



FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Context

1. At Forest Row Parish Council we acknowledge the seriousness of the escalating climate crisis and we will accordingly be environmentally conscious in all our considerations and decisions¹.
2. We recognise that the environment is our home and that the day-to-day operations of the Council impact both directly and indirectly on the environment, whether to soil, water, plants, land or air².
3. We will strive to minimise any adverse impacts, and preserve and improve good practice in the Council's activities and our work within the community, aiming to lead by example.

Objectives

1. We are committed to the creation of a sustainable and regenerative community, balancing and integrating economic, social and environmental components for the benefit not only of present-day residents and businesses but also future generations.
2. We will protect and wherever possible seek to improve the natural environment, eco-systems and biodiversity of the civil parish and its surrounding areas through good management and by adopting recognised best practice³.
3. We will strongly resist any potential threats to the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents.
4. We will work towards a strategy, and encourage behaviour change among residents, suppliers, contractors and local entrepreneurs, to reduce harmful emissions and pollution, to combat waste and to promote soil health and biodiversity.
5. We will work to achieve net zero greenhouse gas status for our community and create incentives for local businesses and enterprises to support that strategy⁴.

¹ In its meeting of 21.5.2019 Forest Row Parish Council approved the following motion:

"This Parish Council acknowledges the seriousness of the current crisis in the climate and resolves to build climate awareness into future decision making and, as far as possible, its activities."

Later a similar declaration was made by Wealden District Council (25th July 2019)

² Impacts may also include those affecting people, animals and livestock, trees and the built environment, as well as infrastructure such as roads, pavements, drains and other facilities.

³ For yardsticks of best practice, we will look at other local authorities of broadly similar size and spending power as our own, as well as at advice given in trade journals and by government bodies and trade associations.

⁴ We cannot yet pinpoint a target date until we have a clearer idea of the rate of progress we can achieve. This will depend to a considerable extent on the public suggestions we receive and the amount of community co-operation we can generate.

6. We will take note of developing scientific evidence in environmental matters and adapt our policy accordingly⁵.

Actions

1. We will give preference to suppliers and contractors with the lowest harmful environmental impacts and use local suppliers wherever possible. We will engage with our principal suppliers to urge them to reduce their harmful impacts.

2. We will plan, audit and monitor our activities and projects to protect and enhance the environment of the civil parish and its surrounding areas.

3. We will identify and where possible quantify the direct emissions due to the Council's activities, and we will track and publish the improvement in these figures each year⁶.

4. We will open a suggestions scheme to encourage ideas and assistance from residents on how we may be able to reduce our adverse environmental impacts and improve the whole local environment⁷.

5. We will ensure that this policy is readily available and promoted to residents, Council members and staff, so that all are aware of and understand our environmental commitment and objectives and are given every encouragement to implement these measures.

Next review: May 2022

⁵ For scientific evidence we will continue to monitor the publications of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as well as those of the UK Climate Change Committee and other respected authorities.

⁶ We will endeavour as much as is feasible to monitor our emissions under Scope 1 and Scope 2 of the GHG protocol, as defined by the World Resources Institute (www.ghgprotocol.org). Scope 1 relates to emissions from sources owned or directly controlled by the organisation, so council vehicle fuel would be included, as would fuel we directly burn on site. Scope 2 covers 'bought in' emissions such as the CO₂ emissions of the companies supplying gas and electricity. Scope 3, which covers emissions of customers and third parties, is unlikely to relate to FRPC.

⁷ By "whole local environment" we include people's health and wellbeing, and on a geographical level we include influences on the parishes directly surrounding Forest Row that could be affected by pollution in the air or watercourses that could cross boundaries into adjoining administrations.