

Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council

POLICY TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

What is Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council (LSWA PC) already doing?

LSWA PC has already introduced several measures to show its commitment to helping to protect the environment and these are listed below:

- If the office staff cannot make use of waste-paper, it is recycled (except confidential papers) along with recyclable plastic items, cardboard and tins.
- Glass bottles/coffee jars are recycled.
- Using glasses instead of plastic cups, as well as avoiding, where possible, the use of plastic plates and cutlery
- For refreshments at meetings the measures include use of crockery, metal teaspoons, bio degradable teabags and loose coffee and glasses where possible.
- No usage of single use condiments sachets
- Straws are not used in the office or at events (unless required for assistance with drinking).
- Staff try, where possible, to bring in their own lunch therefore reducing the use of single use packaging.
- Soap dispensers are refillable.
- Councillors are encouraged to receive agendas and minutes by e-mail, which is the choice of the majority (although some documents do require printing).
- Goods and services are purchased locally, where possible, to reduce mileage and packaging. In addition, we try to combine meetings to save on travel
- All invitations and correspondence from LSWAPC are sent via e-mail, where possible.
- LSWA PC aims to further reduce the use of single use plastic and paper wherever it can and to make use of further initiatives to reduce its carbon footprint.
- Provision of insect hotels, bird feeders, swift/swallow nests and bird nests in Broadholes Play Area, Lapley Green and Primrose Play Area
- Biodiversity in public spaces. LSWA PC is not responsible for the highway verges, although, it has identified suitable areas that can be replaced with a wildflower area and will work with South Staffs District Council to implement this.
- Trees that are felled due to being dead, diseased or dying, are replaced with native species, where possible, and research is carried out to determine which species benefit the wildlife the most. Where possible, felled trees are to remain on site to be used as a natural habitat. Guidance is also sought from the Tree Officer at South Staffordshire District Council.
- Designate and protect sites as local green spaces, new play spaces (formal and informal) and green infrastructure networks, encouraging local residents into the fresh air, walking or cycling rather than using their cars for local journeys. LWA PC are producing a map board displaying local walks.
- All employees submit online time sheets for work reducing the need for printing and postage
- As a response to climate change LSWA PC will consider the location of all contractors before placing any orders with the view of reducing mileage and emissions

What does LSWA PC plan to do?

LSWA PC is aware that there are still measures to be introduced which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- To comment on small and large planning applications. Planning decisions will be made by the local planning authority, which needs to hear from those that support the applications. The UK needs to increase the amount of renewable energy it generates by around eight-fold. Comments to include how an application can aid the environment, can the application support renewable energy?

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- Move to a 'paperless council' where councillors will be provided with a tablet for meeting purposes and purchase a projector for the public to view documents. This will remove the requirement of paper copies in meetings
- Office staff to reduce the paper files held and aim to reduce printing by storing files on Citrix
- Engage with the Local Plan and future developments regarding different sources of energy generation, i.e. solar panels.
- Encourage young people to engage with activities which are already taking place.
- Encourage walking by: employees and Councillors should also be encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport or car-share where possible.
- Encourage residents to increase biodiversity in their back gardens.
- Bring together groups of people for bulk purchases or purchase goods with other local authorities
- Oppose high-carbon developments, promoting sustainable alternatives instead.
- Encourage national changes to bus services regulations, so all areas can regulate buses as London does, and urban profit-making routes can cross-fund loss making rural routes.
- Reduce pesticide use and other harmful activities.
- Encourage residents and local landowners to take part in tree planting. The Tree Charter, developed by the Woodland Trust, provides excellent guidance on how to increase tree cover. The National Association of Local Councils website provides case studies where it has been used¹. Also, the Trees for Climate scheme supported by the Forest of Mercia provides free trees for large landowners.
- Buying green electricity helps develop new renewable energy. Friends of the Earth has identified "Ecotricity", Good Energy and Octopus as the greenest energy companies.
- Support the introduction of safe walking and cycle routes and, where necessary, work in partnership with the local authority to deliver them. To introduce a 'map board' with the local walking routes highlighted
- Ensure the climate change or nature implications of decisions are known before making them. It isn't credible to accept the need for rapid action on climate change and nature and then make decisions without knowing whether they'll be harmful or helpful. Requiring every decision to be well informed is common sense as well as good practice.

This Action Plan will be a flexible, working document that can be added to when required.

Adopted February 2020, Reviewed March 2021, April 2022

Next Review: April 2023

Sources:

- Friends of the Earth, October 2019, 20 actions parish and town councils can take on the climate and nature emergency - Friends of the Earth Demonstrate leadership through your own practical actions

¹ NALC website, The Tree Charter, link to the NALC website for information on the tree charter.