019 report** suggested the hedgerow network be extended by 40% as part of the UK's 2050 net zero target.
- They are important as habitats in their own right – see <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/may/24/a-natural-history-of-the-hedgerow-john-wright-review-profile-books>
- They help combat ecosystem fragmentation in intensively farmed landscapes.
- They can reduce the likelihood of flooding downstream, suck nutrients and pollutants out of water, and prevent soil erosion.

**Natural England** has recommended England's hedgerow network should increase by 60%. The **National Farmers' Union** has told members that hedgerows should be allowed to grow bigger and taller to support more wildlife. This is already happening in some farms in our Parish.

### Why should a Parish Council bother about hedgerows?

- Hedgerows are an integral part of the implementation of the Parish Council's 2019 climate emergency and nature recovery declaration
- The Parish Council owns land on which hedgerows can be planted to enhance habitat for wildlife
- The Parish Council can encourage others (schools, village halls, private landowners) to plant and look after hedgerows.
- The Parish Council is a consultee on planning applications and can encourage hedgerow planting and protection through planning comments

- Bisley -with-Lypiatt Parish Council has an abundance of important wildlife sites, but many are unconnected; hedgerows can provide wildlife corridors
- Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council has several mammals on the red list – including dormice and hedgehogs. These depend on mixed hedgerows for food and shelter and a poorly maintained hedgerow negatively affects their habitat – a dormouse will turn back where there is a 5m gap in a hedgerow.
- To support the Government’s target of an increase in the hedgerow network of 60% by 2050

What can a Parish Council do to enhance hedgerows as wildlife corridors, encourage better management and more planting of mixed hedgerows?

- Work to encourage gentle cutting and heightening of existing hedgerows rather than annual radical flailings
- Encourage hedgerow planting in residents’ gardens, and in other areas such as schools, churches etc
- Encourage the distinct hedgerow types and patterns in each village community – for example Eastcombe has traditional trimmed beech and yew in the Conservation Area
- Help Wildlife Trusts and others educate young people in the Parish about the importance of hedges
- Consider how hedge laying might be encouraged throughout the Parish through illustrations, recommending training schemes such as <https://www.cotswoldsruralskills.org.uk/events/view/506/hedgelaying-beginners-midlands-style-course-full>
- Encourage farmers and landowners who take the opportunity to improve hedgerows through new government incentives to use the CS grant to offer educational opportunities that will build trust between residents and farmers <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/improved-countryside-stewardship-scheme-opens-for-2021-agreements>

Furthermore, the Parish Council has agreed three POLICIES:

- POLICY: Object to the planning authority if a hedgerow is to be reduced or felled as part of a planning application (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-hedgerows-regulation-and-management> provides guidance on the Hedgerow Regulations act 1997, updated 2017)
- POLICY: Commend hedgerow planting in all appropriate planning applications

- POLICY: Plant hedgerows on allotments and on Parish Council owned or managed land where appropriate and particularly where a hedgerow helps enhance existing wildlife corridors or enriches habitat. Every small mixed hedge can help pollinating insects and provide food and shelter for birds and small mammals