



Portland Biodiversity Strategy

Portland Town Council
Policies and Objectives
for the
Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity

Issue 1 (Adopted by Full Council)

Prepared for Portland Town Council by



The Portland Association

Portland Biodiversity Group

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Introduction

Portland Town Council (PTC), as a Public Authority, is required by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006 (as amended) to ‘further the general **biodiversity** objective¹’, by taking actions that are consistent with the proper exercise of its functions. As a consequence PTC must ‘periodically consider the opportunities available to improve biodiversity across the full range of its functions²’ In doing so it must undertake a proactive, strategic assessment of its functions, rather than considering each function in isolation.

In 2019, PTC declared a climate and ecological emergency in response to an ongoing awareness of our impact upon our environment, and the other living beings with which we share our fragile planet. Whilst they were able to take some initial actions in support of this declaration its response was limited by the resources available at that time.

PTC recognises the importance of our natural heritage, the biodiversity it hosts, the part it plays directly and indirectly, in the services it provides us, and its contribution to the quality of life and general well being of our residents and visitors. This strategy document identifies the policies that will be adopted and the objectives it seeks to achieve for the benefit of our biodiversity.

- This document provides details of references used which are included at the footnotes.
- Key resources, for further reading and key details, have been identified with links in standalone boxes.
- Words in bold are defined at the Glossary.

¹ The general biodiversity objective is “the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity”

² Para 924, Explanatory Notes, Environment Act 2021. The Stationary Office.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/notes/division/1/index.htmh>

Part 1

Context setting

‘INFORM’

1.1 Context

It is long recognised that we are experiencing both a climate and ecological crisis. Both Dorset Council and Portland Town Council (PTC) have responded with declarations of climate and ecological emergencies and both have embarked upon actions in mitigation. But the challenge is great, and whilst most understand the actions required to mitigate climate change, the same may not be as clear cut for our diminishing biodiversity. It is now increasingly clear that our biodiversity is declining, such that England has become one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world³. This trend has been well documented in a series of triennial State of Nature Reports, the most recent of which was published in September 2023⁴. It makes clear that whilst we understand the reasons for the decline, and know what is required to reverse the trend, our collective actions to date have not been enough. This section summarises a route to reversing that trend.

In 2010 The Lawton Report, *“Making Space for Nature”* concluded that the existing collection of wildlife sites, across the country, *‘does not comprise a coherent and resilient ecological network’... “that is capable of coping with the challenges of climate change and other pressures”*. It resulted in 23 key recommendations for improvement, with a number directed at Local Authorities as well as public landholdings. The key outcome advocated by the report is that *“biodiversity is enhanced and the diversity, functioning and resilience of ecosystems re-established in a network of spaces for nature that sustain these levels into the future”*. This has been encapsulated in the phrase, *“More, Bigger, Better and More Joined Up”*.

Lawton, JH., et al (2010) <i>Making Space for nature: A review of England’s wildlife sites and ecological network</i> . Report to DEFRA.	LINK
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The Lawton Report had an immediate effect shaping Government Policy, mostly through a slew of reports and papers now mostly obsolete. But it has stood the test of time and has influenced policy and legislation that sets the course for the next generation. Key amongst these are the Government’s *“A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to improve the Environment”*⁵ (25YEP) and the Environment Act 2021⁶. The former contains many ambitious targets on the loss of marine and terrestrial biodiversity, improving the condition of all protected areas, restoring habitats, and increasing woodland cover. But these targets cannot be achieved without the legal underpinning which the Environment Bill, 2021 provides. It introduced three key provisions, of greatest relevance to biodiversity: Mandatory Net Gain of biodiversity of at least 10% from all developments that require planning permission; the requirement for Local Authorities to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS); and, a strengthened Biodiversity Duty⁷, amending the existing duty, requiring all public bodies (including all local authorities) to actively take steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the performance of their functions.

Of all the documents and legislation above, which have significance in framing guidance and intent, it is the enhanced Biodiversity Duty, framed as the Biodiversity Objective, that most impacts upon Portland Town Council and its functions. It requires an assessment of the actions it can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity through appropriate policies and objectives. It requires this assessment to be completed by 1st January 2024, and should be repeated at least every five years. In doing so, The Council *‘must have*

³ [UK has 'led the world' in destroying the natural environment](#). Natural History Museum 20 July 2020

⁴ State of Nature Partnership, (2023). *State of Nature, 2023*. <https://stateofnature.org.uk/>

⁵ HM Government (2018). *A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to improve the Environment*. London

⁶ [Part 6: Nature & Biodiversity](#) The Environment Act, 2021.

⁷ [S. 40. Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act. 2006](#). (as amended by S 102 of the Environment Act, 2021, above.

regard to any Local Nature Recovery Strategy, any Species Conservation Strategy or Protected Site Strategy that are relevant. The Biodiversity Objective is defined within the Act in terms of actions that may be taken to conserve, restore or enhance a population of a particular species or a particular type of habitat.

1.2 The Nature of Portland

1.2.1 Origins

As the Last Glacial Maximum receded northwards, around 20,000 years ago (Before Present, BP), together with its associated tundra megafauna of Mammoth, (*Mammuthus* spp.), Bison (*Bison* spp.), and Reindeer (*Rangifer* spp.), woodland was able to spread northwards and become established across much of the south of England. The megafauna was gradually replaced by temperate mammals, more familiar to us today, such as wild cattle or aurochs (*Bos* spp.), red (*Cervus elaphus*) and roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), along with the smaller mammals that still frequent the island, Badger (*Meles meles*), Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). Woodland developed, mostly Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Elm (*Ulmus* spp.), and probably Common Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*). Humans also migrated north, to exploit opportunities supporting their hunting, fishing, gathering existence. The first mesolithic Portlanders walked across to the island around 9000 years BP, when sea levels were much lower than today; it would be another 3000 years before levels achieved those similar to today. Evidence from remains in middens, at Culverwell and other sites around the island,⁸ reveals a subsistence reliant upon shellfish and what could be foraged from the abundant vegetation. The vegetation of the island would be mostly familiar to us today, wooded areas becoming more open through the agency of larger herbivores, but the fauna was significantly more abundant (some areas of the island are reverting today to what it might have been at that time). The basis of our best biodiversity, which today makes the island of significant importance from a conservation perspective, had already been established by this time. The island's isolation from the mainland supported a continuity that has helped maintain this distinctiveness to this day

As the Late Mesolithic gave way to the Neolithic around 4500 years BP, and our first farming communities were able to domesticate both plants and animals. This led to a need to clear land for crops, further reducing the amount of tree cover⁹. It led to the island being managed in a state of 'suspended **succession**', or **plagioclimax**, which has prevailed for at least a thousand years, if not much longer. The later invasions brought the Romans to the island, bringing Mediterranean herbs and other plants, including Alexanders (*Smyrniolus olusatrum*) and Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) which are today widespread across the island. Later, the Normans brought 'bunnies' (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) to Britain which they exploited for food in established warrens, of which at least two are known from the island. When John Leland visited the island around 1540 he made the observation that '*There be very few or utterly no trees in the isle, saving the elmes about the church*' [St Andrews]. Throughout this period it is likely that introductions of new species of flora through natural agency was largely limited to those that were windborne, against the prevailing southwesterlies, or brought by birds. In 1839, the causeway was bridged at Small Mouth opening up the island to greater human traffic providing a means for a whole range of species to be introduced on to the island. But generally, it is fair to say that ancestral Portlanders have proven to be good custodians of the island and its biodiversity. At the break of the Second War, Portland remained rich with a legacy of flora and fauna that had mostly survived throughout the preceding 8000 years or so.

⁸ Palmer, Susann. (1999) *Ancient Portland: Archeology of the Isle*. 2nd edition. Published by the Author

⁹ South West Archeological Research Framework, 2007 (Ed C J Webster). [The Archeology of South West England](#). Somerset County Council.

Following World War Two the imperative to rebuild, London in particular, led to Planning Permission being granted, on 14 August 1951, for the quarrying of stone on c. 324 Ha of the island (a further extension in 1971 added areas of Broadcroft Quarry). The 1951 permission preceded the notification of large parts of the island in 1952, as Sites of Scientific Interest, covering much of the same area being quarried. The precedence of the mineral permissions led to the loss of large areas of important habitats, throughout the 60's and 70's, before modern environmental planning conditions were introduced under the Environment Act of 1995, bringing more sensitive management and restoration outcomes. In addition, much land was also lost to housing development, with extensive estates being built through Easton, The Grove, Weston and Southwell. Our relationship with the land also changed. Farming practices became more intensive, shifting from traditional grazing to predominantly arable outputs. This has led to marginal land being neglected and subject to **successional processes**. This has been further exacerbated by the fluctuations in the 'bunny' population, a keystone species because of their grazing abilities, from myxomatosis in the 1950s and beyond, and more recently from R_____ Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) of the last few years. These processes result in the degradation or loss of species-rich grassland to scrub and eventually species-poor secondary woodland, dominated by Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), a **neophyte**. Other impacts upon our biodiversity include: the increase of invasive species, especially *Cotoneaster* species and Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja davidii*), which have become a real issue in some areas of our best remaining grassland; and recreational pressures which are known to result in damage to habitats, disturbance of our biodiversity and often contamination from littering and dog-walking, as examples. Collectively, these pressures, occurring over little more than a single lifetime, have added to the burden on our best habitats and the biodiversity they contain. The sustainability of these pressures must be considered in future policy and objectives for the conservation and enhancement of our biodiversity if we are to provide a legacy future Portlanders deserve.

