

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council
Climate and Environmental Policy

Background

The Town Council recognises that it must act on the causes and impacts of global heating and the biodiversity crisis, accepts that it needs to work with the community to develop and implement actions that are effective and achievable in reducing and mitigating the environmental and ecological effects of global heating. A Climate and Ecological Emergency Advisory Group has been set up to develop the strategy in partnership with the community and to support individuals to take actions to make positive change, highlight what organisations can do (behaviour modelled by the Town Council) and what business partners, schools and community groups can do to influence Wiltshire Council and central government.

Our Aim

Our aims are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as we can and to offset those that cannot be reduced as much as possible (becoming carbon zero), reduce our environmental impacts and increase nature on Council owned land.

We aim to help make Royal Wootton Bassett carbon zero by 2030 and to reverse the decline in nature and to reduce plastic and waste and move to a more circular economy meaning we prioritise repair and reuse.

Policy

The Council will communicate and engage with residents and businesses about the importance of becoming a carbon neutral Council and town. We will support the development of a local green economy by promoting and using renewable energy, reusing and recycling as much as possible, using more sustainable products and services. We will keep abreast of the environmental regulations that apply to our business and ensure that our legal obligations are met. We will operate suitable procedures and systems to evaluate and reduce our environmental impacts. We will focus our resources on reducing our biggest climate and ecological impacts. We will reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

The Council will communicate this policy to staff and Members through training, team meetings, work planning and will encourage suggestions of ways to reduce the environmental impact. We will minimise the amount of commercial waste being produced per employee, and waste going to landfill, and encourage environmentally friendly ways of working through the processes we undertake and the projects we support to improve our environment, such those listed below:

1. Energy & Water

Statement: Maximise energy efficiency using low-energy bulbs and insulation as well as ensuring machinery, electrical appliances and lights are turned off when not in use. Find ways to reduce water consumption. Communicate with residents about how they can reduce their energy and water consumption. Use renewable energy sources and low emission machinery and equipment; where appropriate. Engage and work with organisations and residents regarding energy efficiency, carbon emissions and water consumption.

Actions:

- a. Low energy bulbs to be purchased as and when they are due for replacement.
- b. Use the water from natural sources, such as the lake, for watering trees and flowerbeds around the town.
- c. Turn off machinery, electrical appliances, and lights when not in use.
- d. Ensure energy consumption and energy efficiency ratings are considered when purchasing new electrical appliances and where appropriate the products have an energy saving mode.
- e. Carry out energy audits of all Town Council premises and take appropriate action such as improving insulation and energy efficiency measures.
- f. Carry out audits of all Council equipment and machinery and take appropriate action.
- g. Electric alternatives will be investigated when Council equipment/machinery is due for replacement.
- h. To look into installing water-saving devices in all Town Council premises to reduce water use.

2. Suppliers & Procurement

Statement: Source materials and services locally where practical and where they satisfy our environmental criteria. Ensure suppliers and contractors are aware of our environmental policy. Use recycled materials and avoid single-use plastics where appropriate.

Communicate and engage with residents about the benefits of using local products and services. Prioritise repair, refurbishment and reuse before considering procurement. Consider whether hire or lease would be feasible instead of procurement of new products.

Actions:

- a. Use local catering companies for Council events, such as Mayor making, and offer a plant-based alternatives at events.
- b. Use recycled paper and other stationery items in the Council office.
- c. Use local suppliers when renting equipment or machinery (such as barriers or diggers) or purchasing office supplies (such as headed paper or banners).
- d. Use local nurseries and suppliers for plants and associated horticultural supplies.
- e. Evaluate and select suppliers including environmental criteria (ask them to demonstrate how they are reducing the impacts of their products and services).
- f. Consider life cycle costs in decision making.
- g. Ensure sustainable principles are included in the Council's procurement policy and/or create a sustainable procurement policy.

3. Transport & Travel

Statement: Introduce measures to encourage cycling, walking and incentivise travel other than by private car. Look at replacing Council vehicles as and when required with suitable electric models.

Communicate with residents about alternative methods of travel; such as public transport, car sharing and support the development or an active travel network in the town.

