



LANGPORT TOWN COUNCIL

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GREEN CHARTER ADOPTED 4TH SEPTEMBER 2012 REVISED Oct 2018

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Langport Town Council seeks to care for the environment in all that it does – directly and indirectly – and to influence others to do the same.

VALUES

Langport Town Council believes in:

1. Striving to create a clean and pleasant town in which to live, work and play.
2. Conserving energy and, where appropriate, using renewable energy sources.
3. Reducing waste by avoiding single use items, re-using and recycling.
4. Securing goods and services from organisations with a sustainable ethos and/or Fairtrade/Organic accreditation where practicable.
5. Conserving water.
6. Minimising the use of harmful chemicals in cleaning and gardening materials, and office supplies.
7. Encouraging natural flora and fauna to flourish.
8. Supporting initiatives that reduce the need for fossil-fuelled transport.
9. Encouraging and supporting local people to be involved in our community.
10. Working with other local authorities, organisations, groups and individuals to achieve 'green' objectives.

Langport Town Council's Green Charter 2012

Introduction:

We owe it to our current community and its future generations to act now to make this world more sustainable. Threats such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, increased pressures on food production and natural resources, population growth and the constant need for more housing, roads and industry are all adding serious threats and problems to our communities.

Langport Town Council's response is to do all it can to reduce its own impact and encourage the community of Langport to support environmental initiatives and/or to 'think green' for the sake of future generations and this planet.

Together we should aim to do as much as we can, within our limitations, to bring about improvements and efficiencies as well as to highlight what we do well and what can be done to further support the environment - on which we all depend. By 'Environment' we mean both the area in which we live and those parts of the planet essential for the maintenance of life.

Langport Town Council will endeavour to address the following areas where environmental impact occurs and ensure it acts in ways that minimise any harmful effect on the environment.

1. Taking Action to Improve the Local Environment

Taking care of our town environment and our natural environment are equally important to us. Many benefits can be gained through opportunities for community environmental volunteering; learning skills, enhancing the visual amenity and providing benefits for wildlife are just some. The Council supports such initiatives and will encourage more in the future, but particularly welcomes changes and improvements that can be made now.

2. Energy Saving Measures

Energy saving is important to reduce unnecessary costs and climate change gases. The Council is working to convert to lower power consumption and will regularly audit its use of electricity and gas to achieve improved savings and identify where new energy efficient and renewable energy technology installations would help, in the meantime the Council will chose green energy tariffs for electricity and gas* wherever possible. The audit will also look for heating and lighting improvements and make recommendations for action. *In Oct 2018 Langport Town Council declared Langport a Frack Free Zone, pledging to support other town and parish councils in being frack free zones and to not support any fracking applications in Somerset, as well as purchasing gas from certified green gas suppliers.

3. Recycling & Waste Reduction

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling helps save on energy, raw materials and the use of resources. Annual feedback will be required by the Council to monitor how effective provisions and instructions have been to recycle at the Council's properties. Easy to recycle materials are Paper, Cardboard, Glass, Plastic bottles, Metal cans, Foil, Food and green garden waste. Recycling of other plastics and tetrapak cartons are less easy and will need more scrutiny. Langport Town Council will become a 'single-use plastic free' council by phasing out the use of 'single use plastic' (SUP) products such as bottles, cups, cutlery, trays and drinking straws in council activities, where it is reasonable to do so, by April 2018 and to encourage our facilities' users, local businesses and other local public agencies to do the same, by championing alternatives, such as reusable water bottles and coffee cups.

Redundant Council owned items will be offered to community groups or sent for recycling.

4. Greening Buildings & Administration - Being Ethical & Responsible in What We Do

This is fundamentally good practice, but the Council can influence others and build consensus around the issues that matter most, either locally or even on an international level through its engagement of people, products, services and other local authorities regionally and nationally. Becoming a Fair Trade Status Town would be a good example.

The Council purchasing decisions will try to ensure that, where possible and economic, goods and service provisions procured have positive ethical, green/eco, attributes e.g. Fair Trade, local, organic, FSC Certified, recycled, A+++ rated Energy Efficient, water saving, think: Reduce, Reuse, Repair and Recycle

5. Water Conservation Measures

Wise use of our water resource is necessary to prevent waste and to help support the water supply industry in its attempts to avoid the need for water use restrictions. (www.waterwise.org.uk) Langport Town Council will look at all water use and seek to reduce water use where practicable e.g. Low flush toilets, rain water harvesting for garden watering.

6. Avoiding Using or Releasing Harmful Chemicals into the Environment

Langport Town Council aim to minimise the use of environmentally harmful chemicals in all work done by or for the Town Council. The Council will attempt to introduce and use environmentally friendly alternatives, such as steam cleaning or eco-friendly cleaning products for sanitation, and will carefully control the use and disposal of all chemical cleaning and decorating products, in line with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations. Where possible materials which contain harsh toxic components will be phased out and replaced by ecologically friendly alternatives e.g. use of Glyphosate herbicide should be avoided, instead use a clove or vinegar based weed repellent.

7. Allotments, Gardens & Cemetery

These are particular sources of pleasure, recreation, and a provision of local food growing to the local community, which the Council considers to be of particular importance to the community. They provide habitats that support biodiversity which is essential to survival. Langport Town Council highly values the trees, flora and fauna in these areas and will continue to actively encourage new planting and wildlife protection in appropriate areas. The Council will also look into composting green waste from the management of its green spaces.

8. Transport & Travel

The Council recognises that alternative forms of transport energy must be encouraged, for long-term sustainability of social and economic activity. Provision for cyclists and walkers will be encouraged as well as support for more local community transport solutions. Langport Town Council has set up a Skype account to enable communication with the Clerk in person, thus reducing the need to travel to the Town Hall. The Council will continue to support local community and emission free transport.

9. Supporting Community & Volunteering

Langport has a number of self-help, housing, environmental and community focused charities, voluntary groups, not-for-profit enterprises and associated individuals who are supporting people, their households and lifestyles in a variety of environmentally-friendly ways. The Council compliments this work and celebrates those organisations and will continue to encourage them to further Langport's community green-awareness as an example to others.

The Council will invite Langport residents, recognised community groups or constituted organisations, attending the Annual Town Meeting [ATM], to put forward appropriate and supported 'projects and proposals' which can be considered by the Council for general support and inclusion in the Update of this Green Charter.

10. Local Authority & Government Initiative

South Somerset District Council, Somerset County Council and the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy are working to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, engage with local communities, produce annual Climate Change Action Plans and encourage participation. Langport Town Council is playing its part by providing opportunities for Langport community involvement, and in supporting initiatives which reduce carbon and other pollutive emissions in Langport.