1.2.2 The present

A contemporary description of the Natural Character of the island has been published by Natural England. It provides key facts about the island as it is today, the **ecosystem services** from which we benefit and provides Statements of Environmental Opportunity.

Natural Character Area Profile No 137: Isle of Portland. Natural England, 2015.

LINK

1.2.3 Habitats & Species

The Biodiversity Objective identifies the purpose of conserving, restoring or otherwise enhancing populations of particular species and the habitats within which they exist. The enabling Act (footnote 7, above) requires the Secretary of State to publish “*a list of living organisms and types of habitat*”, “*which are of principal importance for the purposes of conserving or enhancing biodiversity*”¹⁰. These lists are used here to identify features of the island - within this section on Habitats and the next on Species (1.3.3) - to be factored into these policies and objectives, where appropriate.

1.2.3.1 Habitats

Lowland Calcareous Grassland

Lowland Calcareous Grassland is one of the rarest and threatened habitats in England having declined significantly over the last 100 years to around 38,000 Ha¹¹. It is a rich diverse habitat of lime-loving plants, comprising grasses, herbs, mosses and lichens, that collectively provide a habitat for many species of birds and invertebrates. Some have compared its diversity with that of tropical rainforests. On Portland around 88 Ha, representing 8 percent of land cover, has been mapped as LCG through national audits. It is a fragile habitat that has relied heavily on grazing activity to maintain its condition but with the loss of traditional management since 1945 many areas of LCG have succumbed to successional pressures scrubbing over and becoming secondary woodland. However, it should be no surprise on an island comprising a large slab of limestone covered with a smear of brown calcareous soils, that almost all of the grassland has calcareous origins. Much of the grassland has been ‘modified’ through different land uses: Quarrying, **pastures**, **meadows**, verges and more recently **amenity grassland** areas. This has led to differing amounts of disturbance, from heavy repeated mowing to none, and much soil enrichment, resulting in more mesotrophic (neutral) grassland vegetation. But this is reversible and many sites around the island could be restored to former LCG communities. This would be in line with current targets to increase LCG across England fourfold to around 149,000 Ha as part of the 25 YEP⁵.

Lowland Calcareous Grassland	LINK
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Maritime Cliff and Slope

Much of the periphery of the island comprises this habitat. To all intents and purposes it is similar to LCG, above, mostly comprising two distinct grassland community types where Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) becomes the dominant grass (rather than the Sheep’s Fescue (*F ovina*) of LCG). It is distinguished by key species such as Thrift (*Armeria maritima*) and Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota* ssp *gummifer*) along with a number of species particularly associated with the island (Portland Hawkweed (*Hieracium* spp; Portland Sea Lavender, *Limonium recurvum* subsp. *portlandicum*) . Overall its condition has declined over the years because of the cessation of grazing and the increase in recreational pressures that have increased in recent years. These habitats are internationally important and recognised in the designation of the island

¹⁰ S 41 Natural Environment & Rural communities Act, 2006.

¹¹ Jefferson RG. (2020). *Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Lowland Calcareous Grassland*. Natural England

as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Isle of Portland and Studland Cliffs SAC, which provides protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017.

Maritime Cliff and Slopes

LINK

Open Mosaic Habitats

A relatively recent designation. This habitat type¹² has been recognised following growing evidence that sites of former development and disturbance, for example Quarries, are of importance because of the biodiversity these sites often host, especially invertebrates, lower plants and others of conservation concern. It can comprise a range of other habitats; grassland, scrub or woodland, for example. There are extensive areas of the island that have been identified as comprising this habitat type.

Open Mosaic Habitats

LINK

Deciduous woodland

Portland is not known for its Deciduous Woodland¹³. The second series Ordnance Survey (1888-1913) maps only small areas of tree cover from around St Andrew's Church and Church Ope. Aerial photography from the 1940's and 1950's reinforces this point. The woodland around Church Ope Cove may be our only ancient woodland, with the Wych Elms (*Ulmus glabra*) there known from the 1560s. Most woodland on the island is recent and can be attributed to the loss of traditional management, particularly livestock grazing. Grazing provides sufficient disturbance to suspend successional processes transitioning through rank grass, to scrub and eventually a climax community of woodland. Our tree cover comprises mostly Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), a 'neophyte', with occasional Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), but it is the poor understorey, dominated by Ivy (*Hedera Helix*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and Hart's-tongue Fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*) that marks it out as an unworthy replacement for rich and diverse calcareous grassland. This habitat type has become important by virtue of targets in the 25YEP which proposes the increase of tree cover in England to around 16.5%, from 12.5%, in support of mitigation of climate change. This has resulted in our small areas of woodland around Old Hill, France Quarry and behind Wakeham being mapped as Priority Woodland.

Deciduous Woodland

LINK

Vegetated Shingle; mudflats; brackish lagoons etc

These have been grouped in this strategy because they occur along Chesil Bank and The Fleet. These areas, mostly Common Land, are the responsibility of the Crown Estate, with management contracted through The Court Leet. As PTC have little direct influence on the sites and would defer to the Crown Estate on any interventions required for the sites, these habitats are not discussed further. Much of this area is also identified as the Chesil and Fleet Nature Reserve, which has its headquarters in the Chesil

¹² Identifying Open Mosaic Habitat. Buglife

¹³ There are around 30 Ha of mostly secondary deciduous woodland on Portland, of almost 1 Million Ha (988,000) across England. [UK National Ecosystem: Technical Report](#) (2011) Ch. 8 Woodlands NERC (and Natural Character Assessment No. 137 Isle of Portland. Natural England at Section 1.2.2, above).

Beach Centre on the causeway. The Reserve has a comprehensive website¹⁴ providing a wealth of information on this area.

Vegetated Shingle; mudflats; and brackish lagoon habitats

LINK

Field Margins (Portland Hedges).

Traditional Hedges are a Priority Habitat, but most of the hedges on Portland are recent with limited features of interest. They mostly comprise native Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and or Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), along with other species native to the island, and therefore have an inherent value for wildlife. What is important on Portland are the extensive field margins comprising traditional stone walls. These can be of particular importance to small mammals and invertebrates. They also host significant communities of Bryophytes (Mosses, mainly) but also Lichens, and consequently have an importance beyond other methods of partitioning fields. Their importance extends beyond biodiversity, if their historic and cultural contributions are considered. This is reflected by PTC having a specific Stone Wall Policy¹⁵

These have not been mapped for the island.

Identification of Habitats for Nature Recovery purposes

Guidance on areas to be incorporated into Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) will emerge as Dorset Council develops its response to its appointment as a responsible authority for delivery across the whole of Dorset. In support of the required outcomes it has established a dedicated page to provide information on progress.

Dorset Council Local Nature Recovery Strategy Website

LINK

The initiatives established under LNRS will be based upon the areas mapped as part of the work undertaken by DERC, since 2010, to identify **Existing Ecological Networks** and **High Potential Ecological Networks**. These maps are readily accessible and should be used by PTC, to inform decision making in support of its relevant Functions.

Ecological Network Maps (Dorset Explorer Website)

LINK

1.2.3.2 Species

This section will focus upon those species that have been identified as '*priority species of primary importance for the purpose of conserving or enhancing biodiversity*', which have been published as required by Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006. Other systems for

¹⁴ [Chesil and Fleet Nature Reserve](#) Website

¹⁵ [Portland Town Council Dry Stone Wall Policy](#)

notifying conservation status and/threat also exist which may include other species, most notably Red Data Listings, which may also be used to inform decision making but these will not be covered further here. There is one other method of identifying conservation status that will be mentioned that has been adopted at the County Level in Dorset. This forms part of the guidelines for the selection of sites as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest. This has been produced by Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) and published by Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC) and comprises a list of “Dorset Notables” which includes species based upon their rarity at both county and national level as well as those species that are indicators of different habitat types (**axiophytes**). These listings are a valuable reference which should be used when evaluating any sites for the purposes of ‘conserving or enhancing biodiversity’. The detailed information can be accessed through the DERC Website [here](#) (under SNCI resources).

For completeness, it should be noted that many species, not necessarily covered in this strategy are afforded a level of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981¹⁶. The restrictions are covered in Part 1 of the act supported by a listing of affected species in the schedules. It should also be noted that the legislation also includes restrictions on the introduction of certain animals and plants into the environment.