Actions:

- a. Electric alternatives will be investigated when Council vehicles are due for replacement.
- b. As a statutory consultee, review relevant planning applications and request that they include provisions for suitable active travel infrastructure under Section 106/278 (contact Wiltshire Council).
- c. Encourage alternative methods of travel other than private car, through supporting the provision of an active travel network in the town and promoting public transport links.
- d. Use the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure new developments include active travel provisions.
- e. Audit staff and Councillor travel to consider whether staff could be offered the option of working from home where efficient and use video conferencing for meetings; if appropriate.
- f. Install EV charging points at Manor House car park and investigate other suitable locations on Council owned land.
- g. Engage with Wiltshire Council and other stakeholders to install EV charging points for use by residents who are unable to charge at home.

4. Natural Environment, Land Use & Parks

Statement: Increase tree cover on Council owned land; preferably with indigenous species as much as possible. Compost, shred and mulch horticultural waste where possible and minimise the use of peat-based composts. Create, enhance and protect wildlife habitats to improve biodiversity. Communicate and engage with residents and businesses about any planting projects the Council are undertaking or promoting.

Actions:

- a. Review the programme of tree planting in light of the desire to plant 13,000 trees with advice and guidance from Wiltshire Council tree officers, working with local partners, identify suitable locations to enable these trees to be planted.
- b. Facilitate and manage the 'Gift a Tree' scheme; whereby people or businesses can sponsor a tree; initially one hundred trees to be sponsored and planted in six parks.

- c. Any wood chippings created by the grounds team to be taken to the allotments for the use of the allotment holders.
- d. Build up boundaries around Council land with hedgerows and whips to create and extend wildlife habitats.
- e. Introduce wildflower areas in the town's parks and identify other green spaces suitable to be managed for wildflowers.
- f. Introduce permanent shrubs/perennials into the Town's flower beds.
- g. Work to adopt, own and manage the Country Park as proposed by Wain Homes.
- h. Engage with Wiltshire Council to enhance biodiversity through tree planting and wildflower areas on Wiltshire Council land.
- i. Use the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure new developments include Biodiversity Net Gain targets and measures such as swift homes and bat boxes.

5. Homes & Building

Statement: Properties under Council ownership to be supplied with renewable energy. Properties under ownership and development of the Council will incorporate environmentally beneficial aspects. Communicate and engage with residents and businesses about how the Council is developing their properties and encourage residents and business to do the same.

Actions:

- a. Ensure Manor House is refurbished with sustainable building materials, is well insulated to a high EPC rating, and includes features to minimise water and waste usage and emissions.
- b. Ensure all properties under ownership of the Town Council are supplied with renewable energy tariffs.
- c. Investigate the potential for direct generation and renewable generation and storage on Town Council owned land and property.

6. Resources & Waste

Statement: Consider the durability and end-of-life disposal implications of products before purchasing equipment. Use the waste

hierarchy to inform decision making: avoid, reduce, recycle, compost, waste to energy, landfill. Promote and use local recycling initiatives as well as disposing of waste correctly to prevent pollution or harm. Communicate and engage with residents and businesses regarding the management of their own resources and waste materials.

Actions:

- a. Ensure the grounds team recycle as much material as possible.
- b. Ensure the office recycle as much material as possible.
- c. Cut the Council's paper waste by offering papers electronically.
- d. Only print/photocopy when necessary, encourage the use of both sides of the paper whenever possible and recycle any waste paper.
- e. Assess environmental impacts of chemicals used (e.g. cleaning/gardening), seek to replace any damaging substances and ensure their appropriate safe disposal.
- f. Recycling available in the town.
- g. Promote recycling, re-use and refill stations including registering the Town offices as a Refill station.
- h. Avoid using single-use plastics where possible and unnecessary or environmentally damaging packaging.

7. Adapting To Change

Statement: Due to climate change wetter weather is expected in the winter months whilst hotter, drier weather is expected in the summer months.

Actions:

- a. Additional watering of trees, new planting and floral displays will be required.
- b. Review the type of planting and change to more drought resistant species.
- c. Create cooler spaces for people by creating tree shade in parks and green spaces.
- d. Examine where else; in or near play areas, more shade can be created to protect children and adults from the sun.

8. Delivery & Monitoring

Actions:

- a. Integrate the Town Council's Climate and Environmental Policy into our other plans, policies and guidance. Our emerging Strategic Plan 2022-2026 will have a focus on dealing with the effects of climate change.
- b. Our plans shall include SMART objectives along with interim and measurable carbon reduction and biodiversity targets.
- c. We will make our plans easily visible by providing information and updates on our website. We are accountable for our actions, and we want to ensure residents know the climate action we are working on and planning.
- d. Monitor the action plan and ensure timely progress is being made and delivered. The group will meet throughout the year and updates will be provided to all Councillors, staff, and the community.

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