

Review of Chesham Town Council's Environmental Policy for 2014

This review of the Town Council's Environmental Policy looks at the environmental activities undertaken by the Council in 2014 to see how they have contributed to the objectives detailed in the policy.

WATER
Water will be used efficiently for Council activities and on Council premises
Drip irrigation system used for hanging baskets at Chesham Moor Gym & Swim, reducing water usage.
Mulches are used to reduce the volume of water required for watering plants.
Small, shallow rooted plants with a high demand for watering are not used in the Council's displays.
Planting schemes include drought-resistant/tolerant species.
The Council has banned the use of hose pipes on its allotment sites to directly water plots and is monitoring adherence with assistance from the Allotments Group.
Supported Chesham in Bloom with the installation of a metered water supply in Market Square to assist Chesham in Bloom water their floral displays.
A 2,800 l rainwater harvesting tank used at the Parks Depot to reduce the amount of mains water required for watering floral displays.
The Council is committed to the conservation of the River Chess in the town
The Town Council continued its involvement in a partnership to successfully repair the Vale Brook Culvert in Market Square.
Impress the Chess has formal representation on the River Chess Association committee.
Continued control of Himalayan Balsam as part of Impress the Chess, which is now almost eradicated in Chesham.
As part of Impress the Chess, leaflets on identifying and controlling Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed, invasive riparian weeds, are available for download on the Council web site.

The Environment section of the Town Council web site includes pages on saving water and the impact of over-abstraction on the River Chess.
Impress the Chess and the Town Council responded to DEFRA's consultation on abstraction reform.
Public awareness of issues surrounding conservation of the River Chess are publicised by the Council in the local media, Council publications and the Council web site.
Reporting water leaks to Affinity Water.
The Town Council lobbied Thames Water regarding the long-term discharges of sewage into the River Chess from Chesham Sewage Treatment Works in 2014.
Impress the Chess representatives attended Colne Catchment Action Network meetings, to ensure that the Chess is included in catchment wide planning.
The Development Control Committee will specifically consider water issues
The Development Control Committee has urged the use of permeable surfaces for car parking areas and block paving.

DEVELOPMENT
The Development Control Committee will consider environmental issues
<p>The Development Control Committee has commented on the following environmental issues when considering planning applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exacerbation of run-off - over-development - work on trees - increased traffic congestion - impact on the street scene - impact on air quality - noise pollution
The Development Control committee responded to Chiltern District Council's Delivery Development Plan Document, raising concerns on the plan's soundness in relation to

abstraction and sewerage infrastructure.

The Town Council petitioned parliament against the HS2 Hybrid Bill, partly as a result of concerns of the impact of this development upon Chesham's environment.

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY CONSERVATION

The Council will adopt and promote energy saving measures

The Council has invested in new Christmas lighting, changing from filament bulbs to low energy use LEDs.

The Council's Town Hall and Clocktower lights were turned off during Earth Hour.

A motion sensor lighting system has been installed in rooms at the Town Hall to reduce energy consumption.

The Elgiva use LED cyclorama stage lights, and intend to purchase low energy LED lanterns for the stage whenever replacement lights are needed.

Energy efficiency is taken into consideration when purchasing electrical equipment.

The Town Hall is adopting a "switch-off" rather than "stand-by" culture.

Chesham Moor Gym & Swim staff switch off lights in the centre when they are unrequired.

All Town Hall lighting uses low-energy bulbs.

The Elgiva uses all low-energy bulbs.

The Chesham Moor Gym & Swim has solar panels to heat the open air swimming pool using renewable energy.

Chesham Moor Gym & Swim has lower energy electric hand dryers to reduce the facility's carbon footprint.

WASTE

The Council will minimise its waste production
The Town Hall recycles waste printer cartridges, paper, cardboard, glass and plastic cups.
The stamps received on incoming mail at the Town Hall are donated to the Hedgehog Preservation Society for fundraising.
The Elgiva recycles its waste glass, paper, cardboard and cans.
Chesham Moor Gym & Swim recycles its waste paper, cardboard and plastic bottles.
The Parks and Premises Depot carry out the following recycling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large woody debris left to rot on site - Small woody debris chipped and used on pathways and gateways - Leaves are used as mulch on allotments - Soft green waste is composted - Metal and timber are reused wherever possible
The compost produced by the Parks and Premises team is shared with the Friends of Lowndes Park to improve the park beds.
Recycling bins are present in the park, enabling recycling of plastic bottles and cans.

