

Agenda Item 20:

Motions submitted for debate at the Council meeting on 20 July 2023

(a) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Culver:

This council **notes**:

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.

The explicit and commendable reference to 'biodiversity' in the relevant portfolio holder's job title.

Many local authorities have declared an ecological emergency as well as a climate emergency.

This council's officers have assisted wildlife by reducing verge cutting, planting wildflowers and supporting the Lockdown Woods project.

The Environment Act includes an obligation for local authorities to publish a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

This council's sole ecologist left in June.

We can all help to protect and restore the natural world and any positive action, large or small, should be encouraged.

The draft Local Plan is being revisited by the current council administration.

This council **resolves**:

To recognise the precarious state of the natural world by declaring an ecological emergency.

To recruit a new ecologist urgently, and ideally more than one, to ensure a.) planning applications are examined by a trained ecologist and b.) the council has an appropriate expert who can liaise with Windsor and Maidenhead Council to fulfil the collective responsibility of local authorities in Berkshire to create a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Work with residents and campaign groups to encourage action for nature, by promoting initiatives like #NoMowMay, the planting of trees, the installation of bird boxes, the creation of hedgehog highways, and so on, using council communication channels and public education opportunities.

Undertake the green infrastructure work promised under the current Local Plan 2012-2026 including mapping and categorisation of all public open spaces to form the basis of a current state assessment of all council managed lands.