



Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council

Non-confidential

Biodiversity Assessment and Enhancement – Saxilby Parish Green Spaces

Report to: Planning & Development Committee

Report by: Clerk

Power/duty which decision falls under:

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 s40.

Which council objective(s) it falls under:

- Maintain and improve community facilities and amenities
- Protect and enhance our green spaces and street scene
- Preserve and enhance heritage assets, environmental assets and wildlife
- Retain and encourage employment and tourism opportunities
- Improve the well-being of residents
- To foster public participation and engagement
- To recognise the climate and biodiversity emergency and it should be considered as the basis of all decision and policy making

Public Sector Equality Duty

Consider how policies/decisions affect those protected under the Equality Act)

If managed carefully (especially maintaining accessible paths and clear communication), the recommendations positively contribute to the Public Sector Equality Duty by:

- Enhancing inclusivity
- Creating opportunities for community involvement
- Improving wellbeing for protected groups

Duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity

This report offers opportunities to directly conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Consideration on carbon reduction:

The proposed biodiversity enhancements (e.g., reduced mowing, creation of wildflower areas, new tree and hedgerow planting, and wetland habitat management) all have potential carbon benefits.

These include:

- Increased carbon catching and storage (sequestration) through additional tree and scrub planting.
- Reduced fossil fuel emissions from lowering mowing frequency.
- Improved soil health and carbon storage through wildflower meadow management.
- Enhanced climate resilience by creating diverse habitats that may mitigate flood risk and heat impacts.

Does the report consider any new activity? If 'Yes', has a risk assessment, including risk management proposals, been included for consideration and adoption by the council?

(Financial Regulation 17b) **Yes.**

Consideration of risk management in relation to the proposal¹

It is impossible to list every risk faced by a local council. Risk, in the general sense, means the likelihood of an event happening, and the severity of the negative consequences. The insurance industry regards risk as representing loss or damage. Risk always involves uncertainty. When protecting a local council effectively, it is important to consider if risk is present in the following areas:

Risk Area	Risk Present / Description?	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating	Mitigation & Contingency
Decision Making / Strategic	Community resistance to changes in mowing regimes or introduction of longer grass/wild areas.	Low	Medium	Low-Moderate	Clear communication plan, signage explaining purpose (Blue Campaign), phased introduction of changes. Review feedback.
Finances	Budget pressures.	Low	Medium	Moderate	Apply for grants (Woodland Trust free trees, external biodiversity funds). Prioritise cost-effective measures (e.g., plug plants over reseeding). Phased implementation. Spend within budgets
Property	Damage to existing infrastructure during enhancement works.	Low	Medium	Low-Moderate	Careful planning of works. Staff/volunteers given clear guidance. Buffer zones maintained around sensitive areas.
Staff / Operational	Additional workload.	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Action plan with timelines. Use volunteers where possible. Consider contractor support.
Legal	Breach of biodiversity or wildlife protection laws (e.g., hedge cutting during nesting season).	Low	High	Moderate	Follow legal requirements (e.g., cut outside March-Sept).
Written / Verbal Communication	Miscommunication with public leading to complaints ("sites look unkempt").	Low	Medium	Moderate	Proactive communications, newsletters, website updates, signage on sites. Provide positive framing. Build on this years comms.
Insurance	Liability risks from accidents during planting/maintenance (e.g., use of tools, uneven ground).	Low	Medium	Moderate	Volunteers/contractors are covered under insurance. Risk assessments for tasks. Provide PPE and safety briefings.
Inspection / Events	Failure to inspect or monitor enhanced areas leading to poor establishment or hazards (e.g., fallen branches, unmanaged scrub).	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Schedule inspections into caretakers' routine. Annual review by Environment Working Group. Engage community in monitoring/reporting issues.

Risks are mostly *moderate* and manageable with good communication, phased implementation, and adherence to legal and safety duties. Benefits (biodiversity net gain, carbon sequestration, community wellbeing) outweigh risks, if mitigations are applied.

¹Risk areas to consider - strategic/operational, likelihood/impact, add to risk register? Any contingency planning needed?



REPORT

1. Purpose of the Report

To summarise the findings of the Biodiversity Assessment of Saxilby Parish Green Spaces undertaken in June 2025, and to provide recommendations for enhancing biodiversity across the parish's green spaces.

2. Key Findings

Overall biodiversity: Most sites have low biodiversity, largely due to frequent mowing and limited structural diversity. The notable exception is the Wildlife Breeding Ponds site [not council land], which qualifies as a Local Wildlife Site due to its freshwater plant assemblage and habitat mosaic.

