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Agenda Item 9– Biodiversity Policy & Action Plan

Background –

Under the 2021 Environment Act public authorities including parish councils must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

At the last Full Council meeting your recommendation with regard to biodiversity was considered. It was agreed to adopt the Biodiversity Policy and delegated powers were granted to the Leisure and Environment Committee to carry out a review of actions being undertaken in respect of biodiversity and what further steps should be undertaken.

- a. To consider carrying out a biodiversity audit of council landholdings, other parish areas and to review any biodiversity plans already in place in the parish.

It is thought that professional help will be required to carry out an audit. Suffolk Wildlife Trust have been approached for advice and their Wilder Ecology branch provide ecological appraisals. It is suspected that this will need to be done in the spring. There are other local ecologists who will offer a similar service and comparison prices can be sourced. It is possible that someone with relevant expertise in the area of ecology may be among Thurston residents and who might volunteer their services.

- b. To review the Biodiversity Action Plan and consider any actions/strategies needed to ensure compliance with the council's duty to maintain, improve and enhance biodiversity.

The additions made to the template action plan are only intended to highlight the endless possibilities. Your considerations going forward might be to look at just a few actions, or to concentrate on a particular aspect.

- c) To note the MSDC Call for Land to help support nature recovery across the district:
<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/call-for-land-to-support-nature-recovery?> and consider any register of interest.

There is scope to work with Mid Suffolk DC on increasing biodiversity. In addition to offering trees and hedgerow plants they are working with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust to offer support and advice. Registering an interest in this "call for land" could be very beneficial.