URBAN ENVIRONMENT
The Town Council will work to enhance the urban environment
The Council worked with Chiltern District Council to install a Living Wall at the Town Hall to help combat air pollution from St. Mary's Way.
The Council continues to support Chiltern District Council in its dog fouling campaign and is a point of collection for free dog waste bags.
The Town Council was involved in a successful partnership to regenerate Market Square as part of the Vale Brook Culvert repairs project.
The Council makes requests to Buckinghamshire County Council's Highways Community

Gang for tasks, including weeding, cleaning signs, graffiti removal, etc.
The Chesham in Bloom campaign worked with the Chesham Environmental Group to hold litter picks prior to Britain in Bloom judging.
The Chesham in Bloom campaign successfully manually weeded the High Street.
Chesham achieved a Gold award for its 2014 entry into Britain in Bloom and won its category in the Thames & Chilterns regional competition.
As part of Getting Closer 2 Communities (GC2C), undertaking specific highway works to improve the town environment, including removing fly-posting, graffiti removal, issuing hedge trimming notices and gritting the High Street during icy conditions.
As part of GC2C, weekly monitoring of St. Mary's underpass to remove litter and report blocked drains.
Monitoring Chesham's market on behalf of Chiltern District Council, including monitoring for market-associated litter and fly-tipping.
Council officers take reports from the public concerning full recycling facilities and bins, failed rubbish collections and blocked drains and pass these on to the relevant local authorities.
Council officers liaise with Thames Valley Police to report vandalism and graffiti.
The Friends of Lowndes Park have planted bulbs and ornamental plants in Lowndes Park and are maintaining their new flower beds around the toilet block.

TRANSPORT
The Town Council will encourage sustainable transport systems
The Town Council supports the successful campaign to make Chesham a Walkers Are Welcome town.
A Walkers Are Welcome on the Town Council web site promotes walking in the area and makes local walking leaflets available to download for free.
A Walkers Are Welcome display area has been created in Town Hall reception to promote

walking.
Council officers liaise with Buckinghamshire County Council Rights of Way team regarding the signage for and condition of footpaths.
The Town Council has an official representative on the Chesham and District Transport Users' Group.
A cycletrack was laid on the old skatepark in Lowndes Park to encourage children to learn how to cycle.
A festival of cycling was held in Lowndes Park to celebrate the Tour of Britain.
The Town Council has a cycle-to-work scheme.
BIODIVERSITY & GREEN SPACES
The Town Council will consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity in the management of its land
The Council worked in partnership with Chesham Community Orchard group to enable the first community orchard for the town to be planted in Lowndes Park in February 2013. Further trees were planted in 2014.
A mini-community orchard has been created at Chesham Moor Gym & Swim with Chesham Community Orchard with planting taking place in November 2014.
A mowing regime in the Upper Park is in place to promote the chalk grassland flora.
The Town Council supported Chesham in Bloom in the creation of new wildflower beds on The Moor and one in Lowndes Park.
Lowndes Park achieved Green Flag status in 2014.
A mowing regime is conducted in lower Lowndes Park to create long grass borders to provide habitats for wildlife.
Moss removal on paths is carried out by physical control rather than chemical control.
The Lowndes Park domestic geese have been re-homed to alleviate problems associated with water quality, footpath fouling and damage to grass and flower beds. Geese that are

abandoned in the park continue to be re-homed.
Native beech hedge was planted around one side of Skottowes Pond to deter Canada Geese and provide additional habitat for birds and invertebrates once grown.
Pesticide use is kept to a minimum on Council land. A 2009 review of herbicide use saw a significant reduction in the areas sprayed for weed control.
Promotion of organic gardening on allotments.
The Council continues to lead on the Impress the Chess project to conserve and restore the stretch of river in Chesham, including where the Council has riparian ownership.
The Council worked with Buckinghamshire County Council and the Chesham and District Natural History Society to get Berkhamstead Field designated as a Local Wildlife Site and manage the field to promote the chalk grassland habitat.
A Biodiversity and Ecology plan is included within the Lowndes Park Management Plan.
The Council has a Tree Management Policy to implement a systematic and proactive method of management to conserve and enhance the Council's tree population in a sustainable manner. The Council's trees are being surveyed by arboriculturalists to safeguard their health and to ensure their safety.
The Council has a planting scheme in Lowndes Park for sponsored trees.
SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT
The Town Council will assess the sustainability of its procurement and source materials locally where possible
The Town Hall office has increased the amount of environmentally sustainable office supplies it uses.
The Town Guide is produced using a National Association of Paper Merchants approved recycled product.
The Council's office supplies company has a dedicated environmental section in its Corporate Responsibility Strategy and has an ISO4001 accredited Environmental Management System.

