CHADDLEWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Environmental and Climate Change Policy

Version number	1.1		
Adopted by	Full Council		
Date adopted	3rd November 2026	Review due	Each annual meeting

1. **Introduction:** Chaddleworth Parish Council recognises that humanity faces a climate and biodiversity crisis. The Council acknowledges its statutory duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (amended by the Environment Act 2021) to consider what action it can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the parish. This policy sets out the framework by which the Council will operationalise its commitment to reducing its own environmental impact, protecting local nature, and supporting the community in building a sustainable future.

2. **Context**: The Parish Council recognises that a climate emergency has been declared nationally and by West Berkshire Council. The Parish Council will consider the impact its activities have on both climate change and biodiversity issues and will endeavour to introduce measures that either mitigate negative outcomes or actively support beneficial outcomes, where this is practicable and affordable within the resources and financial capabilities of council.

3. **Operations and Asset Management**: The Council will minimise the environmental footprint of its own physical operations, assets, and offices by implementing the following measures:
    i. **Energy and Retrofitting:** Transition to 100% renewable energy tariffs for all council-controlled properties and street lighting where feasible and where council assets exist.
    ii. **Waste Minimisation:** Adhere to the waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and champion circular economy principles across council operations. The Council will prioritize the repair, repurposing, and procurement of reused, refurbished, or recycled materials over virgin resources wherever practicable. Transition to a paperless office environment by digitising council agendas, minutes, and working documents wherever lawful, while explicitly protecting paper printing for essential community-wide reach (e.g. printed Chaddleworth News).
    iii. **Water Usage:** Install water-saving devices in council assets and introduce rainwater harvesting systems at allotments and public facilities where council assets exist.
    iv. **Travel and Transport:** Encourage councillors and officers to use active travel (walking or cycling), public transport, or car-sharing schemes or the use of Electric Vehicles (EVs) when attending meetings or executing council business.

v. **Sustainable Procurement:** Prioritise local suppliers to reduce transport miles and seek contractors who demonstrate sustainable practices or hold an environmental policy. In line with circular economy principles, the Council will actively seek out and prefer products, equipment, and construction materials derived from reused, recycled, or remanufactured sources rather than virgin materials, where proportionate to cost and contract size.

vi. **Planning & Development Response:** When commenting on local planning applications, the Council will advocate for high energy-efficiency standards, EV charging capabilities, solar panel integration, and the preservation of green spaces/biodiversity.

4. **Land and Biodiversity Enhancement:** In accordance with its statutory biodiversity duty, the Council will manage its public open spaces, recreation grounds, cemeteries, and allotments to actively support local ecosystems:
    i. **Habitat Management:** Leave designated areas of council-owned grasslands unmown to create wildlife corridors and wildflower meadows. Maintain hedges sympathetically to protect nesting birds and small mammals.
    ii. **Tree and Hedgerow Preservation and Planting:** Commit to ongoing tree, orchard, and native hedge planting initiatives on suitable council-managed land and actively advocate through the planning process for the protection of existing mature trees, ancient hedgerows, and natural wildlife corridors.
    iii. **Chemical Reductions:** Avoid the use of peat-based products and phase out glyphosate or other chemical pesticides/herbicides, replacing them with manual or organic alternatives except for invasive species control.
    iv. **Permeability:** Ensure boundaries, fencing, and physical structures on council land allow for the free movement of small animals, such as establishing hedgehog highways.
    v. **Dark Skies / Light Pollution:** In a rural West Berkshire parish, light pollution impacts local nocturnal wildlife and energy use. The council will seek to minimise artificial light pollution on its own assets, seek and advocate to minimise artificial light pollution wherever possible and require low-impact, downward-facing LED lighting on relevant local planning applications.

5. **Community Empowerment and Collaboration:** The Council recognises it cannot achieve a green transition in isolation and will work to mobilise local residents, businesses, and neighbouring authorities:
    i. **Allotments and Local Food:** Promote and maintain allotments where council assets exist to encourage local food production, reduce food-miles, and support community health.
    ii. **Public Awareness and Sustainable Living:** Utilise Chaddleworth News, noticeboards, and digital channels to share environmental guidance, highlight community conservation initiatives, raise awareness of biodiversity and signpost residents toward home energy-efficiency grants, renewable energy options, and bulk-buying initiatives (such as oil or fuel syndicates). Sponsor and support resident-led biodiversity projects (such as bird/bat box building workshops, stream monitoring, or tree planting days). Where possible, facilitate efficiency case studies and disseminate home energy efficiency guidance via parish channels.

iii. **Partnership Working:** Actively collaborate with district/county authorities, neighbouring parish councils, local wildlife trusts, and schools to amplify the impact of local green initiatives.

iv. **Support Active Travel:** Ensure wherever possible safe walking and cycling routes within the parish are available and well-maintained. The Council will proactively advocate for traffic-calming measures, speed reductions (including 20mph zones), and junction visibility enhancements as practical mechanisms to promote active travel and cut local transport emissions.

v. **Community Infrastructure:** Investigate, support, or advocate for the installation of public EV charging points on council or community land where feasible, working alongside West Berkshire Council. Support and champion energy-efficiency retrofits, solar installation, and sustainable building standards for local community facilities, including Chaddleworth Village Hall, local businesses, and any future community shop or hub ventures.

vi. **Community Green Grants / Seed Funding:** Actively apply for and support community-led applications for environmental grant funding to turn resident-backed green projects into reality (e.g. Greenham Trust, WBC Parish Grants).

6. **Review and Accountability:** This policy will be reviewed annually by the Full Council to ensure compliance with emerging legislation and national guidance from NALC and the SLCC. Progress on biodiversity actions and carbon reduction goals will be reported transparently at the Annual Parish Meeting and published in accordance with statutory reporting requirements.

7. **Attribution:** This document is synthesised from frameworks, guidance, and best-practice briefs published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). It incorporates statutory climate and community requirements under the Environment Act 2021 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.