



## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

### **1. Policy Statement**

Sustainability and Preserving and Protecting the Environment are core objectives of Fownhope Parish Council. The Parish Council is firmly committed to keeping Fownhope a very special place through it's own activities and through co-operation and consultation with others.

The Parish Council recognises the need for sustainable development and the provision of public amenities and services, and aims to balance the delivery of services with regard for the protection of the environment and the reduction in waste and carbon emissions.

### **2. Duties**

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions.

Fownhope sits within the Wye Valley National Landscape. National Landscapes are protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act). It protects the land to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.

Under the CROW Act, the Parish Council must make sure that all decisions have regard for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape. Decisions and activities must consider the potential effect it will have within the National Landscape and land outside its boundary.

Furthermore, the Parish Council has special responsibilities towards the River Wye Special Area of Conservation, and the Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the parish, namely:

- 2.1 Common Hill
- 2.2 Cherry Hill Wood
- 2.3 Lea and Pagets Wood
- 2.4 Capler Wood, and
- 2.5 The River Wye

It is legally obliged to consider whether any of its functions may affect the sites' special interest features, and to change how it carries out its functions so as to avoid damaging impacts.

### **3. Aims**

Fownhope Parish Council is committed to protecting the environment and the natural heritage of the Parish and recognises the importance and value of this environment and its contribution to the quality of life for the village and wider community.

In carrying out its own activities the Parish Council will strive to make a positive contribution to protecting the local and wider environment.

In conjunction with other Parish Councils, (HALC Herefordshire Association of Local Councils), Herefordshire Council, the Wye Valley National Landscape, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, local businesses, community groups, schools and members of the public, the Parish Council aims to help meet the needs of today's society without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs.

### **4. Council Activities**

In carrying out its own activities, where practical and economical, the Parish Council will minimise waste and pollution by:

- Reducing the use of resources
- Re-using materials whenever possible and recycling when waste is produced
- Seeking to eliminate the unnecessary use of energy, and reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Providing information electronically as much as possible.
- Avoiding and advocating against the use of single-use plastic items.
- Minimising the environmental impact of travelling on Council business, where practicable and safe, by, walking, cycling, car sharing or using public transport or the Community Car.

#### **4.1 Procurement**

When purchasing services and goods, where practical and economical, 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

#### **4.2 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

#### **4.3 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, Commons and surrounding landscape.

#### **4.4 General**

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

- Encourage the protection and enhancement of the unique character, beauty, heritage and biodiversity within the Parish;
- Support the FRFA (Fownhope Recreation Field Association) to comply with their policy on managing the various habitats on and surrounding the Recreation Field;
- Encourage membership of the Fownhope Community Car;
- Discourage all forms of littering, particularly dog fouling, including around open areas used by families and children; and encourage the use of biodegradable bags;
- Encourage the conservation and sustainable use of natural resource;
- Encourage reduction, re-use and recycling of resources within the Parish;
- Encourage the use of materials and systems that improve energy efficiency of developments, both new-build and improvements, to reduce greenhouse gas emission;
- 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 local action in support of the environment and in reducing our community carbon footprint;
- Highlight the importance and value of our local environment and its contribution to our community's quality of life;
- Ensure the nature conservation value of the Parish's Commons, woodlands, and surrounding landscape by encouraging maintenance and enhancements;

#### **4.5 Planning Consultations**

Where the Parish Council has the opportunity, in a way that is both practical and economic, it will respond to planning consultations to ensure the Parish's natural beauty and heritage are not compromised by development, paying particular attention to the following policies in the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP):

- NDP Policy FW1 Sustainable Development
- NDP Policy FW2 Safeguarding the Wye Valley AONB (now Wye Valley National Landscape)
- NDP Policy FW3 Flooding

- NDP Policy FW4 Sewage Treatment
- NDP Policy FW5 Biodiversity
- NDP Policy FW6 Access to the Countryside
- NDP Policy FW26 Renewable Energy
- NDP Policy FW28 Protecting Green Spaces

#### **4.6 Works to Trees in a Conservation Area**

Prior notice is required for all works to trees in a conservation area that have a trunk diameter of 75mm or above when measured 1.5m from the ground. This is usually undertaken by submitting a planning application to the local authority. However, unlike a regular planning application, there is an automatic assumption on Works to Trees applications that work **can** proceed if the applicant does not receive any communication from the local authority Tree Officer within six weeks of the date of the application. The Tree Officer can impose amendments to the proposals or place a Tree Preservation Order to safeguard a tree if this is felt appropriate.

Where the Parish Council has the opportunity, it will comment on Works to Trees applications to support the local authority Tree Officer in the decision-making process.

Where it is practical and economic, the Parish Tree Officer will visit the site to assess the work proposed and will report to the subsequent meeting of the Parish Council for a decision on the response to be submitted to the local authority.

The following criteria will be applied when considering the application:

- Has a reason for the proposed work been provided, and if so, does it appear to be reasonable?
- Will the proposed work change the character of the area?
- Will the proposed work jeopardise or enhance the health of the tree?

Adopted at a full council meeting on: XXX  
To be reviewed: May 2027