



## **Environmental Policy**

**(Revised November 2023)**

**Our Aim:** On 11 October 2021, Corsham Town Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency stating that ‘Corsham Town Council fully acknowledges the Climate and Ecological Emergencies. We are committed to reducing the carbon footprint of our community in support of Government and Wiltshire Council targets to reduce carbon emissions. We are implementing a carbon reduction action plan for our own operations which will enable us to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. From 2022, we will implement a biodiversity action plan to protect and enhance our green and blue infrastructure.’ Corsham Town Council will work to protect the natural environment and reduce carbon emissions through its own practices and by encouraging the wider community to do the same.

Since this declaration we have implemented a Climate Change Action Plan and a Biodiversity Action Plan.

**Policy:** The Town Council will keep updated on the environmental regulations that apply to its operations and ensure that its legal obligations are met. The Council will operate suitable procedures and systems in order to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and continually look at ways to limit its environmental impact. The Council will communicate this policy to staff and Members through typical channels such as team meetings and work planning. Staff are greatly encouraged to suggest new ideas and ways of working which will reduce the Council’s operations impact on the environment. The Council will minimise the amount of commercial waste being produced per employee, through recycling initiatives in the office and encourage environmentally friendly ways of working through its processes, such as those listed below:

### **General**

#### **Energy:**

- ❖ Maximise energy efficiency through behaviours, actions and building changes/upgrades (i.e. light sensors).
- ❖ Commit to reducing overall year on year energy consumption.
- ❖ Ensure that the energy consumption and energy efficiency ratings of all new products is taken into account when purchasing.
- ❖ Review the current energy audits of the Town Hall and Arnold House and take further actions as appropriate.
- ❖ Only use 100% renewable energy to supply Town Council owned buildings.
- ❖ Turn off machinery, electrical appliances and lights when not in use.
- ❖ Ensure the new workshop produces 100% of all its energy requirements from onsite renewable energy systems and meets the RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge construction targets.

### **Water:**

- ❖ Find ways to reduce water consumption in town council operations and check for leaks in all Council owned buildings.
- ❖ Intention to install waterless urinals in the Town Hall building.
- ❖ Intention to reduce mains water use at allotment sites.

### **Procurement:**

- ❖ Source materials and services from local suppliers where possible.
- ❖ Source products and materials from sustainable suppliers, for example, only source FSC certified timber.
- ❖ Carry out a life cycle analysis by considering the durability and end-of-life disposal implications of products before purchasing with an aim to achieve closed-loop recycling rather than wasting materials at the end of use.
- ❖ Ensure suppliers and contractors are aware of our environmental policy (by providing them with a copy when we ask them for evidence of their public liability insurance).
- ❖ Try to only use suppliers and contractors that have their own environmental policies that show they are working to reduce their own carbon footprint.
- ❖ Look to reduce year on year procurement for consumables (e.g. paper).
- ❖ Ensure all funded activities and investments support our sustainability and net zero goals.

### **Waste and recycling:**

- ❖ Promote and use local recycling initiatives such as the Corsham Recycling Hub, the Co-op soft plastic recycling scheme and the public recycling bins in the High Street and recreational areas.
- ❖ Dispose of waste properly to prevent pollution or harm. Review waste contracts annually to ensure all waste is being disposed of correctly.
- ❖ Greatly reduce the use of single-use plastics with an aim to eliminate it from Town Council operations completely.
- ❖ The Town Council aims to achieve Plastic Free Town Status in 2023/24.
- ❖ All staff food waste (teabags, etc.) to be composted on site.

