

# Integrating Nature Conservation into the Parish Planning Process

## Initial Guidance for Parishes

The natural environment is what makes each rural, coastal and moorland locality 'special'. It contributes to our spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing. It is often the reason we live where we do.

The natural environment is degrading due to development pressures, changes in farming methods, increased leisure use and climate change. We need to conserve and promote the biodiversity of our natural environment; not only for ourselves but for future generations.

*When planning your community's future remember that the natural environment is equally, if not more important, than the built environment*

Your Parish Council has a duty to conserve biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006. Help them fulfil this responsibility.

- Know what resources exist in your area, map and describe them.
- What are the threats?
- Can you influence such threats?

### Use your Parish Plan to:

- Create a vision for the biodiversity of your parish.
- Set aims for biodiversity conservation.
- Decide on actions and objectives to achieve your aims.
- Devise an action plan to prioritise your actions and objectives.

Use the Parish Planning process to ask questions about the natural environment, find out about residents attitudes, concerns and uses. Set up working groups to look at specific issues.

Use a Parish Conservation Plan Toolkit to guide you through the process of securing the sustainability of your natural environment.

If you would like to know more about biodiversity and nature conservation, please call Martin Rich, Community Projects Officer on 01392 383292 or email [martin@devonrcc.org.uk](mailto:martin@devonrcc.org.uk)