

Environmental Policy

1. Background and Scope for Action

The Family & Community Group exists for the benefit of children, young people and their families within Torfaen with a population of 93000 people living within the area of benefit, which is the most easterly of the South Wales Valleys. There are 3 urban centres, Pontypool, Blaenavon, and Cwmbran..

The main activity of The Family & Community Group is to run a charity, adopting the management of community buildings owned by Torfaen County Borough council, and the landlords of the properties). These properties are very often well used, and in daily use, provide space for a wide variety of opportunities for children, young people, families, their friends and community as a whole to engage in communal, and recreational activities. A recycling collection point will be utilised wherever possible, that are operated by Torfaen County Borough Council, for the associated waste & recycling..

The Family & Community Group relies upon a large number of volunteers to staff and support these centres and community halls. As well as projects, opportunities and activities within these venues as well as within the area of Torfaen.

2. Main Environmental Impacts

The The Family & Community Group has examined its activities and considers that its main environmental and carbon producing impacts as:

Energy

The main use of energy by The Family & Community Group is in the heating of venues by gas, and electrical lighting of each facility.. The heating equipment is dated and needs updating. All lighting is provided by energy- efficient bulbs or fluorescent tubes. All energy usage is recorded by meter, read quarterly, and paid for quarterly. Significant fuel rises have been experienced over the past three years and look set to increase further.

Water

Mains fed water usage is recorded by meter, read quarterly, and paid for quarterly in any properties managed by The Family & Community Group.

Transport

The Family & Community Group is a local charity. Members of the management committee must live or work in the area of benefit and are normally able to walk to meetings or car share where possible. Staff and users of the Centre may travel from a wider area. Regular user surveys record modes of travel.

Materials and Waste

As the facilities overseen by The Family & Community Group and are very often heavily used buildings, on which the local community relies, and without an adequate local temporary substitute, repairs need to be made as soon as possible.

Any repairs and refurbishment of these community venues will need active consideration of the environmental impact. But options are limited as repairs need to be speedy, relatively little cash is available and the landlord is responsible for some areas of building maintenance. The refurbishment of venues must re-use any materials wherever possible..

Very little kitchen waste is produced. Office waste produced at the venues is recycled where ever possible. The volume is not recorded. Waste arising from repairs has not been recorded.

3. Policy

The Family & Community Group recognises that it can contribute towards the conservation and protection of the environment in serving the Torfaen community.

The Family & Community Group commits itself to the 10 Principles of One Planet Living (developed by Bio- Regional and WWF) - see Appendix A for details. We will have regard to these principles in managing the premises and developing new activities. We will aim to foster wider community awareness of sustainability and the necessity of carbon reduction.

Policy Aims

- To improve the way The Family & Community Group manages the Community facilities and its surrounding environment.
- To raise awareness of the Environmental Policy among staff so that they can contribute to its implementation.
- To provide opportunities for staff training in environmental matters both in-house and through attendance at seminars, courses and working parties.
- To provide opportunities for all staff, the management committee and facility users to acquire awareness and understanding of environmental issues through the facilitation of relevant local environmental groups' activities.
- To encourage all staff, users and the wider Torfaen community to be active participants in environmental initiatives.

- To work with the local community, public and voluntary organisations to improve the local environment and promote sustainable lifestyles for local residents and businesses in the community.

4. Implementing the Policy

The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the *General Management Committee of The Family & Community Group*. Authority to manage the environmental impact of *The Family & Community Group* is delegated to volunteers in consultation with the charity trustees, reporting to the management committee on a quarterly basis.

The implementation of the policy will be realised by ongoing development of the management and operations of *The Family & Community Group* buildings and surrounding environments, via the development of relevant *Actions Plans and Projects*, drawing upon the expertise and resources of the wider community, relevant local environmental groups and initiatives, and grant funding opportunities.

The policy will be developed and implemented in partnership with *Torfaen Sustainable Plan*.

Action will be based on priorities set by the *Management Committee*, and informed by an internal annual environmental audit, in the following areas:

- To maintain and publish impact measures such as quantities of gas, electricity and water consumed, waste recycled and not recycled, etc. If possible to also express these measures in terms of environmental footprint.
- To keep all relevant records open to independent scrutiny by partners.
- To establish environmental management procedures among staff with managerial or operational responsibilities for activities that affect *The Family & Community Group* facilities that can have an impact on the environment.
- To develop good practice, including an action plan based on an annual internal environmental audit.
- To encourage staff and user suggestions on ways to improve practices which impact on the environment.
- To improve the environmental integrity of facilities and surroundings via prioritised projects, informed by the environmental audits.

5. Focal Points for Action

Reducing Energy Consumption

Behaviour of Staff and Users

- Turn off lights in the Office and hired rooms when not needed.
- Have 'Switch Off' notices by all lights (exception: fluorescent tubes should be left on if they are going to be re-used within half an hour).
- Encourage users not to use radiators during warmer months (recognising that different activities have different needs).
- Put up signs asking for external doors to be kept closed, especially in cold weather
- Switch off any electrical devices (hot drinks machines, photocopiers, fax machines, computers and printers) when not in use.

