

Environmental and Sustainability Policy

Policy Statement.

Bearsted Parish Council is committed to preserving and protecting the environment of its area by adopting an environmental and sustainability policy in line with all current legislation notably the Environment Act 2021 and the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.

Aims.

Bearsted Parish Council is committed to leading by example in protecting the environment and the natural heritage of the Parish, recognising the importance and value of the area and its contribution to quality of life for parishioners and the wider community.

General.

Where the Parish Council has the opportunity, in a way that is both practical and economic, it will:

- Discourage the use of single use plastics within the Parish
- Discourage all forms of littering
- Encourage the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources
- Encourage reduction, re-use and recycling of resources within the Parish
- Encourage the use of materials and systems that improve energy efficiency of developments, new-builds, extensions and renovations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Encourage new-builds, extensions and renovations to be nature friendly, located close to public transport and amenities and to provide electric vehicle charge points.
- Encourage local action in support of the environment
- Highlight the importance and value of our local environment and its contribution to our community's quality of life
- Ensure the conservation value of The Green
- Recognise the importance of trees, hedgerows and deadwood, as an essential corridor for the movement of wildlife, and a support for animals and plants
- Encourage the provision of cycle lanes and footpaths.

Encourage any person or organisation carrying out works in the Parish to do so in line with this policy.

Council Activities.

In carrying out its own activities the Parish Council will strive to make a positive contribution to protect the local and wider environment. It will seek to promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and to minimise environmental pollution in all its own activities and through its example to others.

Minimise Waster and Pollution.

- Reducing the use of resources
- Re-using materials whenever possible
- Recycling when waste is produced
- Seek to eliminate the unnecessary use of energy and reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions
- Provide information electronically as much as possible
- Minimise the environmental impact of travelling on Council business, where practicable and safe, by, walking, cycling, car sharing or the use of public transport
- Holding meetings by on-line mechanisms such as “webinars” where possible

Energy and Water Management.

- The Parish Council is committed to responsible energy management and will promote energy efficiency throughout its operation, examples of which are;
- Encouraging staff and Members to ensure that electrical equipment and unnecessary lights are switched off when not in use
- Encouraging staff and Members to close windows and external doors when heating is on
- Encouraging staff and Members to minimise the use of electric heaters
- Encouraging staff, members and third parties to use water efficiently on Council premises

Procurement

When purchasing services and goods, where practical and economical, and in line with best value outlined in other policies the Parish Council will give preference to:

- Local suppliers
- Options that are environmentally friendly
- Products that have been manufactured from recycled materials
- Products that can be disposed of in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Contractors and Maintenance.

The Parish Council will require that contractors, councillors and volunteers who carry out maintenance on Parish-managed land, or on other areas of the Parish at the instigation of Council officers:

- Minimise the use of harmful pesticides and chemicals
- minimise adverse impacts on air quality
- Undertake the work in a manner that, where practicable, benefits wildlife and the environment
- Where practicable use locally sourced plants grown in the UK. In appropriate locations encourage the use of native, wildflower and bee friendly species.

Decision Making.

In its decision making the Parish Council will take careful consideration of:

- The importance of encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transport when practicable
- The need to reduce, re-use and recycle to protect resources
- The need to avoid adverse impacts on air quality
- The need to conserve and improve natural habitats
- The need to protect vulnerable and protected species
- The need to conserve the natural beauty of its woodlands, The Green and surrounding landscape.

Trees.

In maintaining our trees, we will:

- Organise regular tree inspections
- After relevant investigation remove dead, dying and dangerous trees
- After relevant investigation remove dangerous and damaged limbs
- Endeavour to replace large specimen trees with similar species

If works are required, this will be programmed as necessary.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.