



Ramsgate Town Council

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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Due to review	Yearly in November.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ramsgate Town Council ('the Council') recognises that a healthy environment is fundamental to the prosperity and wellbeing of our local community. The Council acknowledges that whilst certain activities may have adverse effects on the environment, we can take steps to minimise those impacts.

1.2 The Council considers that the environment is important and will comply with and, where possible, exceed all environmental regulations, laws and codes of practice, as applicable.

1.3 The Council will make a positive contribution to sustainable progress by protecting and enhancing the local and global environment.

2. AIMS OF POLICY

The aims of the Ramsgate Town Council Environmental Policy are:

- To increase sustainable progress across Town responsibilities and assets for the benefit of the local community.
- To promote the importance and value of a quality environment, and to support local people in their enjoyment of it.
- To carry out our work in an efficient way that minimises or eliminates any adverse impact on our environment.
- To promote the development of a Circular Economy.

3. LIST OF POLICIES

3.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

The Council has declared a climate emergency in February 2022 and pledges to be fully carbon neutral by 2030. We have set out plans for immediate and long-term actions to reach this goal which include:

- Encourage staff to switch off electrical equipment and unnecessary lights when not in use, with the intention of installing motion sensor lights, where possible.
- Encourage staff to close windows and external doors when heating is on.
- Encourage staff to minimise the use of electric heaters and fans.
- Introduce LED bulbs in Council premises.
- Introduce phased replacement of electrical equipment used on Council premises with products of maximum energy efficiency rating.
- Switch to 100% renewable energy tariffs for electricity on Council premises.
- Implement phased replacement of non-renewable heating sources (oil, gas fired systems) with renewables.
- Invest in electric car charging points, where possible.
- Retrofit buildings with energy saving measures (glazing, roof insulation).

- Introduce natural climate change solutions (such as tree and hedgerow planting and rewilding) on Council assets.
- Consider introducing carbon offsetting for large-scale Council events, where the emissions generated are balanced by supporting renewable energy projects or tree planting.
- Undertake an audit of current Council emissions and agree measures to track the Council's carbon footprint over time, working with Thanet District Council and other bodies.
- Create a yearly Action Plan for the Climate Change Task Group to work towards and review.

3.2 NATURE & WILDLIFE

The Council is committed to increasing opportunities for nature to thrive on the assets it owns or manages. Sustainable progress will be achieved by:

- Protecting and enhancing the quality and extent of the natural environment in Montefiore Woodland, Charlotte Court and allotment sites.
- Supporting the conservation of trees (as detailed in the Tree Management Policy), hedgerows, ponds, streams and coastal habitats.
- Managing Council assets in a manner that protects and increases biodiversity.
- Introducing sustainable progress opportunities and activities, as appropriate, on Council assets.
- Banning the release of balloons/sky lanterns from Council land and events.
- Encourage the use of environmentally friendly services for Council events, including sustainable suppliers, eco-friendly fireworks, and waste-reducing practices.
- Set guidelines for reducing noise and light pollution during events, particularly in sensitive wildlife areas or near residential areas.

3.3 PESTICIDE USE

3.3.1 The Council is committed to phasing out the use of pesticides on assets we own or manage (with the exception of use for the control of Schedule 9 plants under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, such as Japanese Knotweed, or where it is used to reduce material risks to asset integrity).

3.3.2 As per Allotment Rules 5.20 and 5.21: *The Council will only permit plot holders to apply chemicals to their plots if the chemical is permitted within current regulations and designed for amateur use. No commercial chemicals will be permitted, and the Council does not wish plot holders to use any residual herbicide weed killer. All spraying is to be conducted with due regard to the health and safety of others on the site and no chemicals are to be left unlocked nor in unmarked unofficial containers (e.g., lemonade bottles, jars or similar).*

3.3.3 The Council will conduct a yearly review on the use of Pest Control and its effect on the wildlife on the allotments.

3.4 SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

The Council will:

- Promote and support modern working practices, such as remote working, amongst staff and councillors.
- Promote and support the use of cycling, public footpaths and public transport, through initiatives such as the Highways Improvement Plan and Active Ramsgate, as well as working with Kent County Council and Thanet District Council.
- Encourage all members and officers, especially those living in Ramsgate, or one mile within Council property, to walk, cycle, car-share or use public transport, where possible, when a journey must be made for Council business.
- Promote the use of public transport, car-sharing, or electric vehicles for event attendees and suppliers to reduce emissions.
- Ensure all Council vehicles are serviced and maintained to a high standard.
- Pursue the use of electric powered vehicles for the Council, where this is a workable alternative.

