

Georgeham Parish Environmental Policy 21 April 2026

This document sets out aspirations of Georgeham Parish Council (GPC) with regard to the environment of the parish.

Of primary concern are the assets owned by the Parish Council itself which include, in Georgeham, the Glebefield and Green, the Recreation Ground and Cemetery, and, in Croyde, the Playpark. The Georgeham Neighbourhood Plan (GNP), adopted January 2022, specified Designated Green Spaces which includes these assets plus Croyde Village Green and the Rabbit Field owned by John Fowler. GPC also takes responsibility for the maintenance of the Georgeham Churchyard. In addition the GPC Environmental Policy would hope to be applicable and relevant in the wider context of the whole parish: to farmland, hedges, private gardens, footpaths, streams, dunes, cliffs etc.

The main matters currently exercising the world are:

- Biodiversity: the reduction in numbers and abundance of species other than humans
- Landscape and seascape: the appearance of the coast and countryside as perceived and appreciated by humans, and as habitats for other species
- Climate resilience: the ability of the ecosystems and populations in the parish to withstand the changes predicted to occur
- Amenity: the enjoyment of the area by its inhabitants and visitors
- Cultural: appreciation of the manifestations of human achievement within the parish.

In this parish GPC must attempt to aspire to a balanced outcome for all. The strengths and weaknesses of, opportunities for, and threats to all species within the parish are relevant and yet difficult to quantify. Nevertheless GPC must now adhere to adopted GNP policies and offers the following supplementary statement of GPC environmental policies/objectives:

Biodiversity.

To maintain and enhance the numbers of species and their abundance.

To conserve and increase the availability of habitats such as the lengths of ancient hedge in the parish and within the designated wildlife sites.

To control invasive species.

To respond to planning applications with biodiversity implications appropriately.

(see also GNP policies BE3, BE8, N2 and N3)

Landscape and seascape.

To record, and promote appreciation of, visual features valued by the residents and visitors.

To respond to planning applications with landscape and seascape aspects robustly.

(see also GNP policies BE1, BE3, BE5, H5, N1, N3, ED2 and ED4)

Climate resilience.

To foster awareness of forthcoming climate challenges within the parish.

To promote frugal use of energy and uptake of energy saving initiatives.

To encourage small scale generation when considering planning applications but subject to landscape/seascape considerations.

(see also GNP policies SC3, N4)

Amenity and Culture.

To manage parish-owned land for biodiversity gain whilst preserving amenity use.

To analyse and respond to the concerns of residents and visitors about the balance of use of these.

To ensure management of roadside vegetation for visibility/convenience of walkers, cyclists etc.

To encourage interpretation and appreciation of the history of buildings and landscape in the parish.

To protect the conservation areas within the villages and hamlets.

(see also GNP policies SC1, SCE4, N2 and N3)

As much of the parish lies within the North Devon Coast AONB, the AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 is relevant and all 30 of its current policies seem to apply, see below

Summary of Objectives and Policies

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| <p>Landscape and Seascape To conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special landscapes of the AONB</p> <p>A1 Ensure that the landscape character, natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB are conserved, enhanced and fully respected in all decisions affecting the Area A2 Preserve the dark skies, peace and tranquillity of the AONB A3 Ensure developments both onshore and offshore, take account of open views, wilderness and maritime connections A4 Recommend that no development should be permitted inside or outside the AONB that would harm the natural beauty, character or special qualities of the AONB A5 Ensure developments comply with the North Devon Landscape and Seascape Character Assessments</p> | <p>Environmental Quality and Climate Change To promote the sustainable management of natural resources and of climate change impacts</p> <p>D1 Increase understanding, adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts on coastal landscapes and communities D2 Contribute to marine planning to conserve and enhance seascape quality, coastal species and habitats D3 Improve inland, coastal and bathing water quality through catchment management, local flood management and litter management</p> <p>(Note: former 'Coast' objective and policies incorporated into this section and others)</p> | <p>Sustainable Rural and Visitor Economy To promote sustainable development within the AONB that is consistent with the designation</p> <p>G1 Take account of the value of the natural environment in economic development decisions using the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services approach G2 Support partners to develop sustainable tourism opportunities that promote the special qualities of the AONB, without damaging protected sites and species</p> |
| <p>Biodiversity and Geodiversity To conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of the AONB, in terrestrial, aquatic and marine habitats</p> <p>B1 Support and promote approaches to conserve and enhance habitats and species, increase wildlife richness and ensure the resilience of the landscape B2 Identify and address actual and potential impacts on biodiversity from invasive species, disease and climate change B3 Encourage actions to enhance, maintain and promote the geodiversity of the AONB through appropriate site management and public awareness</p> <p>(Note: former 'Geodiversity' objective and policies (C1-3) incorporated into this section)</p> | <p>Planning, Development and Infrastructure To ensure the planning process and infrastructure development protects and enhances the designated AONB and its special qualities</p> <p>I1 Provide planning advice and policy guidance to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the designated AONB I2 Promote and maintain the local distinctiveness and historic character of the built environment I3 Support affordable housing proposals to meet local housing needs, that take full account of the AONB designation I4 Conserve and enhance the coast and marine environment in relation to onshore and offshore developments I5 Support appropriate infrastructure, signage and transport networks in the AONB, for the benefit of local and visiting communities I6 Ensure that new development delivers suitable biodiversity net gain</p> | <p>Access, Health and Wellbeing To ensure sustainable access to the AONB for the benefit of the health and wellbeing of local people and visitors, consistent with the designation</p> <p>H1 Work with partners and landowners to develop improved access to and interpretation of the natural environment H2 Support new opportunities and reduce barriers to improve the health and wellbeing of local people and visitors</p> |
| <p>Historic Environment and Culture To conserve, enhance and understand the historic and cultural features of the AONB</p> <p>E1 Support actions to conserve and enhance the historic and cultural features of the AONB, and their setting E2 Develop approaches to increase understanding of local heritage and culture</p> | <p>Farming and Land Management To promote farming, food production and land management practices that conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB</p> <p>F1 Support partners to deliver sustainable and exemplar land management, forestry and farming practices in keeping with the AONB designation F2 Work with landowners and managers to maintain landscape features such as hedge-banks and woodlands F3 Support approaches to enhance the Natural Capital within the AONB including carbon storage, clean water, clean air, timber, renewable energy and food, consistent with the designation</p> | <p>Community Action, Learning and Understanding To support more people to learn about, understand and take action to conserve the AONB</p> <p>J1 Raise awareness and understanding of the AONB, its special qualities, natural and cultural heritage J2 Develop opportunities for people to volunteer and gain appropriate skills and knowledge to deliver AONB policies J3 Support the provision of community facilities and services to improve the quality of life and sustainability of rural and coastal communities J4 Support communities and businesses to reduce carbon emissions from the designated AONB so long as they are complementary to the special qualities of the AONB</p> |