The use of peat for soil amelioration is avoided wherever possible.
Bedding plants, trees shrubs and bulbs are obtained from local suppliers.
The Council makes Fairtrade refreshments available at Council meetings and available to Town Hall hirers.
In partnership with Transition Town Chesham, the Council organises the monthly local produce markets which increase the accessibility of sustainable, local produce to Chesham residents, decreasing the community's "food miles".
Chesham Moor Gym & Swim has reduced the quantity of cleaning products it uses.
The Town Hall has changed its drinking water supply from bottled to tap water, saving "water miles".
An ionisation system has been installed at the open air swimming pool to reduce the level of chlorination required.

AWARENESS, LOBBYING & PARTNERSHIPS
The Council will promote awareness of, and information on, environmental issues within the community
The Town Council initiated the Stop The Drop campaign, working with the District Council, schools and residents associations, to spread an anti-litter message and encourage members of the public to participate in litter picking.
The Town Council supported Chesham and District Natural History Society's wildflower project action days and survey day at Berkhamstead Field in 2014.
Articles on the Council's environmental performance appear in Council newsletters, web site and Town Guide.
Information on environmental issues was published on the council web site and in newsletters and the Town Guide.
The Council supplies information on local environmental issues to the media.

<p>The Council continues to promote the use of its allotments for the production of local food. Full tenancy has been achieved on all three allotments sites, with waiting lists reduced thanks to increased inspections conducted with the Allotments Group.</p>
<p>The Council offered a free service for chipping residents' real Christmas Trees after Christmas, with the chippings being reused on Council land.</p>
<p>The Council will engage in partnerships on environmental issues</p>
<p>The Council has an official representative on the Transition Town Chesham (TTC) group and works in partnership with TTC to organise the local produce markets.</p>
<p>The Council works in partnership with community organisations, conservation bodies and local authorities to tackle environmental issues. A number of environmental organisations are now official 'Town Partners', receiving support from the Council, including free room use twice a year.</p>
<p>The Council works with and supports groups involved in environmental work in the town, including Chesham in Bloom, Chesham Environmental Group, the Friends of Chesham Cemetery, the Friends of Lowndes Park and Chesham Allotments Group.</p>
<p>The Council has official representation on the Walkers Are Welcome steering group.</p>
<p>The Council has provided funding to a variety of local environmental groups through its charitable donations scheme.</p>
<p>Impress the Chess is represented in the Restoring Sustainable Abstraction investigations for the Upper Chess.</p>
<p>The Council is a partner of the FloodSmart project.</p>

Future Targets:

This section lists the Council's future targets stemming from the Environmental Policy and relates them to the broad policy objectives outlined in section one.

Water will be used efficiently for Council activities and on Council premises	Timeframe
When taps/showers are due for replacement in Council properties, they will be replaced with water-efficient equipment (subject to costs and suitability).	As needed
The Council is committed to the conservation of the River Chess in the town	Timeframe
Consider the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in developments on Council land.	As needed

The Development Control Committee will consider environmental issues	Timeframe
Encourage the Local Planning Authority to take relevant environmental issues into consideration when making decisions on planning applications in Chesham.	On-going
Press for the use of planning obligations (section 106 agreements) to promote sustainable development and mitigate environmental impacts resulting from developments.	On-going

The Council will adopt and promote energy saving measures	Timeframe
Investigate increasing its proportion of low energy appliances as appliances become due for replacement.	On-going

Pollution will be considered as part of risk management procedure	Timeframe
Continue to increase recycling of Council waste where possible.	On-going

The Town Council will work to enhance the urban environment	Timeframe
Look at powers accorded to local authorities through the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act.	Dependent on timeframes of principal authority

The Town Council will encourage sustainable transport systems	Timeframe
Investigate sustainable, minimally polluting forms of fuel for its vehicles.	As fleet vehicles are replaced

The Town Council will consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity in the management of its land	Timeframe
Expansion of wildflower area's on the Council's land.	2015