### **Travel:**

- ❖ Minimise travel by hosting online meetings and encourage car sharing. Unnecessary trips will be avoided.
- ❖ Staff are encouraged to use the cycle to work scheme which enables them to purchase a regular bike or E-bike through salary sacrifice.
- ❖ Encourage staff to walk/cycle to the office and for work activities. Survey needs and, if justified, purchase E-bike for work-related journeys by office staff.
- ❖ Encourage Staff to use public transport for commuting.
- ❖ Allow home working opportunities to reduce car journeys and carbon emissions.
- ❖ Continue to replace all town council vehicles with electric. All new Town Council vehicles (purchased or leased) to be electric where possible. Install electric vehicle charging points where required.
- ❖ Promote changing to low carbon electric vehicles to staff and the community.
- ❖ All staff to be offered a fuel efficient driving session.

### **Office and Administration**

#### **Waste and recycling:**

- ❖ Purchase paper with a minimum of 80% recycled ingredients.

- ❖ Aim to become paperless wherever possible, only print/photocopy when necessary and recycle waste paper in black bins under desks.
- ❖ Aim to move to a paperless office where feasible.
- ❖ Take the minimum number of promotional leaflets as is necessary and return or recycle those that are not used.
- ❖ Recycle used ink cartridges via copier supplier.
- ❖ Send old mobile phones away for re-use or recycling.
- ❖ Use email or telephone in preference to the postal service.
- ❖ The Corsham Town Council newsletter is now printed on FSC Mix paper. This certification ensures that the product is sourced from recycled materials, FSC certified or controlled forests.

**Energy:**

- ❖ Ensure heating is adjusted with energy consumption in mind and identify and encourage energy reduction behaviours.

**Policy:**

- ❖ Ensure all staff are involved in the implementation of this policy, for greater commitment and improved performance.

**Management and maintenance of outdoor amenities**

**Waste and recycling:**

- ❖ Use recycled materials where appropriate and use companies with sustainability and environmental credentials such as Wiltshire Wood Recycling.
- ❖ Ensure all staff use the recycling bins at the Town Hall for cardboard, plastic, paper and glass to minimise waste that ends up on landfill.
- ❖ Evaluate if renting/sharing equipment and machinery is an option before purchasing equipment and evaluate the environmental impact of any new products we intend to purchase.
- ❖ Compost and shred garden waste.
- ❖ Do not dispose of waste by burning or bonfires.
- ❖ Mulch horticultural waste where possible.
- ❖ Eliminate the use of peat-based composts.

**Energy:**

- ❖ Use sustainable energy sources (such as solar lighting at Springfield Youth Shelter).

**Chemical use:**

- ❖ Assess chemicals used (e.g. cleaning/gardening), find environmentally friendly alternatives to harmful chemicals and ensure their appropriate safe disposal.
- ❖ Greatly reduce the use of harmful pesticides and find environmentally friendly alternatives where possible.
- ❖ Ensure all cleaning materials used are as environmentally friendly as possible.

**Planting:**

- ❖ Increase the number of native trees planted in Corsham through the tree planting volunteer group and replant any trees felled due to Ash die back.
- ❖ Increase the number of wildflower meadows in recreational and play areas to improve biodiversity.

**Policy:**

- ❖ Support the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan. This will commit to planting more trees, hedges, creating wildflower meadows, building more ponds and wildlife habitats and shelters in the recreational and green public spaces in Corsham.
- ❖ Regularly review ground maintenance regimes to improve practices to protect and enhance biodiversity.

### **Training and development**

- ❖ All staff and Councillors to be offered an internal climate literacy course by April 2024 to increase understanding of climate change and potential impacts on council business and the community.

The Environment Task Group, which was set up in 2019, is continuing to work to reduce Corsham's carbon footprint through a number of projects and initiatives. Part of this includes the Town Council Climate Change Action Plan which has resulted in a number of changes including: changing to renewable electricity; water reduction measures in the public toilets; energy efficient lighting in the Town Hall; replacement of small petrol powered machinery with electric powered, and biodiversity improvements at Springfield Rec. This work is continuous, and the Action Plan will be reviewed and updated at least annually.

Date: October 2023

Next Review Date: October 2024

*Approved by Full Council 13 November 2023*