

SAVE YOUR SITE!

What to do if development threatens your local wildlife patch



**Dorset
Wildlife Trust**

Know your Local Plan

- This sets the local policy and strategy for development in each District/Borough and can be found on council websites for [Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole](#) (BCP) and [Dorset Council](#), local reference libraries or at council planning departments. The plan shows which areas are earmarked for future development and which the Council wants to protect for wildlife or open space. Policies for all aspects of development are listed - if you can show that a specific proposal conflicts with the council's own planning policies this can help your case.
- If a site is earmarked for development in the Local Plan it will be much more difficult to stop development happening, though you may be able to influence the layout so that wildlife features are retained.
- Both [Dorset Council](#) and [BCP Council](#) are currently in the process of developing new Local Plans which will set local planning policy until 2038. Keep an eye on their websites and sign up for updates if you want to have your say to help this process. Make sure you are aware of the timetable and look at any new plan which is drafted to check what is proposed and make your comments using the procedure set by the Council.

Make sure the wildlife value of sites is known and counted

- Make sure any wildlife species you know of are not just known by the community but are accurately recorded and the records submitted to Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC). See [DERC's](#) website for details of how to do this.

- This data is made available for Local Authorities and can be requested by developers to inform the application as well as providing evidence to support comments or objections concerning impacts on wildlife.

Assessment of impacts to biodiversity

- Check the details of the planning application online - if there is a planning notice on site take down the reference number and look it up on the websites for [BCP Council](#) or [Dorset Council](#). You will be able to view what's planned and review any documents such as ecological surveys that have been submitted and comments made by other people.
- For any site in the [Dorset Council](#) area which is 0.1ha or greater in size, or any site where there are known protected species or important habitats/habitat features, a biodiversity appraisal and approved Biodiversity Mitigation Plan are required. More details of what is required are on the Dorset Council website. If an ecological report has not been submitted and you think one should be done, contact the Local Planning Authority to tell them.
- Even if you know of no protected species, let the Council know how much you value the site's wildlife. If you have recorded a list of species, such as birds, this will help and also proves your long-term interest.
- If there are specific features of the site which are especially important such as an old tree, hedges or a pond, ask for these to be retained and managed for wildlife as part of the development.

take ACTION
#wilderdorset



dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 200222

What you can do

- Submit a response to the planning application. This can be in the form of a letter or a comment submitted through the online planning portal. Submitting letters as attachments through the online portal ensures they are processed and added to the application documents quickly.
- Talk to other local residents and get as many people involved as possible. Ask your neighbours to comment. Individually written letters or online comments are more effective than petitions.
- Contact your local councillors for the district, ward, parish or town and provide them with a copy of your response - they can give useful advice, especially if they are on the planning committee, and perhaps help and support. Contact your MP to ask for their support.
- Attend the relevant planning committee meeting - in the Dorset Council area, planning committees are divided into [Eastern, Northern and Western & Southern areas](#). In BCP there is [one planning committee](#) which covers the whole council area.
- Contact the local media - if a whole group of residents are objecting the local press will certainly give you coverage and may bring in more support.

Protected Sites

- If the site has a specific wildlife protection such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), Local Geological Site (LGS) or green corridor, conservation organisations may be objecting too. [Get in touch](#) - we don't always know that a new development has been proposed.

Protected Species

- Wildlife cannot survive just by living in the few nature reserves or protected sites that there are. Many legally protected species such as bats, badgers, dormice or reptiles occur outside these sites. Local Authorities have policies to conserve protected species - but planners don't always know they are there, so it may be helpful to remind them

that protected species are what's called a 'material consideration' when deciding on an application.

- The presence of a protected species does not always mean an application has to be refused - but measures to avoid harm to the population or conserve their habitat should be included, which may make for a more wildlife-friendly development.
- If protected species are present on the site, the Local Authority needs to advise the developer to commission a survey by a professional ecologist.
- More information about some protected species, and some other issues including invasive species, is available on the [Dorset Council](#) website.

If you think that wildlife laws might have been broken

- If work is being carried out on site that you think is illegal, contact the police (use 101 or [report it online](#) rather than 999 unless you are witnessing a crime in progress). Ask to speak to a Wildlife Crime Officer if possible within the [Rural Crime Team](#), but any police officer can attend a wildlife crime if a Wildlife Crime Officer is not available.

Further Information

- Use our [brief guide](#) to writing a response to a planning application.
- Many of the links in this document give further advice and help, particularly the Dorset Council pages on [species and habitats](#) and [biodiversity appraisal](#).
- The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) runs a website with a whole range of useful information and advice at [www.planninghelp.org.uk](#).
- You can also find more information about how the [Wildlife Trusts](#) are involved in influencing planning at a national level and what we do here at [Dorset Wildlife Trust](#).