3.5 WATER MANAGEMENT

The Council is committed to responsible water management and conservation throughout its operations, which include:

- Encouraging staff, allotment holders and hirers to use water efficiently on Council premises.
- Where possible, collect rainwater and use as a non-drinking water source.
- Seek to provide public sources of drinking water to reduce the need for bottled water.
- Ensuring staff and users are aware of which materials can be disposed of in wastewater.
- Promoting and supporting natural solutions to reduce/reuse surface water run-off in the Town.
- Encourage event organisers to implement water and energy-saving measures such as water-efficient appliances and renewable energy sources (e.g., solar-powered lighting).

3.6 WASTE & RECYCLING

The Council will:

- Minimise waste by prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling, or recovery, and extend the lifespan of equipment and products through regular maintenance and timely repairs.

- Ensure waste is sorted, stored and disposed of appropriately.
- Cease use of single-use plastics on Council premises and events (as detailed in the Procurement and Greener Working Policy).
- Promote and encourage recycling across the Town.
- Recycle all recyclable waste generated at Council premises and events.
- Minimise the amount of printing and minimise the amount of wastepaper.
- Encourage the use of biodegradable, recycled, or reusable materials for all event decorations, signage and packaging.
- Use recyclable, compostable and/or recycled products on Council premises.
- Reduce the production of non-recyclable resources such as laminated or plastic based publicity material.
- Utilise electronic communications; councillors to use an opt-in scheme for printing paper documents.
- Minimise pollution and prevent where possible (including light, air, noise, solids, liquids and chemicals).
- Observe our duty of care conscientiously within our waste contracts.
- Use composting facilities at relevant operated amenities including allotments and woodlands.

3.7 DEVELOPMENT

The Council will:

- Consider biodiversity net gain as an important factor in supporting planning applications.

3.8 RESPONSIBLE & SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

The Council will:

- Source materials and services locally so long as the requirements for value for money and quality are met.
- Ensure that catering produce, including tea/coffee in offices, are sourced from local, organic, fair trade (or other recognised certification schemes).
- Ensure that timber, or similar products, used by the Council will be from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified sources, (as detailed in the Procurement and Greener Working Policy).
- Ensure that consumables used on Council premises (such as cleaning products and inks) are eco-friendly.
- Ensure that procurement of goods and services is weighted appropriately to encourage local suppliers, thereby promoting the local economy.

3.9 AWARENESS, LOBBYING & PARTNERSHIPS

The Council will:

- Promote awareness of, and information about, environmental issues within the community.
- Support, and act as a voice for, local environmental concerns within the community.
- Ensure that all individuals involved in the organisation (including contractors) are aware of their responsibilities in implementing this environmental policy.
- Work with partners, where appropriate, to increase sustainable progress within the Town.

3.10 ENERGY USE

The Council will:

- Undertake an audit of its existing energy use and compare to the original audit carried out in March 2022 by the Marketing and Communications Officer.
- Produce a plan on how the Council's energy use can be reduced.
- Procure energy from sustainable sources.
- Maximise use of wind and solar energy on its premises, where possible.
- Promote use of renewable energy in the Town.
- Encourage event organisers to implement water and energy-saving measures such as water-efficient appliances and renewable energy sources (e.g., solar-powered lighting).

3.11 CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The Council will:

- Undertake an audit of the materials and services used by the Council.
- Develop policies that encourage the development of a Circular Economy in the Town.

3.12 DECISION MAKING

The Council will:

- Make consideration for climate change during decision making. All decision makers will be asked to identify basic emissions sources within their decisions.
- Consider a Net Zero decision policy that ensures decisions have had due regard to reducing emissions.
- Request all applicants for Council Grants to submit and inform the Council about their environmental policy.

4. REVIEW

This policy and its application will be subject to annual review to ensure that it continues to reflect the aims and objectives of Ramsgate Town Council and promotes continuous environmental improvement throughout the Council's operations.