

Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council

ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

The environment is an important issue at all levels of society. We are bombarded in the media with information about climate change and its possible effect on weather patterns, with revelations about dwindling natural resources, whether it be the raw materials which are the life blood of our economies or vast eco-systems such as the Amazon basin, and nearer to home with concerns about unfettered development and its effect on the countryside.

We may be worried about these matters, but it is easy to feel helpless when confronted with their enormity, and to believe that there is little that can be done by any one organisation or individual to combat their effects. The reality is that although only national governments are able to take the big decisions to tackle environmental issues, it is often all of us in our day-to-day behaviour who hold the key to successful implementation of these measures and to the changes in attitudes which could help to safeguard the environment for our children and grandchildren.

The Parish Council has a duty to conduct its own affairs in an environmentally sound manner, but it also has a responsibility to set an example to all our parishioners by promoting best practice and encouraging them to think and act “green”.

Our aims can be grouped under three headings:

Energy Conservation - to reduce our collective carbon footprint as far as possible.

Efficient Use of Resources - minimising our use of non-energy resources.

Caring for our Local Environment – protecting the natural landscape and supporting sympathetic development in accordance with our ‘Biodiversity Duty’ as stated in section 40 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act (NERC)2006.

These aims will be delivered through three channels:

Direct Action – by changing the Council’s own procedures, aiming thereby to influence everyone in the community.

Collaboration – with other organisations to make our views known in wider debate and to seek action when it lies outside the Council’s own powers.

Communication – to operate our businesses by applying best practices throughout the community as practicable.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Saving energy has a double benefit. As a nation we are committed to reducing dramatically our carbon dioxide emissions, and everything we can do at a local level will contribute to this goal, but it does seem a rather remote objective with which the average citizen might not easily identify. More pressing and personal is the

high cost of energy, a burden on every organisation and household which can only get greater in the years ahead; every measure taken to reduce energy consumption therefore has a positive impact on our own budgets.

We will pursue this objective in the following ways:

- Monitor energy consumption in buildings and activities for which the Council is directly responsible and then aiming to reduce consumption where practical, by implementing a cost-effective combination of efficiency measures.
- Encourage councillors to set a personal example by reducing their own carbon footprints.
- Encourage energy conservation and consumption at home.
- Encourage the use of alternatives to private cars or car sharing where possible.
- Encourage the use of cost-effective energy sources, eg. Solar panels, ground source heat pumps.
- Pass on energy conservation advice to the community e.g. good insulation.

EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

Everything we use and consume has an environmental cost attached to it. We need to understand what those costs are and seek to reduce them by limiting consumption of resources (particularly those which are scarce or energy intensive), eliminating waste as far as possible and increasing re-cycling. As a community we should encourage and support national goals to develop more sustainable lifestyles.

We will pursue this objective in the following ways:

- By reducing the Council's own consumption of water, paper and other consumables.
- By assessing all goods and services purchased by the Council, or used/operated on Council premises, minimising environmental impact where practical.
- By raising the level of community recycling and thereby reduce waste going into landfill.
- By encouraging the community to reduce resource consumption.
- By encouraging the production of fruit and vegetables in gardens and allotments.

CARING FOR OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

It is vitally important that we safeguard the character and quality of our local environment; we are the temporary custodians of a natural asset which we should bequeath to our descendants for them to enjoy. However, it is also well established that the quality of the environment correlates closely with the attitudes and behaviours of the people who live there. In short, a healthy and uplifting environment encourages good citizenship and community cohesion. Our Parish is fortunate to have a varied landscape of river, woods, farmland, community spaces and attractive buildings, for some of which the Council has direct responsibility. Our goal should be protection and preservation where appropriate, but also sustainable development where this will benefit the whole community.

We will pursue this objective in the following ways:

- By managing Council-owned open spaces, woods and common land in accordance with best practice for the maintenance of and minimising impacts of bio-diversity, providing net gains where this is possible, to counteract the national decline in flowers, insects and animals (Government Biodiversity Strategy 2020; National Planning Practice Guidance – Natural Environment Plan, para. 7)
- By aiming to develop bridleways, cycle ways and footpaths to facilitate enjoyment of the countryside whilst also encouraging “green” travel.
- By replacing felled trees where appropriate, with native species, and aiming to enhance the quality and quantity of woodland in the Parish.

- By working with other responsible bodies to ensure the health of rivers, streams and drainage channels, so as to limit the risk of flooding.
- By the development and implementation of plans to reduce litter.
- By encouraging the development of sporting opportunities and other activities within the village, which may provide residents with further choice.
- By working with businesses and other groups in the Parish to encourage their involvement in our environmental agenda.
- By ensuring that environmental issues are a high priority in our consideration of planning applications.

IMPLEMENTATION

This strategy will be valid for three years and be available to view on the Parish Council website. It will be assessed annually and a yearly implementation plan produced.

Adopted at meeting of Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council held on 6th February 2018.

Last Reviewed 2nd September 2025

Signed.....

Miss J Bowd

Parish Clerk