The full list of (Section 41) priority species¹⁷ comprises some 943 species of which around 185 are known to have been recorded on or around Portland. That is almost 20% (19.6%) of all the priority species in England.

Flora

Vascular Plants

There are 151 vascular (flowering) plants identified in the priority species list of which 21 are known to have been recorded on Portland. Of these, however, 15 have not been recorded during the current century. Many of these are species that have occurred on arable land subject to traditional non-intensive agriculture. The most likely cause of the loss is the changes to agricultural practice: the increasing use of herbicides and chemical fertilisers, which have enabled earlier cropping which have reduced the growing window for arable plants. It is likely that this may be a focus of forthcoming LNRS initiatives, where management objectives might be tailored to enhancing our flora across our ecological networks.

Lower Plants

Portland is one of the richest coastal limestone sites for Lichens in the British Isles¹⁸, with over 210 species recorded, mostly on rock but also on soil and trees. The best places being around the coastal margins, especially rocks around the high water mark and around the quarries. They are a feature of our many traditional stone walls and buildings around the island. Of the 96 species identified in Section 41 priority species list, 10 are known to have been recorded on the island. There are also many species identified by Dorset Wildlife Trust as being of importance at the County Level.

Our Bryophyte (Mosses and Liverworts) flora is also exceptional, reflecting the extreme southerly and maritime position of the island¹⁶. Much of the flora is essentially Mediterranean in character, including species only found elsewhere on the continent. Again the quarries and coastal margins feature as habitats hosting this flora, but more damp areas within grassland, in open mosaic areas and scrubby

¹⁶ [Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981](#)

¹⁷ [List of habitats and species of principal importance in England](#). HM Government

¹⁸ [Citation for the Isle of Portland SSSI](#). Natural England

habitats also favour these species. There are 76 species on the priority species list of which 5 are known to have been recorded here.

Fauna

In this section there will be a larger list of individual species mentioned. This is deliberate, many of the species which we often take for granted are actually declining. This is mostly because we have crowded them out; not leaving sufficient habitat and space for them to exist and thrive.

Mammals

Mammals are represented on the island by 28 species¹⁹ (non-marine) that have been recorded here in recent times. Nine of these species are bats. Our mammal fauna represents a significant number of the 18 identified as priority species under section 41. Eight have been recorded here: Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*); Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus*); Harvest Mouse (*Micromys minutus*); Otter (*Lutra lutra*); Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*); Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*); Greater Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*); and, Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*).

Our marine mammals are also equally important and are represented by four species that regularly occur in our waters and five have been sighted from the island, including Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) and Killer Whale (*Orcinus orca*). Of the four species that regularly occur two appear in the list of priority species: Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*); Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*).

Birds

The location of Portland jutting out into the English Channel makes it one of the most important landfall sites for migrant birds advancing north towards their nesting grounds or back south towards their wintering grounds often in the southern hemisphere. This phenomenon has long been recognised and led to the purchase of the Old Lower Lighthouse as the Portland Bird Observatory and Field Centre opened in May 1961 by Sir Peter Scott. It continues to this day as a registered charity with its work becoming internationally renowned for its scientific importance. The observatory hosts a website²⁰ which posts latest sightings and other information of interest.

It should be no surprise that a good number of the birds listed on the Priority species list pass through the island in Spring and Autumn on passage to and from the breeding areas. The imperative to get to the breeding grounds means that they seldom stay long in spring, but in autumn they will often stay around for a while to feed up before heading south again. But Portland is also important because it also has a good number of resident and breeding species here throughout the summer, and also winter visitors that have come south to take advantage of the milder winters we tend to have. Of the breeding and resident birds the following are listed as Priority species:

Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Common Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
Cirl Bunting	<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus ssp argenteus</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Hedge Accentor (Dunnock)	<i>Prunella modularis</i>

¹⁹ [Dorset Mammal Atlas.](#)

²⁰ [Portland Bird Observatory and Field Centre](#) Website.

Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		

There are a further two which should be mentioned. Both Corn Bunting (*Emberiza calandra*) and Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) have bred on the island until recently. Their loss to the island has resulted from a move away from traditional farming practices in the south of the island (a similar fate as has befallen some of our arable weed species, above). Active conservation measures are in hand, led by the Bird Observatory, to try and attract them back to the island.

Portland, and particularly the Fleet and Portland Harbour are also important for wintering species. Notable amongst these, and appearing on the priority species list are:

Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	Dark-bellied Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla ssp bernicla</i>
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>

Herptiles (Reptiles and amphibians)

Reptiles are represented by three species that are listed as priority species: Slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*); Adder (*Viperus berus*); and, Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*). Whilst many of these species may seem common around the island it remains essential that we provided appropriate space for them.

Amphibians on the island are represented by two (of the four) on the list of priority species: Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*); and Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*). The common feature here is the importance of water bodies within which they and the other amphibians can spend much of their lifecycles. Water bodies, especially permanent ones, are not common on the island and the continued existence of these species is probably dependent upon artificial ponds in gardens.

Invertebrates (terrestrial only)

This is by far the largest group, represented on the priority species list by 378 representatives. They are probably also the most important group of species. They represent all those species that act as **pollinators** of our flowers in all our habitats, together with the vegetables and fruit in our gardens and allotments. Some also serve the purpose of controlling other species that are considered as pests. Others are important merely because of the colour they bring into our environments. But the fact is they are in serious decline and this is well described elsewhere, most notably (and accessibly) by Professor Dave Goulson (University of Sussex).

Goulson D, 2019. <i>Insect declines and why it matters</i> Suffolk Wildlife Trust

LINK

Butterflies & Moths (Lepidoptera)

Of the 59 butterflies seen in Britain more than 30 can be seen on Portland. And for some of those species Portland is a stronghold because of the extent of grassland and the larval foodplants they contain and on which the many of our butterflies depend. A number of the species here are generalists or migrants

meaning that they have no particular habitat preference other than access to feeding and sheltering places. Some of our species have complex needs and interactions with other species, which must all come together during the lifecycle for the species to survive. An example is the Chalkhill Blue, which depends upon Horseshoe Vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*), as the only foodplant for its larvae (caterpillar), and also the Yellow Meadow Ant (*Lasius flavus*), with which it has a complex relationship. After about two months feeding on the vetch the butterfly larvae start to pupate, at which stage they start to exude a sweet sticky secretion which attracts the ants. The ants 'herd' the pupae and may take them underground, protecting them at their most vulnerable stage, and milk them for the secretions.

There are 23 of Britain's 59 species on the priority species list, of which the following eight are recorded on Portland:

Small Heath (<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>)	Small Blue (<i>Cupido minimus</i>)
Dingy Skipper (<i>Erynnis tages</i>)	Grayling (<i>Hipparchia semele</i>)
Wall (<i>Lasiommata megera</i>)	Silver-studded Blue (<i>Plebejus argus</i>)
Grizzled Skipper (<i>Pyrgus malvae</i>)	Lulworth Skipper (<i>Thymelicus acton</i>)

Moths are also well represented on Portland. Of the 141 species identified on the priority species list no fewer than 73 have been recorded on the island. Some credit for recording this number must go to the Bird Observatory which has an active programme of trapping and releasing moths on a daily basis, an activity they have undertaken for many years. This does mean that judging the status of our moths is difficult, because many moths are migrants and are readily attracted to the wavelength of light emitted by the type of mercury vapour lamp used at the observatory. That said, Moths, together with butterflies, play a role in pollination and consequently, their role in the environment should not be underestimated.

Of all the priority moth species recorded here a couple are worth noting: Richardson's Case-bearer (*Eudarcia richardsoni*), a micro-moth which is believed to be endemic to Britain and known only from a site near Swanage and around the East Weares here on Portland (its habitat is threatened by scrub encroachment); and the Least Owlet (*Scythris sicilia*), another micro-moth, occurring in dry sandy areas along the harbour side of the causeway (it has also been found in one other location in Suffolk).

Beetles (Coleoptera)

A very abundant group, ubiquitous in all terrestrial and freshwater habitats; there are over 4000 species in Britain.. They fulfil a number of important functions in the ecosystems in which they occur. Some act as predators preying on a range of other invertebrates, some feed on algae, many feed on decaying wood, others are polyphagous, feeding on a range of material, being herbivorous or fungivorous. There 74 species listed as priority species. Eight of these species have been recorded on Portland, although there appear to be no recent records for five of these.

Bees, Ants & Wasps (Hymenoptera)

An important group, one of our four main groups of pollinators, of which Honeybees, Bumblebees and Solitary Bees, are particularly important. They all seem to be in decline, suffering significant losses over the last century. There are six species of bumblebee (*Bombus* spp.) on the priority species list that have been recorded on Portland. Of these only two have been recorded this century: Brown-banded Carder Bee (*Bombus humilis*) and Moss carder Bee (*Bombus muscorum*). Both have declined significantly but

retain some strongholds around the coast. Severe declines in three of the remaining species (Red-shanked Carder Bee, *Bombus ruderarius*; Large Garden Bumblebee, *Bombus ruderatus*; and Shril Carder Bee, *Bombus sylvarum*) have led to a contraction in range towards the east. The final species, Short Haired Bumblebee, *Bombus subterraneus*) is now believed to be extinct in Britain although efforts to reintroduce it from stock from Sweden are under way.