Flora: Common and widespread plant species dominate most sites. Only the Wildlife Breeding Ponds meet the criteria for a Local Wildlife Site; a few sites have isolated species that contribute to local grassland biodiversity.

Fauna:

- **Birds:** Common species present across sites, with some species of conservation concern (e.g., starling, song thrush, greenfinch). Existing hedgerows, trees, and reedbeds provide nesting habitat.
- **Mammals:** Sites with scrub, trees, and longer grass provide foraging and potential nesting for hedgehogs; mature trees at some sites offer bat roosting potential.
- **Invertebrates:** More abundant in sites with longer grass or woodland areas.
- **Amphibians and reptiles:** Wildlife Breeding Ponds offer habitat for common frogs, toads, and potentially grass snakes.

Habitat condition:

- Amenity grasslands are species-poor and frequently mown.
- Woodland areas generally unmanaged or partially underplanted; some scrub and hedgerows are sparse.
- Ponds, wet woodland, and orchard areas provide the highest diversity of habitats.
- Evidence of non-native species and minor fly-tipping in some locations.

3. Recommendations for Enhancing Biodiversity in Saxilby Parish Green Spaces

1. Grass Management

- Within sites where all the grass is currently cut, leave some of it unmown, or mow less frequently, to allow plants to flourish.
- Ideally, no cutting should take place between March and September.
- If some cutting must occur, leave grass uncut between May and late June/early July for pollinator benefit.
- Areas such as *St Botolph's Church Yard* and *Ashfield Grange Recreation Area* could become botanically diverse if left uncut in parts.
- Mown pathways should be maintained to reassure the public that the sites are still cared for.
- Longer grass is more drought-tolerant and should be encouraged.

2. Grass Arisings

- Remove all arisings from grass cutting to avoid adding nutrients to the soil.
- Where space permits, pile grass clippings discreetly to provide habitat and egg-laying sites for grass snakes, slow worms, amphibians, and invertebrates.

3. Wildflower Creation

- Create new wildflower areas within species-poor sites to increase plant diversity.
- Preparation requires scarifying to 60% bare soil, followed by hand seeding and rolling for soil contact.
- Recommended seed mixtures:
 - *Emorsgate Seeds EM5 Meadow Mixture for Loamy Soils (40kg/ha).*
 - *Boston Seeds BS4M Mixture for Loam and Alluvial Soils.*
- Sowing should take place in autumn or early spring.

4. Wildflower Management

- Cut new wildflower areas once in spring (if required) and once in early autumn.
- Remove arisings after 7 days to allow seed to drop.
- Avoid herbicide use; control weeds by pulling or topping.
- Install signage to educate the public about these management practices (e.g. Blue Campaign).

5. Plug Planting

- Use native plug plants as an alternative to re-seeding.
- Recommended supplier: *Boston Seeds Wildflower Plant Collections.*
- Plant in early spring, clearing grasses around planting spots for success.

6. Woodland Enhancement

- Seed woodland areas with mixtures such as *Emorsgate Seeds EWI Woodland Mixture* or use native plug plants.

7. Willow Coppicing

- Coppice smaller willow stands at the *Wildlife Breeding Ponds* site to provide structural diversity.

8. Tree Planting

- Plant new trees where space allows; orchards could provide fruit for the community.
- Recommended orchard trees: apple, pear, plum, walnut, cherry.
- Other native species for different site types:
 - Restricted spaces: hawthorn, field maple, crab apple, rowan.

- Larger spaces: bird cherry, wild cherry, pedunculate oak, small-leaved lime.
- Use biodegradable guards and ties (not required where deer/rabbits absent).

9. Scrub Creation

- Enhance woodlands with native scrub along boundaries or as standalone features.
- Benefits: nesting for birds/hedgehogs, foraging for bats, invertebrates, and birds.
- Suitable species: hawthorn, guelder rose, hazel, dog-rose, elder, spindle, wayfaring tree, dogwood, buckthorn, holly.
- Avoid blackthorn near dwellings due to suckering habit.

10. Hedgerow Creation

- Plant new hedgerows on open sites for cover and connectivity.
- Species-rich hedgerows should include at least six from: hazel, holly, hawthorn, dog rose, wayfaring tree, dogwood, elder, wild cherry, bird cherry, guelder rose.
- Plant in double staggered rows for density.
- Use biodegradable guards and ties where necessary.

11. Hedgerow Management

- Manage hedgerows on a rotational basis (cut half/third annually).
- Only cut outside nesting season (late March–early September).
- Place clippings under hedgerows or in woodland to provide habitat piles.

