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Statement on Biodiversity

Crediton Town Council (CTC) has recently held its first Climate Change and Sustainability Committee ("CCSC") under an approved Terms of Reference, which replaced the former sub-committee of the same name, which was suspended in March 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic.

The Statement on Biodiversity remains largely unchanged, but it is anticipated to evolve over coming months as the CCSC determine their role and how best to deliver against the Terms of Reference.

Background

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 placed a duty on Local Authorities to consider biodiversity as part of its policy and decision making.
Conserving biodiversity can include restoring or enhancing a population or habitat. It is the responsibility of the Council to have due regard to this when exercising its various duties and responsibilities.

Statement

CTC is committed to doing all it can to enhance and protect biodiversity in Crediton.
To achieve this, it closely monitors and reviews the work it carries out to ensure it meets its obligations, this includes:

- Ensuring the Council considers biodiversity in exercising all of its statutory regulatory functions. Examples of this are:
  - When considering planning applications
  - The development of a Neighbourhood Plan, which will include policies for the protection, conservation and enhancement of biodiversity
  - When considering new projects and initiatives
  - When reviewing maintenance contracts of council owned land.
- Improving the management for biodiversity of land and buildings owned by the Council, such as:
  - Management plans that maintain and enhance biodiversity including retaining mature trees and replacing any which have to be removed using species indigenous to the area
  - Increasing grass cutting heights to encourage insects and wildlife
  - Looking into ways to reducing the use of herbicides
  - Creation of new areas of habitat such as the creation of the Peoples Park wildlife area and a more recent proposal to turn an unused play area into a community orchard.
- To raise awareness of biodiversity and promote opportunities for formal and informal learning, including officers and member training and understanding of the natural environment by:
  - Involving local schools, community groups and organisations in biodiversity projects. For example, in the past Landscore and Haywards Primary Schools created bug and bee hotels at the Peoples Park Wildlife Area. Also the bird feeders at the Wildlife Area were being regularly re-filled by a local nursery, encouraging frequent visits to the area

- ➢ Continue to develop the Wildlife Hunt, which encourages children to visit outside spaces to see the wildlife living in Crediton
- ➢ Encouraging members of the community to look after the areas outside their homes to reduce the need for herbicides around the town
- ➢ Encouraging the local community to volunteer and become involved in local conservation projects, which can also assist in combatting social isolation and engenders community cohesion.
- Act as an example of best practice, by incorporating biodiversity into relevant strategies and within partnership working, for example:
  - ➢ CTC to work in partnership with local groups and organisation, land owners and the community to raise standards and transform unkept and unloved spaces in the town. When Mid Devon District Council removed its bedding services from Crediton, CTC joined up with local community groups and volunteers (including Sustainable Crediton and the St Lawrence Group) to provide large areas of summer bedding. These projects have focused on the use of wildlife and bee-friendly plants, as well as planting perennials to encourage areas to re-grow from one season to the next.
  - ➢ CTC encourages residents and businesses to enhance the environment in Crediton through the annual Floral Crediton Competition, as well as entering the town into the Britain in Bloom Competition and local community groups into the It's Your Neighbourhood Awards.