The final two Bee species on the priority list are a Long-horned Bee (*Eucera longicornis*), of which there are recent records for the island, and a Solitary Bee named as Cliff Burrow Bee (*Lasioglossum angusticeps*), which used to frequent the soft rocks around the coastline but has not been recorded for some years. Both species are known to be declining.

There are no ants resident on the island that are on the priority species list. Despite this mention should be made of the Yellow Meadow Ant (*Lasius flavus*), which has an important part to play in the lifecycle of the Chalkhill Blue butterfly, above. Their ant-hills are often very large and become significant features in our calcareous grasslands, signalling continuity of undisturbed and often diverse habitats. They are often threatened through removal because their presence can cause problems when mowing occurs.

Other Terrestrial Invertebrates

There are a number of other invertebrate groups which appear in the Priority species list. All are represented on the island: True Bugs (Hemiptera); Grasshoppers & Crickets (Orthoptera); Dragonflies and Damselflies (Odonata); Flies (Diptera) and Centipedes (Chilopoda) and Millipedes (Diplopoda). There are also representatives of molluscs (Gastropoda) on the island. However, amongst these groups there are none that appear on the priority species list.

Other Marine Fauna

Our marine invertebrates are an important, but often overlooked group. This group includes cnidarians (sea anemones, corals, jellyfish, hydroids etc), crustacean (crabs and shrimps etc.) and molluscs (oysters and barnacle, for example). The Priority species list includes 18 that are of primary importance for conservation. Of these seven are known to occur in the littoral waters around Portland, including Portland Harbour.

Also represented are Bony Fish and also Sharks and Rays. Of the Bony fish some species we may take for granted are listed as priority species; Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*), Whiting (*Merlangius merlangus*) and Plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa*), for example. Basking Shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) and Porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*) have been sighted in the waters around the island as have Common Skate (*Dipturus batis*). Two species of Turtle have also visited our waters; Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) and Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*).

1.2.4 Designated Sites

The importance of Portland for Biodiversity, and indeed **Geodiversity**, is recognised through the number of statutory designations that have been applied to the island. These designations represent recognition at International, National and County levels, and apply to almost 50% (565 Ha of 1150Ha)²¹ of the land surface of the island. When the maritime designations are also taken into account the size of the protected area increases significantly. Portland Town Council is responsible, as owner or occupier, for land either adjacent to several designated sites or that sits within the impact zone of a designated site. The following provides details of designated sites with links to information to inform PTC in its decision making.

1.2.4.1 International Designations

Title	Habitats/Features for which designated	Map	Further information
Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC	• Annual vegetation of drift lines • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts • Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>), (note that this includes the priority feature "important orchid rich sites") • Early gentian (<i>Gentianella anglica</i>)	LINK	LINK
Studland to Portland SAC	• Maritime Reefs	LINK	LINK
Chesil & The Fleet SAC	• Coastal lagoons • Annual vegetation of drift lines • Perennial vegetation of stony banks • Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>) • Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (<i>Sarcocornetea fruticosi</i>)	LINK	LINK
Chesil & The Fleet SPA	• Little tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) • Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>)	LINK	LINK
Chesil & The Fleet RAMSAR Site	• Bass (<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>) - Breeding • Coastal lagoon • Dark-bellied brent goose (<i>Branta bernicla</i>) - Wintering • Shingle	LINK	LINK
World Heritage Site	UNESCO World Heritage Convention designation to recognise outstanding combinations of globally significant geological and geomorphological features.	LINK	LINK

²¹ Comprises 497.4 Ha (43%) designated as SSSI (International and National importance); 68Ha (5.9%) designated as SNCI (County importance).

1.2.4.2 National Designations

These designations originate from the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (s.23) in response to the recognition that some land should be set aside for nature in the national interest. To achieve this, representative sites across the country were designated ‘*by reason of its flora and fauna, or geological or physiological features*’. It resulted in Chesil & The Fleet, comprising 990Ha (not all within the Parish), and the Isle of Portland (as Portland Coast & Cliffs), comprising 369 Ha, being designated in 1952 as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The 1949 Act failed to provide adequate protection for the sites; the quarrying, for example, continued without restriction. In 1981, the Wildlife & Countryside Act was enacted resulting in both sites above being re-notified, in 1986 and 1987, respectively. It also led to the Portland Harbour Shore, comprising c.29Ha, being designated in 1987 (it had previously been notified as part of Sandsfoot Castle & the Nothe SSSI previously notified in 1972). In 1999, Nicodemus Heights, comprising 7.9 Ha, was added to the list.

Title	Habitats/Features for which designated	Map	Further information
Chesil & The Fleet SSSI	<i>Chesil Beach is one of the three major shingle structures in Britain and is of international importance for coastal geomorphology. About half its length encloses the Fleet, the largest tidal lagoon in Britain. With the beach and associated habitats, [it] incorporates a site of international importance for its wildlife’</i>	LINK	LINK
Isle of Portland SSSI	<i>‘Internationally important for its geological interest. Hosts a rich assemblage of plants and animals associated with limestone grassland, scrub and coastal habitats, a combination of features and species unrepeated elsewhere. Famous for study of bird migration centred on the observatory’</i>	LINK	LINK
Portland Harbour Shore SSSI	<i>‘The causeway.... supports extensive, rich maritime grassland. There also patches of saltmarsh vegetation’</i>	LINK	LINK
Nicodemus Heights SSSI	<i>‘A complex range of habitats including limestone grasslands, cliffs and quarries. The limestone geology, southern maritime position and land use history gives the island a unique ecological character and rich biodiversity and makes Portland one of the key limestone areas in Britain’</i>	LINK	LINK

There are two Marine Conservation Zones in close proximity to the island. These marine protected areas have been introduced to protect important habitats and species within the ‘Blue belt’ around our island.

They are two of 91 sites around the UK coast introduced under the Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009. These two sites have been included here for completeness, the further information column provides links to information on the habitats and species subject to conservation measures and the regulators responsible for outcome delivery.

Title	Habitats/Features for which designated	Map	Further Information
South of Portland MCZ	• High energy circalittoral rock • Moderate energy circalittoral rock • Portland Deep geological feature • Subtidal coarse sediment • Subtidal mixed sediments • Subtidal sand	LINK	LINK
Chesil Beach to Stennis Ledges MCZ	• High energy circalittoral rock • High energy infralittoral rock • High energy intertidal rock • Intertidal coarse sedimentLINKLINK • Native oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>) • Pink sea-fan (<i>Eunicella verrucosa</i>) • Subtidal coarse sediment • Subtidal mixed sediments • Subtidal sand	LINK	LINK

1.2.4.3 County Level Designations.

The are Local Wildlife Sites that are non-statutory but with ‘substantive nature conservation value’²². These sites are reliant upon local agreements and partnerships with landowners to ensure that the conservation features of the site are maintained. In Dorset, these sites are identified by the County Wildlife Trust (DWT) who liaise with landowners and relevant public authorities to maintain the features of interest. They are selected on the basis of the species present, and their conservation value²³ They are designated Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and on Portland there are more than 12 sites comprising some 62.08 Ha. They are mostly small sites, but many are adjacent to existing SSSIs effectively providing a degree of connectivity. The condition of many SNCI is poor, reflecting the difficulty of establishing voluntary agreements for their management.

In addition to SNCI, there is also one Local Nature Reserve on the Island under the ownership and management of Dorset Council. Verne & Old Hill LNR was inaugurated in 2007 by Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, it has since transferred to Dorset Council as part of Local Government Reorganisation in 2019. Despite attempts to reintroduce grazing, which has proved unsuccessful, the condition of the site is deteriorating.

²² *Local Sites: Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management* (2006) DEFRA
²³ [Sites of Conservation Interest: Dorset Wildlife Trust Website](#)

1.3 Portland Town Council Functions and Responsibilities

Portland Town Council exists to represent the local community, deliver services to meet local needs, and improve the quality of life and community well-being of its residents. In doing so it is required to comply with duties placed upon it by legislation; invoke the powers it holds necessary for the delivery of services; and, also to deliver outcomes enabled through its 'general power of competence', in accordance with the Localism Act 2011²⁴. In delivering this strategy PTC is required to consider what it can reasonably undertake in the proper performance of its functions to further the 'biodiversity objective'.

