

BSBI Policy on nature conservation

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Approved by & date	Board of Trustees, August 2020
Next review date	September 2023 (3 year review interval)

Position Statement

BSBI's mission is to advance the study, understanding and enjoyment of wild plants and support their conservation in Britain and Ireland.

Nature conservation is the protection of plants, animals and habitats (often collectively termed biodiversity) from the damaging effects of human activity.

Among the main causes of biodiversity loss are climate change, land use change, intensification of land use including agriculture, hydrology change, nitrogen deposition and other pollutants, urbanisation, and human footfall.

Nature conservation projects can have a key role to play in restoring biodiversity, maintaining functioning and resilient ecosystems, and enhancing the environment. Enjoying nature and wildlife is valuable for human health; and it is essential to inspire everyone about the importance of plant biodiversity through public engagement and education.

BSBI recognises that, whilst primary responsibility for nature conservation policy and action rests with other organisations, the Society supports and encourages collaborative working at policy, strategic and tactical levels in the interests of nature conservation.

The primary role and strength of the BSBI is in its knowledge of the past and present distribution of plants and their ecology, encapsulated in data on plant distributions, and in the quality of the scientific analysis and interpretation of these data.

These temporal data on plant distribution are the collective achievement of an organised network of skilled voluntary recorders throughout Britain and Ireland who collate, verify and ensure the high quality of plant records held on the BSBI database.

BSBI wishes to use its unrivalled capabilities and the skills and enthusiasms of its membership to underpin the conservation of the British and Irish Flora and to contribute to local action to turn ambition into achievement.

Policy Objectives

1. Consultations and Government policy

Recognising that BSBI's resources are constrained and will continue to focus predominantly on our scientific and learning activities we will respond on limited occasions as an organisation to issues affecting plant populations in the circumstances listed below. The Trustees and the President in collaboration with Country Committees and senior staff will agree the cases that are taken forward at organisational level.

- take an active role in government consultations relevant to the British and Irish flora and their conservation
- respond as BSBI via either President, Board member, County Committee or senior Staff member as appropriate to major consultations with implications for national policy or that will set a legal precedent which will affect plant populations, habitats and their conservation
- influence policy on key issues of plant conservation through active engagement with Plant Link UK (PLINK UK), Plant Link Scotland, Plant Link Cymru, and conservation bodies in Ireland with an interest in plants and/or Plantlife
- submit evidence-based objections to planning applications that adversely affect legally protected habitats and plant species when an appropriate case is drawn to our notice
- enthuse members and the wider public through our education and outreach work about the importance of a world in which plants thrive and are valued
- provide guidance to vice county recorders and members when they wish to respond independently to local issues
- signpost 'off-the-shelf' best practice guidance and minimum expected standards for planners and developers, and take a proactive role in making BSBI data available to inform local planning applications.

2. Practical Conservation

Recognising that BSBI is not a body owning or managing land and that its resources are constrained it nevertheless recognises that its members will support plant conservation and will want to see some commitment to practical measures to safeguard plant populations. BSBI's role in this will be limited to the following:

- promote best practice examples of plant conservation
- promote evidence-based plant conservation projects
- provide high quality data in support of plant conservation on the understanding that use by third parties will be acknowledged and used in good faith
- collaborate with Government Agencies, NGOs, landowners and managers, conservation charities, the private sector, and academia in plant conservation and research
- continue to support vascular plant Red List initiatives
- support initiatives and projects that deliver on country, national and international targets for conservation
- identify sites of national and local importance for individual plant species or communities.