12. Tree and Hedgerow Grants

- Apply to *Woodland Trust* for free trees and hedgerow plants for community projects.#

13. Wildlife Ponds

- Create small ponds at larger sites (e.g. *St. Botolph's Gate Rear* and *Ingleby View Cemetery Extension*).
- Develop as community projects to increase local engagement.

14. Non-native Species Removal

- Gradually replace non-native and exotic plants with native species.

15. Hedgehog Conservation

- Install hedgehog nest boxes beneath hedgerows, shrubs, or in quiet woodlands (not at Saxilby Road Scrub due to road).
- Recommended suppliers: *NHBS* and *Wildcare Shop*, or community-built versions (ensure safe materials).
- Encourage “Hedgehog Highways” between gardens to support movement.

16. Bat Conservation

- Install bat boxes on large trees, at least 3m high, facing east/south.
- Recommended: *Schwegler 2F Woodcrete Bat Box*.
- Alternatively, build timber boxes (though less durable).

17. Bird Nesting

- Install nest boxes on suitable trees, facing east/north at 3m+ height. Suitable models available from *NHBS* or *Wildcare Shop*.

18. Invertebrate Habitat

- Install insect houses and bee hotels (purchased or handmade).
- Encourage community building projects using recycled/natural materials.

19. Wildflower Planters

- Add wildflower planters seeded with cornfield annual mixtures (e.g. Boston Seeds BS9P-100).
- These provide nectar/pollen for pollinators and attractive displays.
- Note: annual mixes must be re-sown yearly; use perennial mixes for lasting meadows.

4. Summary

There is significant scope to enhance biodiversity across Saxilby Parish Green Spaces. The Wildlife Breeding Ponds site [non-council] already demonstrates high ecological value, while other areas could benefit from relatively straightforward management changes, wildflower planting, and structural habitat enhancements.

Implementing these measures would improve ecological connectivity, support priority species, and increase opportunities for community engagement with local biodiversity.

There is scope to achieve an increase in biodiversity on all of the sites if some or all of the recommendations can be implemented.

Biodiversity recommendations **action table**

- Note: Some site recommendations are not included in action table as not council owned land.

Biodiversity Action Table

Actions	St Botolph's Church Yard	Ashfield Grange	St Botolph's Gate Rear	Ingleby View Cemetery Extension	Westcroft Green Spaces	All / Other Sites
Leave some grass unmown (March–Sept), maintain mown pathways, allow drought-tolerant longer grass	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Remove and pile grass arisings for habitat (snakes, slow worms, amphibians, invertebrates)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Create new wildflower areas (scarify, sow Emorsgate EM5 / Boston BS4M seed mix)	✓	✓				✓
Manage wildflower areas – 1 spring cut, 1 autumn cut, no herbicide, signage (Blue Campaign)	✓	✓				✓
Add native plug plants (Boston Seeds collections, planted early spring)	✓	✓				✓
Enhance woodland areas with wildflower mix (Emorsgate EWI) or plug plants					✓	
Selective tree thinning to increase light, stack timber as habitat piles					✓	
New tree planting – orchards (apple, pear, plum, walnut, cherry) or native species depending on space			✓	✓		✓
Add native scrub to woodland/site boundaries (hawthorn, hazel, guelder rose, etc.)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Plant new native hedgerows (6+ species, double staggered rows)				✓		✓
Manage existing hedgerows on rotation (outside nesting season)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Create wildlife ponds (community project)				✓		
Remove non-native/exotic species and replace with natives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Actions	St Botolph's Church Yard	Ashfield Grange	St Botolph's Gate Rear	Ingleby View Cemetery Extension	Westcroft Green Spaces	All / Other Sites
Install hedgehog nest boxes (not Saxilby Road Scrub)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Promote hedgehog highways across neighbourhoods						✓
Install bat boxes (≥3m, east/south facing, Schwegler 2F woodcrete)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Install bird nest boxes (≥3m, east/north facing)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide insect houses / bee hotels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Install wildflower planters (annual mixes – cornfield BS9P-100)	✓	✓				✓

RECOMMENDATION(S):

5. Recommendations to Committee

1. Approve in principle the implementation of biodiversity enhancements across council owned parish green spaces as outlined above.
2. Review mowing and maintenance to integrate biodiversity-friendly management practices - October committee
3. Prioritise sites with the highest potential gains:
 - **Westcroft Green Space**
 - **St. Botolph's Church Yard**
 - **Ashfield Grange**
4. Explore community engagement opportunities, including wildlife monitoring, educational signage, and volunteer planting projects.
5. Apply for funding/grants to support tree and hedgerow planting (e.g., Woodland Trust free community trees).