The functions undertaken by the council, through duty or choice are wide and varied. Many of these functions have the potential to impact upon biodiversity either negatively or positively. The considerations in this strategy, then, need to encompass all the functions undertaken by the council. The following is a list of functions, undertaken by PTC, of relevance to the Biodiversity Objective which have been grouped as follows:

1. Management of Land, as owner or occupier.
2. Communication, Engagement & Leadership
3. Internal Processes & Procedures
4. Planning
5. Miscellaneous

1.3.1 Breakdown of Functions

1.3.1.1 Management of Land, as owner or occupier.

PTC is responsible for a number of sites across the island, either as Owner or Occupier (Annex A). These include the following:

- a. Allotments
- b. Cemeteries
- c. Parks and Sports Fields
- d. Amenity spaces and communal gardens
- e. Buildings, Car Parks and other hard landscape areas.
- f. Incidental spaces

Many of the sites have potential for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. The plan at Part 3 includes a phased approach to site assessment for biodiversity opportunities over the five years of this strategy.

²⁴ Localism Act 2011, Part 1, Chapter 1. "A local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do"

1.3.1.2 Communication, Engagement & Leadership.

The way that PTC communicates with the community it represents is an increasingly important function, especially in an age where social-media often dominates discussions and misinformation proliferates. Recent communications, mostly through Facebook, have demonstrated the need to ensure that messaging from the council is both accurate and clear. Inherent within this approach is the need to inform residents on the delivery of services that the council provides and ensuring that areas where the council is not responsible is properly addressed through engagement with the proper authorities or providers, if necessary. This is very much the case when it comes to our environment. Whilst the responsibilities of the council are defined with the Biodiversity Objective, described here, other parties generally have a greater role to play on the island. To promote a common understanding and to counter misconceptions, in what is often an esoteric area, consistent communications are essential. The council should consider the following areas in their approach to conserving and enhancing biodiversity:

- a. The Promotion of Biodiversity initiatives with the objective of promoting public understanding.
- b. The provision of information about sites that PTC own or occupy and their potential to contribute to the restoration of nature.
- c. Communication that encourages public participation.
- d. The provision of interpretive materials that promote the objectives on which the council and others have embarked.
- e. The provision of advice to internal and external clients and service users

Delivery on the Biodiversity Objective for Portland will inevitably involve other parties, some of whom the same objective applies along with others with vested interests through landownership and/or occupation and those, individual and community groups, with an interest in aspects of the environment. Engagement of those stakeholders to collectively achieve the biodiversity objective requires cooperation which PTC should seek to further through collaboration with:

- a. Other (public) authorities; including, but not limited to, Dorset Council; The Crown Estate; Natural England; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Defence; Portland Port - as Harbour Authority; other statutory authorities) - on verges, RoW and Access; woodland and Nature Reserves (Verne & Old Hill LNR; marine habitats etc.
- b. Landowners or occupiers; such as Portland Port (as private Landowner); Stone Firms Ltd; Albion Stone, Portland Bird Observatory; Diocese of Salisbury; Church Conservation Trust; Pennsylvania Estate and others with significant landholdings on the island.
- c. NGOs, charities and other organisations providing environmental management outcomes and services on Portland: includes, but not limited to, Butterfly Conservation; Church Conservation Trust; Court Leet, Dorset Wildlife Trust; Island Community Action (ICA); Portland Sculpture & Quarry Trust; Portland Bird Observatory: also Chesil & Fleet Nature Reserve (established as a Trust in 1994 by The Ilchester Estate).
- d. Collaboration with Community Groups to further and achieve biodiversity objectives.

Community Leadership will be key to the success of PTC in rising to the Biodiversity Objective challenge. As previously stated, the challenge is immense, if we are to reverse the declines and allow our biodiversity to recover for the benefit of future generations. It is incumbent upon those in position of leadership within local democracy to further the objectives by applying their skills as **“Stewards of Place, Advocates, Sensemakers, Orchestrators and Catalysts”** (of community participation)²⁵.

²⁵ [Local Leadership Framework for Councillors](#), Local Government Association, March 2023

1.3.1.3 Internal Policies & Procedures

To be able to perform its functions in a consistent and open way PTC has produced a series of policies and procedures. These are available through the PTC website. The Council will endeavour to ensure that these policies and procedures are consistent with the aims of this strategy document. Where it is identified that there are inconsistencies or errors in interpretation or application this should be raised with the Town Clerk in the first instance.

The current suite of policies and procedures cover the following areas:

- a. Committee/WG Terms of Reference
- b. Standing Orders - Duties
- c. Financial Regulations
- d. Requests for information (Freedom of Information and Environment Information Regulations compliance)
- e. Communications
- f. Health and Safety Policy, including Risk Assessments
- g. Risk Management
- h. PTC BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY
- i. Equality and Diversity
- j. Human Resources

Portland Town Council Policies and Procedures

LINK

1.3.1.4 Planning

The Council have three planning functions:

- The Planning, Highways and Licensing Advisory Committee responds to planning applications notified by Dorset Council (Local Planning Authority). This response is in an advisory capacity on behalf of the residents of the island.
- The Council also responds to consultations on all matters related to Planning, including local and national planning policy consultations.
- Responsibility for the production and maintenance of the Portland Neighbourhood Plan.

In fulfilling these functions, PTC is guided by the National Planning Policy Framework²⁶ and Planning Practice Guidance²⁷. It also refers to the current West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, 2015²⁸, The Neighbourhood Plan²⁹, and represents the views of Portland in the developing Dorset Local Plan³⁰ (currently at the consultation stage). In addition, PTC is required to take into account the guidance contained within the recent Green Infrastructure Framework, which is particularly aligned to PTC activities associated with the improvement of quality of life and community well being.

Green Infrastructure Framework, Natural England, 2023

LINK

²⁶ [National Planning Policy Framework](#), HM Government 5th September 2023

²⁷ [Planning Practice Guidance](#), HM Government

²⁸ [West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, 2015](#). Dorset Council.

²⁹ [Portland Neighbourhood Plan Portal](#). Dorset Council

³⁰ [Dorset Local Plan](#), Consultation Version 2021. Dorset Council

1.3.1.5 Miscellaneous

PTC undertakes a number of miscellaneous activities and functions with the potential to impact upon biodiversity. These also come into the scope of the biodiversity objective and consideration should be given to how these are undertaken or where they should be avoided and phased out. The following is not meant to be comprehensive but provides an indication of areas to consider.

- a. Procurement: Ensuring, where legislation enables, that goods and services utilised by the council are sourced from reputable providers with a demonstrable record of sustainable practices and supply chains.
- b. Waste: Ensuring the minimising of, and wherever possible, the repurposing of waste, to minimise impact upon the natural environment.
- c. Transport: Reduction of transport which impacts upon the environment, whether directly through the use of fossil fuels or through the use of materials sourced from the natural environment.
- d. Pesticide use: Should be avoided across The Council's estate (see LINK to Insect Declines and Why They Matter, above) because of their indiscriminate nature impacting not only target species. Viable alternatives are constantly being developed, which alongside physical interventions can, in many cases, obviate the need for pesticide use.

Pesticide Action Network UK (Promoting safe and alternative alternatives to hazardous pesticides)	LINK
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Part 2

Biodiversity Policies

‘COMMIT’

2.1 Policy Overview

Policies are described in terms of a set of principles, rather than detailed line-by-line prescriptive statements. This approach has been adopted to reduce the word count and ease assimilation. The principles have been established across six functional areas, including two statements covering overall council functions

2.2 Policies

Policy ID.	Policy	Rationale	Commitment Ownership
A. Overall			
A1	Portland Town Council (PTC) recognise their responsibility to further the conservation and enhancement of Biodiversity for the parish of the Isle of Portland.	Acknowledgement of a moral and legal duty to comply with legislation and associated guidance on behalf of the community of Portland	Full Council
A2	PTC will approve a Biodiversity Action Plan that covers a five year period which will be reviewed and re-issued in the year before its expiry, or more frequently if appropriate..	This is to ensure that policy is translated into appropriate actions for delivery and that the action plan is refreshed regularly.	Full Council
B. Land Management			
B1	PTC will seek to improve biodiversity across the estate for which it is responsible through the conservation and enhancement of priority habitats and species, where they exist on that land or where the property neighbours land that may contain priority habitat or species.	Commitment to meeting the intent of the biodiversity duty for managed land and so as no to compromise conservation and enhancement measures on adjacent land.	Full Council/ Services & Facilities Committee
B2	PTC will cooperate with and support, as appropriate, other public authorities, landowners, NGOs and Community group seeking to deliver their own biodiversity objectives to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes	Enables PTC to represent the community with other organisations seeking the same or similar outcomes.	Full Council/ Services & Facilities Committee
C. Communications, Engagement & Leadership.			

