

Wedmore GREEN CHARTER

(Last updated March 2021)

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Wedmore Parish Council in 2019 declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and publicly supported Green Wedmore in its Zero Carbon Wedmore aim for the parish to be Carbon Net-Zero by 2030.

This Green Charter will be rigorously applied to the work of the Parish Council towards the above aim.

VALUES

Wedmore Parish Council believes in:

- 1. Protecting our precious local natural capital such as fresh air, clean water, biodiversity and more, so Wedmore remains a beautiful and healthy place to live, work and play.**
- 2. Generating more local renewable energy and reducing energy use.**
- 3. Avoiding all waste - refuse, reuse, repair and lastly recycle.**
- 4. Buying locally and ethically.**
- 5. Reducing water use.**
- 6. Eliminating the use of harmful chemicals in cleaning and gardening .**
- 7. Restoring nature.**
- 8. Supporting low carbon transport initiatives.**
- 9. Encouraging and supporting local people and businesses to be involved in our drive to Net Zero by 2030.**
- 10. Working with other local groups and individuals to achieve 'green' objectives with the aim to be carbon neutral by 2030.**
- 11. Preparing the community by adapting to the changing climate, most notably greater storms, drought and heat**

Green Charter Details

Introduction:

We owe it to our current community and future generations to act now to deal with the climate and ecological emergency and prepare ourselves for the climate changes already locked into the system. Threats such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, increased pressures on food production and natural resources, population growth and the constant need for more housing, roads are all adding serious threats and problems to our community.

Wedmore Parish Council will do all it can to reduce its own impact and encourage the community of Wedmore to support environmental initiatives and/or to 'think green' for the sake of future generations and this planet.

Together we should aim to do as much as we can, within our limitations, to bring about improvements and efficiencies as well as to highlight what we do well and what can be done to further support the environment - on which we all depend.

Wedmore Parish Council will endeavour to address the following areas where environmental impact occurs and ensure it acts in ways that minimise any harmful effect on the environment.

1. Taking Action to Improve the Local Environment

Taking care of our village environment is vital to us. Many benefits can be gained through opportunities for community environmental volunteering; learning and sharing skills, enhancing the visual amenity and providing benefits for wildlife are just some. Wedmore Parish Council supports such initiatives and will encourage more in the future.

2. Renewable Energy Generation and Energy Saving Measures

Generating as much renewable energy as possible and also focusing on energy saving is important to reduce carbon emissions and achieve net-zero whilst also saving money. Wedmore Parish Council is supporting local renewable energy initiatives and will regularly audit its energy use to achieve improved savings and identify where new energy efficient and renewable energy technology installations would help. In the meantime, Wedmore Parish Council will choose green renewable energy tariffs for electricity. The audit will also look for heating and lighting improvements and make recommendations for action.

3. Waste Reduction & Recycling

Avoiding unnecessary purchases, reducing waste, reusing and recycling helps save on energy, raw materials and the use of resources. Easy to recycle materials are Paper, Cardboard, Glass, Plastic bottles, Metal cans, Foil, Food and green garden waste. Recycling of other plastics and Tetrapak cartons will be added to collection in Sedgemoor in 2022

Wedmore Parish Council is a '*single-use plastic free*' organisation by phasing out the use of 'single use plastic' (SUP) products such as bottles, cups, cutlery, trays and drinking straws in Council activities, where it is reasonable to do so and requests our facilities' users, local businesses and other local public agencies to do the same, by championing alternatives, such as reusable water bottles.

4. Greening Buildings & Administration - Being Ethical & Responsible in What We Do

This is fundamentally good practice and Wedmore Parish Council can influence others and build consensus around the issues that matter most, either locally or even on an international level through its engagement of people, products, services and other local authorities regionally and nationally.

The Council purchasing decisions will try to ensure that, where possible and economic, goods and service provisions procured have positive ethical, green/eco, attributes e.g. Fair Trade, local, organic, FSC Certified, recycled, A+++ rated Energy Efficient, water saving, think: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair and Recycle

5. Water Conservation Measures

Wise use of our water resource is necessary to prevent waste, reduce carbon and to help support the water supply industry during periods of drought. (www.waterwise.org.uk) The Council will look at all

water use and seek to reduce water use where practicable e.g. Low flush toilets, rain water harvesting for garden watering.

6. Avoiding Using or Releasing Harmful Chemicals into the Environment

Wedmore Parish Council aim to eliminate the use of environmentally harmful chemicals in all work done by or for the Council. The Council will attempt to introduce and use environmentally friendly alternatives, such as steam cleaning or eco-friendly cleaning products for sanitation, and will carefully control the use and disposal of all chemical cleaning and decorating products, in line with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations. Where possible materials which contain harsh toxic components will be phased out and replaced by ecologically friendly alternatives e.g. use of Glyphosate herbicide should be avoided, instead use a clove or geranium based weed repellent, or allow the weeds to grow helping provide food for our local pollinators.

7. Allotments, Gardens & Cemetery

These are particular sources of pleasure, recreation, and a provision of local food to the local community, which Wedmore Parish Council considers to be of particular importance to the community. They provide habitats that support biodiversity which is essential to survival. The Council highly values the trees, flora and fauna in these areas and will continue to actively encourage new planting and wildlife protection in appropriate areas. The Council will also look into composting green waste from the management of its green spaces.

8. Transport & Travel

The Council recognises that alternative forms of transport must be encouraged. Provision for cyclists and walkers will be encouraged as well as support for more local community transport solutions.

9. Supporting Community & Volunteering

Wedmore has a number of self-help, housing, environmental and community focused charities, voluntary groups, not-for-profit enterprises and associated individuals who are supporting people, their households and lifestyles in a variety of environmentally-friendly ways. Wedmore Parish Council compliments this work and celebrates those organisations and will continue to encourage them to further Wedmore's community green-awareness as an example to others.

10. Local Authority & Government Initiative

Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council and the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy are working to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, engage with local communities, produce annual Climate Change Action Plans and encourage participation. Wedmore Parish Council is playing its part by providing opportunities for Wedmore community involvement, and in supporting initiatives which reduce carbon and other pollutive emissions in Wedmore to become carbon neutral by 2030.

11. Climate Adaptation

The effects of climate change are with us now and in the coming years we can only expect more periods of intense rainfall, droughts and heatwaves. This makes it more essential than ever that we prepare our community against floods, drought and heat. Any new housing must be renewably powered, excellently insulated, water-saving devices throughout and heat-ready with appropriate shading built into the design. Clearly a parish has very limited authority over planning decisions but nevertheless these measures and retrofitting existing housing must be a priority. Our green spaces can also be improved to be more climate ready and nature friendly with tree and hedgerow planting, retention ponds and other nature-based solutions.