

UPC ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Parish of Urchfont lies in the Vale of Pewsey in the county of Wiltshire and Urchfont Parish Council ('the Council') represents the best interests of its community.
- 1.2 In respect of Climate Emergency and environmental issues, Councillors have no defined responsibility beyond compliance with government regulations. However, Councillors can bring influence and expertise to bear on Council activity that can minimize environmental impact and promote environmental good practice.
- 1.3 The Councillors are mindful of the Report of 8th October 2018, issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ('IPCC') on the state of climate science and of the unanimous approving of a non-binding motion to declare a climate emergency by the UK Parliament on 1st May 2019, calling on the government to adopt more ambitious targets for reaching net zero emissions.
- 1.4 In the UK, national, regional and local government acknowledges the imperative to act, and numerous local governments formally recognise the Climate Emergency and abuse of the environment, regardless of the nature and pace of national government measures, policy or legislation.
- 1.5 Mindful of the weight of scientific evidence pointing to widespread environmental degradation, to the moral imperative for positive action and the promotion and adoption of counter-measures, the Councillors discussed the issue at the 12 Feb 2020 Parish Council meeting. In consequence a motion was unanimously agreed to set an achievable environmental policy for the parish. That Environmental Policy is set out in paragraphs 2-4 of this document.

2. Commitment

- 2.1 Urchfont Parish Council, recognising the imperative of the Climate Emergency and the need to reverse environmental degradation, will make all reasonable efforts in its business and conduct to avoid and reverse adverse environmental impact within the means and authority of the Council. The Council will achieve this through:
 - acknowledging the human impact on the physical environment and climate;
 - recognizing the initiatives and activities recommended by experts to address the climate emergency and environmental degradation;
 - considering and, where achievable, mitigating the environmental impact in every decision made by the Council;
 - appointing a Climate Emergency and environmental champion among councillors;
 - actively promoting behaviour in the parish that minimises consumption and waste, and maximises the recycling of materials;

- setting objectives and recording data to evidence the impact of those objectives on the environment;
- leading a working group (or working groups) of parishioners and third parties to likewise act to address the Climate Emergency and protect the environment.
- encouraging the initiatives of volunteers, authorities and commercial business to positively improve the natural environment for the benefit of biodiversity and habitat.
- Working with third party organisations and funding bodies to investigate and, where achievable, implement Climate Emergency mitigation measures in the Parish.

3. Principles

3.1 The Council will apply the following principles in the conduct of its business in order to achieve its commitment at 2 above:

- develop and share awareness of the issues and, where appropriate, consult acknowledged experts;
- hold environmental considerations as a fundamental priority in the conduct of Council business;
- comply with the laws and regulations that relate to the environment and are applicable to Council business;
- report breaches of any law or regulation to relevant authorities;
- as a criterion in selecting any third-party service provider to consider the extent to which its activities or that of its parent or associated companies adversely impacts the environment;
- treat other peoples' environments as if they were its own;
- consider actions that could be implemented, including (but not restricted to): renewable energy generation and storage, providing electric vehicle infrastructure and encouraging alternatives to private car use, increasing the efficiency of buildings, in particular to address fuel poverty;
- proactive use of local planning powers to accelerate the delivery of carbon emission reduction measures;
- raise awareness and share good practice as a matter of course;
- encourage consideration of ecological impact in planning applications, property development and alteration, and on property and habitat management (e.g. hedge, tree and verge management);

4. Due Diligence

4.1 The Council shall carry out due diligence prior to entering into any contract for the provision of equipment or services to assess the impact on the environment of the supply chain and to ensure the Council does not knowingly, or foreseeably, act in breach of local regulations protecting the environment and where feasible to enable the Council to limit its environmental impact in selecting those goods and services.

5. Legal liability

5.1 For the avoidance of doubt, the adoption of this Environment Policy by the Council does not create any obligation or legal duty on the Council to act in accordance with the Policy or to act in relation to the Climate Emergency.

References – external

Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments on 8th October, 2018, which can be reviewed at:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments>

BBC report on the motion of the UK Parliament of 1st May 2019, which can be viewed at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48126677>