C1	The council will promote the biodiversity objective through appropriate communications with the aim of promoting public understanding and public participation. It will provide information about initiatives being undertaken within its responsibilities, through the provision of interpretive and other materials, as well as providing appropriate advice to internal and external clients and service users.		Full Council/ IT & Communications Committee
C2	The Council will engage with other parties in the furtherance of the biodiversity objective, whether other public authorities, landowners or occupiers, NGOs or individuals or community groups seeking to achieve mutually beneficial biodiversity outcomes.		Full Council/ All Committees

D. Internal Policies and Procedures

D1	PTC will ensure that all internal policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure that they reflect the Council's commitment to the biodiversity objective in the delivery of its functions. They should be reviewed at least every five years.	Will ensure that PTC will be compliant in the delivery of its Actions, Functions and other policies.	Full Council/ Town Clerk
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E. Planning

E1	PTC will ensure that the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with respect to the 'Natural Environment' and 'Local Green Sites' are incorporated into the Portland Neighbourhood Development Plan.		Planning, Highways & Licensing Advisory Committee
E2	PTC will proactively support Local Nature Recovery Strategies, applicable species conservation strategies and protected site strategies to inform relevant decision making, as required under the biodiversity objective.		Planning, Highways & Licensing Advisory Committee

E3	PTC will view all Planning applications, on which it is notified, with due regard to this strategy and will comment with the intent of furthering the aims of the biodiversity objective.		Planning, Highways & Licensing Advisory Committee
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F. Miscellaneous administrative and operational activities

F1	The Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that Products and Services sought by or utilised by PTC will be procured from organisations and suppliers with a demonstrable record of sustainability.	To minimise risk that PTC contributes to biodiversity loss through unsustainable sourcing.	Town Clerk/All Staff
F2	The Council will endeavour to ensure that no activities will be undertaken, on land it owns or occupies, that will be detrimental to biodiversity. (It is accepted that there will be occasions on which control activities must be undertaken especially with regard to pest species.)		Ful Council / Services and Facilities Committee/ All Staff

Agreed on behalf of Portland Town Council	J Draper Chair of the Council	Governance & Quality Endorsement	M Ryan Portland Town Clerk
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Part 3

Biodiversity Objective and Action Plan

‘DELIVER’

3.1 General Guidance & Principles

Rather than provide a comprehensive list of prescriptive constraints or directions, a number of general principles are provided to inform decision making. These are based upon the ecology of Portland and guidance derived from Government targets.

- Sites outside the Defined Development Boundary (DDB) should be treated as being part of the wider countryside. Guidance should be sought before developing interventions which might introduce species that are not native to the island or might otherwise impact upon a designated site or area of priority habitat. More liberal interventions, utilising not-native flowers and or specimen trees, might be appropriate at sites within the DDB. Again guidance should be sought, where necessary.
- “tree planting is not a desired management objective in this windswept coastal landscape³¹” The introduction of trees requires additional management considerations: Trees are **autogenic engineers**, altering the environment within which they exist, some of which is positive, but can also be negative (i.e. impairing the ability of other species under the canopy to photosynthesise leads to the dominance of competitive species with the loss more stress tolerant species); the diameter of the root ball can be larger than the height, which needs consideration when locating new trees; a mature tree can require 100 gallons of water a day, which is then lost through evapotranspiration.
- Pollinators need more than flowers. They also need nest and hibernation sites as well as the opportunity to breed. Often these needs are already present in a location before we need to plant flowers, which is often more often to meet our preferences than those of the pollinators. It is really important to see what is already available at a site before intervening with alternative offerings. For example, a palette of Gorse (Jan-Dec); Blackthorn (Mar-May); Hawthorn (Apr-Jun) Dogwood (May - Jul); Blackberry (May - Sep); and Ivy (Oct- Nov), all native shrubs on the island might provide sustenance throughout the year, above and beyond that from the range of flowers available.
- Excessive Mowing over the years has changed many of our grassy margins. Regular mowing especially when the clippings are not removed leads to soil enrichment which impacts upon the vegetative communities present, tending to become more mesotrophic and dominated by coarse grasses. This enrichment makes more Nitrogen and Phosphates available to the vegetation which responds accordingly favouring the ranker grasses. To get back to the desirable calcareous flora those nutrients must be stripped from the soil; Nitrogen dissipates quickly to the atmosphere or run-off, Phosphates can take years to diminish to an optimum level. Removing and disposing of the clippings will prevent the nutrient load being reinforced, but it takes time to achieve the desired outcomes..
- Significant management interventions to remove vegetation should generally take place during the period from September to February to avoid nesting season.
- Invasive species. Wherever possible PTC will remove these from their estate. This includes, but not limited to: Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), Cotoneasters (*Cotoneaster* spp.); Buddleia (*Buddleia davidii*); Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*),
- Each site or location or building subject to this programme of biodiversity conservation and enhancement shall be supported by a Biodiversity Management Worksheet. This will comprise a

³¹ [Dorset Landscape Character Assessment - Limestone Peninsular](#). Dorset Council

Portland Biodiversity Strategy

Description and Status; Aerial Photograph and Map; Wildlife Value and Potential assessment; A Management Prescription, and a Management Sketch Map.

- It is recognised that strategies required to address climate change and those to address conservation and enhancement of biodiversity may deliver mutually beneficial outcomes of, for example, adaptation. A range of approaches should be considered on a case-by-case basis to realise optimum outcomes.

3.2 Action Plan

Biodiversity Action Plan - Year 1 (2024)			
Intervention	Resources	Timing	Measure of Success
Communicate adoption and implementation of Strategy once endorsed. Invite Community engagement and followers.	Clerk/Deputy Clerk Ful Council PTC Facebook Page	By February	Majority support for initiative; adverse reactions responded to, as appropriate, and resolved.
Assess the condition of Weston SNCI and implement DWT Management Plan	DWT PTC Green Team	Feb See Worksheet & DWT Management prescription.	Removal of rank vegetation and year on year condition improvement
- Explore options for extensive non-mowing initiative for both Grove Playing Field (Asset A) & Weston Playing Field (Asset B) Upper Level West (former SNCI) (both outside the DDB). - Agree Worksheets and implement - Resolve Communications	PTC Green Team Deputy Clerk	March Timings will be laid out in Site Worksheets	Agreement of worksheet and implementation. Resolve and deliver communications.
- Assess options for Ladymead (Asset C) and Easton Gardens (Asset D) and resolve a plan (both sites inside the DDB) - Produce Worksheet for implementation	PTC Garden Team	March Nov 24- Mar 25 (Preparation/Implementation)	Agreed Plan to enhance biodiversity on sites with proposals communicated to stakeholders and community.
Conduct Audit of all assets, Plans, Procedures and Council activities to identify and prioritise areas for intervention.	Services & Facilities Committee; Clerk/Deputy Clerk; Green Team	Sept	Prioritised site list for implementation in subsequent years
Establish Communications & engagement plan for Community Groups, Individuals and NGO's operating in the parish.	DWT/Butterfly Conservation/CCT/PB O/P4P/PSQT etc.	April	Agreed approach on participation in mutual outcomes to enhance biodiversity.
Review biodiversity awareness needs for PTC Staff and develop a plan.	Portland Association (and other expertise, as available) PTC Staff & Councillors	June - Aug	Increased awareness of Biodiversity objectives, need and opportunities.
Conduct Biodiversity Assessment of PCV and grounds for enhancements for nature	PTC Green Team Deputy Clerk	May	Agreement on what can be achieved and develop proposal for endorsement.
Marker for collaboration on	Full Council	Support to Tranche	Agreement on full

Portland Biodiversity Strategy

Portland Landscape Recovery Project*	Dorset Council/DEFRA	3 bidding round during 2024	participation iaw Project Plan
Review years outcomes and incorporate lessons learnt into future plans	Clerk/ Deputy Clerk Green Team Others as appropriate	During December	Agreed outcome

*The Tranche 2 Bid was unsuccessful. This project is retained in case of Tranche 3 bid.

