ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY & PROCEDURES

Open Country is a countryside organisation and our commitment to protecting the environment is crucial. To minimise the impact on the environment made by Open Country staff, trustees, members and volunteers, we will consider the following:

A) Minibus use
B) Energy use
C) Waste and pollution minimisation
D) Purchasing
E) Travel
F) Our 'Green Growing' projects
G) Promoting our environmental message

A) Minibus use

- Service minibuses regularly and keep them in good working order.
- Check tyre pressure every 2 weeks, (for every 6psi a tyre is under-inflated, fuel consumption can rise by 1%)
- Drive slower, (driving a car at 50 mph rather than 70 mph will improve fuel economy by 25%, and will reduce emissions too). Speed limiters are fitted to all minibuses, with a maximum speed of 62 mph.
- Use the highest gear possible to reduce fuel consumption (5th gear from 30 mph up).
- If you are sat in traffic and expect a wait of more than a minute, turn the engine off.
- Plan your route!
- Sharp acceleration and sudden breaking use more fuel, so speed up and slow down gradually. It can improve fuel efficiency by 30%.
- Air conditioning in minibuses increases emissions and decreases fuel economy. Turn air conditioning off as soon as temperature is comfortable, open windows and vents instead.

Patrons:
Lord Willis of Knaresborough
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B) Energy use

- Ensure that all computers and office equipment are switched off at the wall socket if not in use and at the end of the day.
- Ensure that all lights are switched off if there is no-one in the room.
- Never leave computer monitors/ TV's/ photocopiers/ printers on standby.
- Only boil the amount of water that you need when making tea.
- Heating in winter - turn the thermostat down by a few degrees (wear more layers at work). Turn heating off when the office is empty.
- Ensure the heating is off before opening a window.
- Buy energy efficient items, such as cycle lights with rechargeable batteries.

C) Waste and pollution minimisation from our activities

- Encourage *HADCA* to reintroduce environmentally-friendly products in the kitchens and toilets.
- Non-confidential office paper and cardboard is collected for recycling in the large orange tub. In *Harrogate Community House*, when the container is full, place the materials in a clear bag (available from reception) and take down to the cellar, from where it will be disposed of).
- Any confidential waste to be shredded and recycled.
- Plastic, glass and tins must be collected and disposed of by tenants themselves – can we partner with other tenants to do this?
- Old newspapers can be given a new lease of life by brick recycling.
- Use recycled printer cartridges.
- Use recycled paper wherever possible.
- Recycle envelopes with labels.
- Save stamps and take to *Shamrock Vets* who recycle them for the *RSPB*.
- Only print out what we need and print double-sided where possible. Store electronically where prudent. Paper that has only been used on one side to be kept in the tray for reuse. (Do not give it out if there is confidential information on the reverse).
- Use *Bags for Life*.
- Use materials saved from landfill via Freecycle and voluntary donations.
- Encourage recycling on residential weekends and activities.
- Use road planings on access projects.
- Dispose of batteries/old paint/white spirit etc in the correct manner.
- Don't waste water e.g. when washing the buses.
- Investigate 'Eco' friendly alternatives when washing the bus.

D) Purchasing – consider the environmental & social impact

- Buy environmentally-friendlier office products, especially paper, card and envelopes, batteries and Tippex.
- Try to buy *Fairtrade* goods (*Harrogate Fairtrade* are *Community House* tenants!) *Rainforest Alliance* is not as well-respected.
- Buy organic milk if possible.

- Consider buying ethically for weekend residentials, meetings etc.
- Use all detergents sparingly.
- Cleaning products – avoid chlorine-based bleaches and phosphate-based detergents - they are toxic and cause pollution to waterways. Use vegetable-based alternatives such as *Bio D*. ('Ecover' has been taken over by *SC Johnson*, which animal tests, so their environmental credentials are suspect.
- Give thought to banking & pension saving ethically.
- Smoothie bike – Try to buy in-season fruit, sourced as locally as possible and Fairtrade bananas. Avoid air-freighted, out-of-season produce.

E) Travel
- Can a telephone call or email replace a meeting?
- Reduce mileage on trips where possible.
- If possible, walk, cycle or use public transport to work and to meetings etc.
- Encourage lift share to work/activities.

F) Our Green Growing projects (includes allotment and wildflower project)
- Use water sparingly – it sometimes has to be driven to the allotment.
- Provide members with practical experiences in environmentally-friendly and sustainable foodstuff cultivation.
- Encourage wildlife by installing bat, bird and minibeast homes.
- Use peat-free potting media, water harvesting and composting.
- Limit the use of chemical sprays and fertilisers. For Health & Safety reasons, one exception would be wasp nest destroyer, but only where organic methods of removal have failed.
- Use recycled materials wherever possible e.g. from *Cone Exchange*.
- Could we brighten up the outside of the building and promote Open Country (with little plaques) by planting bee-friendly/butterfly friendly pots/tubs?
- We currently put our compostable waste into landfill. Could we have a caddy in the kitchen to take to the allotment during the summer when we go there regularly? Could we ask *HADCA t*o have a compost bin on site?

G) Promoting our Environmental message
- Publicise our positive environmental impacts e.g. tree planting, newspaper brick making, carbon off-setting.
- Make the most of awareness days e.g. World Wetlands Day, Earth Day, Recycling Week. Post on social media to show what we are doing.

Policy prepared by:	David Shaftoe and Dennis Kelly
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