The Management of Energy

- Use PIR switches in areas where lights are often left on.
- Ensure only occupied areas are heated and that heating is off or reduced outside hours of occupancy.
- Ensure heating and any ventilation systems are regularly checked, to ensure they are working as efficiently as possible (i.e. identify individuals to be responsible for ensuring this when needed).
- Wherever possible use natural ventilation as an alternative to air- conditioning when not in use.
- Set computers to power-down options, and use greener computers.

Investment

- Avoid use of batteries in the Office (e.g. water/mains/ solar power for calculators).
 - Use automatic door closers, unless there are Health and Safety reasons not to.
 - Use low-energy bulbs in all areas.
 - To continue to invest in new technology to help reduce the use of energy.
- Action On-going To do To be considered

Reduce Paper Product Consumption

- Reduce paper use, double-side print where possible. Use one-sided scrap for memos and phone messages, and reuse envelopes.
- Use recycled and/or FSC paper wherever possible ensuring the appropriate grade is used (i.e. low-grade for internal memos, agendas and minutes and high-grade only for permanent documents or letters as necessary).
- Increase use of notice boards for general information to reduce use of paper.
- Re-use folders, files, envelopes and all other stationery.
- Use recycled non-chlorine bleached toilet paper.
- Cancel unwanted publications and junk mail.
- Use electronic communication when possible, e.g. email, and discourage people from printing off emails.
- Ensure that new photocopiers and printers can easily produce double-sided output.
- Recycle all used paper, card and cardboard in local facilities. Promote Sustainable Transport Use
- Increase and encourage use of facilities for cyclists, including secure cycle parking.
- Promote use of bicycles, and then public transport, as an alternative to car use.,
Action On-going
- Only recycled/FSC paper used

Sustainable transport fund

Reduce Use of Consumables and Products with Adverse Environmental Impact

- Reduce the use of disposable biro's as far as possible.
- Eliminate the use of correcting fluids that contain ozone-depleting chemicals, e.g. White correction fluid (which contains 1,1,1- trichloroethane).
- Avoid the use of disposable (paper, plastic and styro-foam) cups and plates.
- Use no tropical hardwoods.

- Eliminate the use of aerosol spray, wherever possible, e.g. by using pump-action sprays, or by using waxes.
- Eliminate halon fire extinguishers.
- Replace toilets as they wear out with dual flush cisterns and display appropriate notices for Users. Investigate possibility of rainwater harvesting.
- Fix dripping taps and leaks, provide plugs for hand-basins, and install automatic switch-off taps to reduce water consumption and use water limiters.
- Use environment-friendly cleaning materials for cleaning.
- Ensure CFCs are recovered from old refrigerators that are being disposed of.
- Renovate furniture rather than buy new replacements where possible.
- Reuse what seem like obsolete computers by upgrading them or re- imaging them for staff or local community users.
- Donate or sell unwanted office equipment and furniture to local charities, staff or users.

Recycling of Outputs

- Use all available recycling facilities (including light bulbs, oil, toner cartridges, batteries, etc.).

Hanover Centre External Environment

- Compost all food waste, excluding meat waste, for use in Hanover Centre garden / tubs.
- Promote use of outside space for Vegetable Educational Gardening, and herb growing, in association with local environmental groups.

Purchasing

- Buy and promote the use of environment-friendly products which comply with as many of the following criteria as possible:
 - a) avoid dependence on non-renewable resources or pollutants in their production and use,
 - b) are based on recycled materials,

c) are minimally packaged,

Environmental Policy

Awareness

- Users should be made aware of the Environmental Policy via public notice boards and the The Family & Community Group website.
- The Family & Community Group- should support increased environmental awareness and sustainability in the community, working with local environmental groups.
- Staff and management committee members should have the opportunity to attend environmental awareness training sessions

6. Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the Environment Policy is the responsibility of the Management Committee of the Hanover Community Association.

An Annual Environmental Report, prepared if possible with an independent partner, will detail the progress we have made in implementing this policy.

7. Related Policies and Other Documents Related policies and documents include:

- Sustainability Policy

Date adopted:

Date last reviewed:

To be reviewed by:

Appendix A

THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF ONE PLANET LIVING

1. Zero Carbon: Making buildings more energy efficient and delivering all energy with renewable technologies

2. Zero Waste: Reducing waste, reusing where possible, and ultimately sending zero waste to landfill
3. Sustainable Transport: Encouraging low carbon modes of transport to reduce emissions, reducing the need to travel
4. Sustainable Materials: Using sustainable and healthy products, such as those with low embodied energy, sourced locally, made from renewable or waste resources
5. Local and Sustainable Food: Choosing low impact, local, seasonal and organic diets and reducing food waste
6. Sustainable Water: Using water more efficiently in buildings and in the products we buy; tackling local flooding and water course pollution
7. Land and Wildlife: Protecting and restoring existing biodiversity and natural habitats through appropriate land use and integration into the built environment
8. Culture and Heritage: Reviving local identity and wisdom; supporting and participating in the arts
9. Equity and Local Economy: Creating bioregional economies that support fair employment, inclusive communities and international fair trade
10. Health and Happiness: Encouraging active, sociable, meaningful lives to promote good health and well being

<http://www.oneplanetliving.org/>