

Environment and Sustainability

Whicham Parish Council Environmental Policy Statement

Whicham Parish Council recognises and supports the urgent need to tackle the issues surrounding global warming and its impact on climate change. Within its limited resources the Council will do what it can to work with and for its local community to assist in the aim of ensuring the long-term sustainability of our environment.

Back in 2008 the Climate Change Act established a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels. Over the past few years the effect of these emissions on our climate has become widely recognised as a very urgent problem and tackling it has moved higher up the agenda. It is recognised that national and international governments and agencies have the most important role to play but there is still much that local authorities can do in helping communities engage with the environmental and climate change agenda through grassroots initiatives and sharing information and advice.

WPC are committed to working with local partnerships and will continue to engage fully with Cumberland Council on local climate issues as well as wider work on achieving net zero carbon. As part of this bigger network and as a parish council WPC can make a difference locally.

Our Suppliers and Contractors

Who we work with and how is important primarily because the works commissioned by WPC are often focused on environmental improvements for our community and those who visit us. WPC will:

- Screen all of our potential suppliers and contractors for their commitment to sustainable working practices and supply chains.
- Ensure that when goods and services are procured, we do so in a way that reflects our commitment to environmental sustainability

Trees & Habitats

WPC manages a number of areas of land within the parish boundary and many of these are heavily wooded or contain trees and hedges which provide important habitats for many wildlife species. WPC will

- Observe best practice in managing the parish's woodland and natural assets
- Replace trees which have to be felled with new native species saplings wherever possible
- Carry out maintenance at appropriate times of the year in line with guidance on bird and wildlife habitats

Energy

WPC has a very limited involvement in facilities requiring power but we do work closely with partners like the village halls at Silecroft and Kirksanton, which are so important to community activity. Other things like local speed notices also require power. WPC will:

- Support our partners in achieving the best possible outcomes for their efforts towards reducing carbon footprints.

Planning & Built Environment

Development can have both positive and negative impacts the local environment both in terms of how our environment looks and how we live in it. Unlike towns, rural communities are often impacted by the requirement to balance things like creating more diverse economies and the impact this can have on traffic and to some degree the visual amenity of the area.

WPC will:

- Support planning applications that use or introduce renewable energy technologies where appropriate
- Support planning applications for developments or changes of use which help diversify the local economy where appropriate
- Object to planning applications that result in the loss of tree cover or natural habitats without offering sensible alternatives or mitigation.

Information/Local Action

There is much that can still be done by local communities to reduce the carbon footprint in the local area and WPC envisages its role as a hub for information and activity for interested parties. WPC will:

- Host information on our website giving links to relevant information sources by external bodies and partners
- Form and support a community led subcommittee to look at activities and initiatives that reduce the local carbon footprint.

Future Actions

Possible future actions could include:

- Information sessions for local residents on how to improve their carbon footprint at home and in travelling
- Survey PC land and develop a 5 year plan to improve woodland management biodiversity and ecology

