

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.