Biodiversity Action Plan - Year 2 (2025)			
Intervention	Resources	Timing	MoS
Confirm Work Plans for the year and implement them.	Green Team	Jan	Agreed work plan and commitment
Establish partner priorities and potential for engagement and implementation	Clerk/Deputy Clerk Interested third-party partners	1st Quarter	Canvass potential partners Agreed list of potential partners
Agree approach and plan for Assets E [TBC] & F (TBC).	PTC Green Team Deputy Clerk	March Timings will be laid out in Site Worksheets	Agreement of worksheet and implementation. Resolve and deliver communications.
Agree approach and plan for Assets G [TBC] & H (TBC).	PTC Garden Team Deputy Clerk	March Timings will be laid out in Site Worksheet	Agreement of worksheet and implementation. Resolve and deliver communications.
Identify 'Walking with Nature' Routes with partners.	Identify Lead (ICA?) B-side; Portland 4 Planet; DWT; ICA/ PSQT.	1st Quarter (Links to Wildlife Trail Maps below)	Thre routes identified and described forntesting during summer
Develop "Portland Biodiversity Champion" scheme with Sponsor and champion levels and implement.	Full Council Town Clerk Community Partners	Any time	Agreed delivery of Biodiversity Champions/ Biodiversity Sponsors. Agreed first awards process.
Liaise with Dorset Council on establishing Roadside Nature Reserves (Verge Improvements)	Town Clerk /Deputy Clerk DC Countrysde Team (Crown Estate/Court Leet)	By April	Agreed Verges Agree approach to management Agree Communications.
SPARE			

Biodiversity Action Plan - Year 2 (2025)			
- Explore the production of Nest boxes (Swift/Bat) as a Community engagement initiative. - Explore options for locations and negotiate permissions.	The Man Shed (Production) B-Side (Design) DC/PTC/Crown Estate?	Anytime, but rolling programme of installations anticipated over plan period.	- Agreement to support design outcomes. - Agreement to manufacture. - Secured funding / donation of materials - Agreement on locations
Youth Council and Biodiversity engagement and participation plan.	ICA Youth Council Biodiversity WG Portland Association Other parties	Anytime	Agreed approach and programme of engagement based upon mutually desired outcomes.
Review years outcomes and incorporate lessons learnt into future plans	Clerk/ Deputy Clerk Green Team Others as appropriate	During December	Agreed outcome

Biodiversity Action Plan - Year 3 (2026)			
Intervention	Resources	Timing	MoS
Confirm Work Plans for year and implement them.	Deputy Clerk Green Team	Jan	Agreed work plan and commitment
Identify site for Community Nature Reserve (preferably one each for Tophill & Underhill).	Work with all partners to identify potential site for development as an accessible Community Nature Space	Any time	Site identified Plan and funding stream identified and agreed
Agree approach and plan for Assets I [TBC] & J (TBC).	PTC Green Team Deputy Clerk	March Timings will be laid out in Site Worksheets	Agreement of worksheet and implementation. Resolve and deliver communications.
Agree approach and plan for Assets K [TBC] & L (TBC).	PTC Garden Team Deputy Clerk	March Timings will be laid out in Site Worksheet	Agreement of worksheet and implementation. Resolve and deliver communications.
Establish Community Spaces (Parklets)/Living columns for urban space improvements.	Deputy Clerk Green Team DC Highways	Any time	Sites identified Funding secured Trial site plans agreed

Portland Biodiversity Strategy

Biodiversity Action Plan - Year 3 (2026)			
Develop a wildlife trail map(s) (cf Tourist Map) to promote the island's biodiversity.	Identify Lead (ICA) B-side; Portland 4 Planet; DWT; BC	4th Quarter Delivery for 2026 season	Outline project timescales and funding. Agree routes and draft map inputs.
Develop "User Guide" for Portland in conjunction with Natural England & interested Landowners.	Clerk/Deputy Clerk Natural England Partners	Any Time	Agreement on Communications and guide drafted. Communications and delivery
Liaise with Portland Hedgehog Group to identify locations for Hedgehog Boxes/ Hedgehog Routes. Provide guidance and establish an implementation programme.	Community Led (PTC supported) Interested Parties The Man Shed Sponsors	Summer	Sites identified Means of production and implementation resolved Plan agreed.
Review impact of BNG implementation and LNRS impacts on the Island. Provide feedback/Lobby for action as appropriate.	Planning & Highways Advisory Committee Led review to identify shortcomings/ improvements	Quarter 4	Agreed observations and recommendations delivered to DC as LPA.
Review years outcomes and incorporate lessons learnt into future plans	Clerk/ Deputy Clerk Green Team Others as appropriate	During December	Agreed outcome

Biodiversity Action Plan - Year 4 (2027)			
Intervention	Resources	Timing	MoS
Confirm Work Plans for year and implement	Green Team	Jan	Agreed work plan and commitment
Establish SNCI on a site Owned /occupied by PTC with advice from DWT.	Biodiversity WG Green Team	Any time	Designation of sit under PTC ownership.
Agree approach and plan for Assets M	PTC Green Team	March Timings will be laid out	Agreement of worksheet and implementation.

Biodiversity Action Plan - Year 4 (2027)			
[TBC] & N (TBC).	Deputy Clerk	in Site Worksheets	Resolve and deliver communications.
Agree approach and plan for Assets M [TBC] & N (TBC).	PTC Garden Team Deputy Clerk	March Timings will be laid out in Site Worksheet	Agreement of worksheet and implementation. Resolve and deliver communications.
Hold a Community competition inviting ideas for a community initiative and develop an implementation plan for successful idea.	Community Lead (ICA)	Any time	Winning idea agreed and developed for implementation.
SPARE			
Promote Portland as a 'Wild Portland' destination for a low impact, greener tourism offering, in conjunction with PBO/C&FNR and DWT.	Community Led (PTC sponsored) PBO/C&FNR and DWT	Any time	Agreed output and communications
Introduce Wildlife for Allotments and Gardens support to the island, providing/ sharing advice across the community.	Services & Facilities Committee Allotment Holders Gardening groups	Any time	Agree approach to sharing ideas and best practice.
Establish a Conservation Volunteers Group for the island (engaging Community Payback and associated/similar schemes). Identify Equipment/Location/Training Need. Explore sponsorship.	PTC enabled/ Community enabled (ICA) Interested parties	Any time	Group formed and established.
Review years outcomes and	Clerk/ Deputy Clerk Green Team	During December	Agreed outcome

Biodiversity Action Plan - Year 4 (2027)			
incorporate lessons learnt into future plans	Others as appropriate		

Biodiversity Action Plan - Year 5 (2028)			
Intervention	Resources	Timing	MoS
Confirm Work Plans for year and implement	Green Team	Jan	Agreed work plan and commitment
Hold competition for Wildlife Garden (sponsored) Awards (in conjunction with DWT).	Council led/ Community groups engaged; DWT. Community judges	During period Jun to Sept	Competition held. Awards presented Positive publicity.
Agree approach and plan for Assets Q [TBC] & R (TBC).	PTC Green Team Deputy Clerk	March Timings will be laid out in Site Worksheets	Agreement of worksheet and implementation. Resolve and deliver communications.
Agree approach and plan for Assets S [TBC] & T (TBC).	PTC Garden Team Deputy Clerk	March Timings will be laid out in Site Worksheet	Agreement of worksheet and implementation. Resolve and deliver communications.
Review outcomes related to Assets, Plans, Procedures and Council activities to identify areas of improvement.	Those engaged during plan period.	Quarter 4	Areas for improvement identified and agreed
Hold a Community Event to celebrate achievements and progress over the plan period.	Community led (ICA/B-side) All stakeholder and interested parties.	September (potentially part of B-side celebrations)	Event plan agreed and implemented
SPARE			
Liaise with local businesses to support Wildlife Improvements in the services/products they provide.	Community Led/PTC sponsored. Engage interested businesses	Any time	Successful engagement and examples of positive outcomes.

Biodiversity Action Plan - Year 5 (2028)			
Review years outcomes and incorporate lessons learnt into future plans	Clerk/ Deputy Clerk Green Team Others as appropriate	During December	Agreed outcome
Conduct 5 Year Review and publicise.	Clerk/Deputy Clerk Green Team The Portland Association	During December	Agree and publish review outcome Agree and publish Five year plan (2029-34)

Glossary

‘Advocate’	‘Acting to represent the interests of all citizens’ Local Leadership Framework for Councillors. LGA
Amenity Grassland	Comprises intensively managed and regularly mown grasslands, typical of lawns, playing fields, and many urban ‘savannah’ parks, in which Perennial Rye-grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>), with or without White Clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>), often predominates. Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey (2016 revision). JNCC
Autogenic Engineer	An organism with the capability to change its environment through their own physical structure. Trees, for example, provide habitats for other organisms and create shade from their canopy. ANother example is Beavers, which build dams which change the environment within which they exist. Wilkinson, DM. 2021. Ecology and Natural History. Collins, London.
Axiophyte	A “worthy plant” - the 40% or so of species that arouse interest and praise from botanists when they are seen. They are indicators of habitat that is considered important for conservation, such as ancient woodlands, clear water and species-rich meadows. Botanical Society of the British Isles
Biodiversity (or Biological Diversity)	The variety of life on Earth and the natural patterns it forms. The biodiversity seen today is the result of 4.5 billion years of evolution and, increasingly, of human influence as well. It forms the web of life, of which humans are integral and upon which people and the planet so fully depend. United Nations Environment Programme
‘catalyst’	Enabling citizens to do things for themselves, having new conversations about what is now possible’ Local Leadership Framework for Councillors. LGA
Ecosystem Services	Defined as services provided by the natural environment that benefit people. These are normally described in terms of Provisioning Services (food, fibre and water supply), Regulating Services (water purification, air quality maintenance and climate regulation), and Cultural Services (inspiration, education and wellbeing).. An Introductory Guide to Valuing Ecosystems Services (HM Gov)
Existing Ecological Networks	all known sites of wildlife importance, together with habitats that may be widespread but are nevertheless valuable for wildlife as part of the ecological function of the landscape, for dispersal (termed corridors and stepping stones) or to cushion wildlife sites from harm (termed buffers). Dorset Local Nature Partnership
Geodiversity	The variety of the geological and physical elements of nature, such as minerals, rocks, soils, fossils and landforms, and active geological and geomorphological processes. IUCN

