

# Long Melford Parish Council

## Environmental Policy

### INTRODUCTION

Long Melford Parish Council is committed to the creation of a sustainable community, balancing and integrating economic, social and environmental components. Developing a more sustainable community will benefit present-day residents and businesses, as well as future generations. Recent declarations by both Suffolk County Council and Babergh District council in support of becoming Carbon Neutral by the year 2030 emphasised the need for the Council to consider the environment in its activities.

### LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The main pieces of relevant legislation are:

*The Water Act 2003.* This Act places a duty on all public bodies to take into account, where relevant, the desirability of conserving water supplied or to be supplied to premises.

*The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.* From 1 October 2006, every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

*Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006.* This Act gives specific powers to town and parish councils to tackle climate change. The Act places an obligation on town and parish councils to improve their energy efficiency.

*Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.* This Act extends the statutory offence of dropping litter and enables town and parish councils to authorise officers to serve fixed penalty notices for the litter offence under section 88 of the 1990 Environmental Protection Act; gives town and parish councils the power to issue fixed penalty notices for graffiti and fly-posting offences; and allows town and parish councils to create offences relating to the control of dogs and replaces the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996.

*Duty of Care (Waste).* The Duty of Care covers any business that produces or disposes of waste and requires the business to ensure that any waste produced is handled safely and in accordance with the law.

*Water Framework Directive.* The purpose of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater. The River Stour is covered by this directive, which requires all WFD water bodies to reach 'good ecological status' by 2027.

In addition, 150 countries, including the UK, endorsed Agenda 21 at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 calls for local authorities to initiate Local Agenda 21 processes. Local Agenda 21 involves taking a partnership approach to develop an action plan for sustainable development at a local level.

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## **POLICY COVERAGE**

This policy applies to all the land and properties that Long Melford Parish Council owns land/properties that the Council manages or is responsible for.

Long Melford Parish Council encourages and supports those who manage facilities on its behalf to do so in an environmentally responsible manner.

## **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

Long Melford Parish Council recognises that its activities will have some negative impacts on the environment. The aim of this policy is to establish broad objectives to enable the development of activities that will minimise negative effects on the general environment and also work towards enhancing and protecting Melford's immediate environs.

The Council will aim to improve its environmental performance and influence improvement in Melford in the following ways:

- Use energy, natural resources and non-renewable resources efficiently and strive to minimise waste and pollution.
- Inform Melford's residents of the Council's environmental activities and respond and react to feedback.
- Support individual behaviour change in Melford's residents, leading by example and supporting environmentally friendly activities.
- Support local businesses in the adoption of low-impact practices.
- Manage its land using environmentally-friendly practices that will promote biodiversity and protect habitats.

## **SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS**

Long Melford Parish Council is committed to action in the following, specific areas:

### **Water**

Water will be used efficiently for Council activities and on Council premises. In the Council's parks and green spaces planting schemes and technology that minimise the need for watering will be used, e.g. planting drought-resistant species and using mulches and water gel crystals. The Council acknowledges that the River Stour and the Chad Brook run through and beside Melford. The habitat is important for the characteristic wildlife of the Stour Valley. The Council is committed to the conservation of this habitat. The Council will support the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in new developments and redevelopments to reduce flooding risks, manage storm-water, minimise diffuse pollution from surface water runoff and help maintain groundwater levels.

### **Development**

The Council's Planning Committee and the Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when commenting on planning applications and when developing/maintaining the Long Melford Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will lead on

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consultations relating to the Local Planning Authority's Local Plans. The Council will press for the use of planning obligations (section 106 agreements/CIL) to promote sustainable development and mitigate environmental impacts resulting from developments.

### **Climate Change and Energy Conservation**

The Council will monitor its energy use and improve upon energy efficiency within its buildings by adopting energy-saving measures, e.g. purchasing electrical equipment with good energy ratings. The Council will increase awareness of energy efficiency amongst employees and encourage energy-conserving behaviour, e.g. switching off lights that aren't needed and switching off equipment rather than using standby. In the longer term, the Council will investigate the feasibility of sustainable supplies of energy to power its premises.

### **Transport**

The Council will continue to encourage sustainable transport systems, promoting public transport and non-polluting modes of transport within the parish, such as cycling and walking. The Council will support cyclists, ramblers/walkers as part of this. As a long-term goal, the Council will investigate sustainable, minimally polluting forms of fuel for its vehicles, and incorporate this within the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Biodiversity and Green Spaces**

The Council will, wherever possible, consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity in all its activities, but particularly with regard to land management. The Council will seek to manage green spaces in a manner that promotes and protects biodiversity. This includes the management of invasive plants on its land and using planting schemes that exclude species known to be invasive in the SE of England. The Council commits to using pesticides in an environmentally responsible manner and to identifying environmentally-friendly alternatives. The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance the quality of Melford's natural environment and open spaces, e.g. by the maintenance of the Country Park and Melford Walk via effective Management Plans. The Council aims to make open space accessible wherever possible.

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