

## **Foreword**

Diverse rural and urban landscapes, their integral habitats and wildlife, still make North Hertfordshire a very special place in which to live and work. However we should not become complacent, for all is not well. Many changes, some quite dramatic and others very subtle, continue to degrade local habitats, reduce the diversity of wildlife and threaten the qualities of our own surroundings.

The importance that your Council places upon the environment that we share, not least with many important facets of wildlife that indicate its health, is clearly outlined within its corporate vision. Its priorities promote conservation of our historic towns and rural settlements together with protection of the countryside.

In the wake of international and national concerns about environmental degradations together with losses in bio-diversity, including the tenet to 'think globally, act locally', the Council initiated measures to effect positive local conservation for both habitats and species. Detailed studies and correlation of holdings of data have facilitated a timely overview that elucidates the ranges and status of the District's wildlife and wild places, and have facilitated production of this, ~~own~~<sup>our</sup> very own Local Bio-diversity Action Plan.

With policies and evolving programmes towards effective conservation of the environment we share, the North Hertfordshire Bio-diversity Action Plan meets criteria of the Council's vision and priorities. However, these can only be really workable if each and everyone of us share in the many challenges and commitments required to ensure appropriate care for our surroundings, whether it be in town or countryside.

Your Council will lead these challenges but there will be opportunities for all of us to be involved, not least toward education at all levels, joining partnerships and actively supporting the care that our urban and rural countryside needs and deserves.

**Local Actions make Global Changes**

**Leader of North Hertfordshire District Council**

**Councillor F. J. Smith**