Green Infrastructure	a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity. National Planning Policy Framework, 2021
Higher Potential Ecological Networks	areas which are not currently of high nature value but have the greatest potential to be managed or enhanced to play a valuable role in future. This could be because of their location offering the greatest opportunity for large-scale restoration or connectivity with existing sites, or because they already hold some wildlife value. Dorset Local Nature Partnership
Meadow	Tracts of land that are left unmown throughout the summer, and then mown to produce a hay crop for fodder. (The land is often grazed after mowing.
Neophyte	A plant species which is not native to a geographical region and was introduced in recent history. (In the case of Sycamore it is thought to have been introduced to Britain in 1578) (Acer pseudoplatanus L. in BSBI Online Plant Atlas 2020, eds P.A. Stroh, T. A. Humphrey, R.J. Burkmar, O.L. Pescott, D.B. Roy, & K.J. Walker. [Accessed 27/10/2023])
‘orchestrator’	‘Helping broker relationships, working with partners and develop new connections’ Local Leadership Framework for Councillors, LGA.
Pasture	Enclosed (mostly) tracts of land used for grazing by domestic animals.
Plagioclimax	Where a habitat is maintained in a state of suspended succession through human intervention controlling the amount of disturbance the habitat receives. (Examples of disturbance include grazing by domesticated, and sometimes wild animals or the cutting down of vegetation).
Pollinators	Pollination is the means by which pollen is transferred from the male parts of a plant (anthers) to the female parts (stigma) thereby enabling fertilisation. Around 87% of wild plants and around 70% of our fruit, vegetables and other crops rely on insects and other animals (pollinators) to assist in this. Habitat Management & Creation for Pollinators. Nowakowski, M & Pywell, R. (2016) Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
‘sensemaker’	Translating a shift in the role of public services and the relationship between institutions and the public’ Local Leadership Framework for Councillors, LGA
‘Steward of place’	‘Working across the local area in partnership with others’. Local Leadership Framework for Councillors, LGA
Succession (Successional processes)	Succession refers to the sequence of changes in vegetation that occurs in response to disturbance and often leads to the re-establishment of the vegetation that existed before the disturbance. If the disturbed site has retained its soil and material capable of regeneration (Propagules)

	this leads to secondary succession, which can occur relatively rapidly (c.f. sites where disturbance has removed the soil and any material necessary for regrowth which must be replaced through the regenerative processes of primary succession).
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Annex A: PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL - ASSET LIST

Version: Bio-diversity Working Group 19/09/2023

LAND & BUILDINGS - FREEHOLD

Asset Number (If available)	Title Number	Asset Description	Asset Type	Address	Lease Expiry
N/A		Portland Community Venue (Formerly Brackenbury Infants School)	Community Venue	Three Yards Close Portland Dorset DT5 1JN	N/A

LAND & BUILDINGS - LEASEHOLD

Asset Number (If available)	Title Number	Asset Description	Asset Type	Address	Lease Expiry
Betterment Properties	N/A	Car Park at Church Ope	Car Park	Church Ope Portland	
Betterment Properties	N/A	Land at Haylands Portland - Open Green Space	Public Open Space	Haylands Portland	May-25
Dorset Council		Playing Field at the Former Royal Manor School Site	Playing field Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and recreational area	Weston Road, Portland, DT5 2RS	31-Aug-52

LAND & BUILDINGS - APPROVED FOR ASSET TRANSFER (MOU)

Asset Number (If available)	Title Number	Asset Description	Asset Type	Address	Lease Expiry
Under Lease		Allotment The Grove	Allotment	Grove Portland	N/A
	DT440381	Community Garden	Garden	Rear of 57-93 Verne Common Road	N/A
	DT323183	Easton Car Park	Car Park	Easton Portland	N/A
	DT326533	Fortuneswell Car Park	Car Park	Fortuneswell Portland	N/A
	DT326993	Hambro Car Park	Car Park	Fortuneswell Portland	N/A
	DT303955	Lord Clyde Car Park	Car Park	Chiswell Portland	N/A

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Salisbury Diocesan		Strangers Cemetery	Cemeteries	Victory Road Portland	N/A
		Land adjoining Bloomfield Terrace, Park Road & Park Estate Road	Land Vacant	Bloomfield Terrace	N/A
	DT329290	Playground - Land at the rear of 19-39 Cheyne Close, adjacent 68 Reap Lane & Adjacent 49 Sweet Hill Lane	Play Areas, Open Space & Community Use	Reap Lane Cheyne Close Portland	N/A
	DT285307	Grangecroft Road, Play Area	Play Areas, Open Space & Community Use	Grangecroft Road Portland	N/A
	DT261575	Fortuneswell Play Area	Play Areas, Open Space & Community Use	Hambro Road Portland	N/A
Crown Estates		Church Lane, Southwell, Play Area	Play Areas, Open Space & Community Use	Church Lane Portland	N/A
	DT315041	Sweet Hill Lane, Play Area & Recreational Ground	Play Areas, Open Space & Community Use	Sweet Hill Lane Portland	N/A
	DT331114	West Weares Play (MUGA) Area	Play Areas, Open Space & Community Use	West Weares Portland	N/A
	DT444449	Officers Field	Play Areas, Open Space & Community Use	Officers Field Portland	N/A
	DT122719 DT129096	Grove Road Recreation Ground	Sports Facilities	Grove Road Portland	N/A
Crown Estates		Victoria Gardens (including Bowls Pavilion, former mortuary, tennis courts, and gardeners compound - accommodation, with play equipment listed separately).	Parks & Gardens	Fortuneswell Portland	N/A
Crown Estates		Easton Gardens, Portland (Including Clock, and Monkey hut with play equipment and toilet listed separately)	Parks & Gardens	Easton Portland	N/A
Crown Estates		Easton Gardens, Public Toilets	Public Conveniences	Easton Portland	N/A
	DT330936	Fortuneswell Toilets	Public Conveniences	Fortuneswell Portland	N/A
Crown Estates		Portland Bill Toilets	Public Conveniences	Portland Bill Portland	N/A
		Yates Road Toilets	Public Conveniences	Yates Road Portland	N/A

LAND & BUILDINGS - TO BE CONSIDERED FOR DC ASSET TRANSFER

Asset Number	Title Number	Asset Description	Asset Type	Address	Lease Expiry
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Portland Biodiversity Strategy

(If available)					
	DT303955	Paracademy	Sports Facilities	Beach Road Portland	N/A
	DT327998	Portland Cemetery	Cemeteries	Weston Road Portland	N/A
	DT303955	Fishermens Hut to the rear of 119 Chiswell	Land Vacant	119 Chiswell Portland	N/A
	DT70187	Fishing Hut to rear of Dolphin Cottage, 131 Brandy Row, Chiswell	Land Vacant	131 Brandy Row, Chiswell, Portland	N/A
	DT300904	Land to the front of 41 Chiswell, Portland	Land Vacant	41 Chiswell, Portland	N/A
	DT215912	Land between 27 & 30 Artist Row	Land Vacant	27 & 30 Artist Row Portland	N/A
	DT92660	Land adjacent 9-11 Rufus Way, 21 Rufus Way & 18-40 Rufus Way	Land Vacant	Rufus Weay Portland	N/A
	DT123931	Land between 82 & 84 Croft Road	Land Vacant	Croft Road Portland	N/A
	DT327696	Land adjacent to 22 & 23 Fancy's Close	Land Vacant	Fancy's Close Portland	N/A
	DT326167	Car Parking Spaces at Bakers Ground	Land Vacant	Bakers Ground Portland	N/A
	DT303955	Car Parking Spaces 131 & 132A Chiswell	Land Vacant	Chiswell Portland	N/A
	DT334557 DT344764 DT440381	Land adjacent Yeates Road, Priory Road, and New Ground including Cenotaph, Olympic Rings and HMS Sidon War Memorial	Land Vacant	Yates Road, Priory Road & New Ground Portland	N/A
	DT303955	Portland Skate Park	Play Areas, Open Space & Community Use	Portland Beach Road	N/A

Annex B: Site Biodiversity Worksheets

Asset ID	Description	Location
A	Grove Playing Field	Grove Road (SY694721)
B	Weston Playing Field	Weston Road (SY684716)
C	Ladymead Gardens	Park Estate Road (SY690717)
D	Easton Gardens	Easton Square (SY691718)
E	(TBC)	
F	(TBC)	
G	(TBC)	
H	(TBC)	
I	(TBC)	
J	(TBC)	
K	(TBC)	
L	(TBC)	
M	(TBC)	
N	(TBC)	
O	(TBC)	
P	(TBC)	
Q	(TBC)	
R	(TBC)	
S	(TBC)	
T	(TBC)	