



Axminster Town Council



Sustainability Policy

What we pledge to do:

Axminster Town Council pledges to ensure it behaves responsibly towards the environment in all its activities. The Council recognises that the quality of the local environment contributes to the quality of life for residents and visitors to the town. It also recognises that improving the local environment will contribute towards improving the overall sustainability of the community through healthier people, better social cohesion, economic prosperity and a diverse and rich natural environment.

Environmental Legislation that we must follow:

Axminster Town Council will be aware of and act accordingly within the following parliamentary Acts:

The Water Act 2003. This Act places a duty on all public bodies to take into account, where relevant, the desirability of conserving water supplied or to be supplied to Council premises.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006. This Act gives specific powers to town and parish councils to tackle climate change. The Act places an obligation on town and parish councils to improve their energy efficiency.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. This Act extends the statutory offence of dropping litter and enables town and parish councils to authorise officers to serve fixed penalty notices for the litter offence under section 88 of the 1990 Environmental Protection Act; gives town and parish councils the power to issue fixed penalty notices for graffiti and fly-posting offences; and allows town and parish councils to create offences relating to the control of dogs and replaces the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996.

Our commitment to action in the following, specific areas:

Within its own buildings

The Council will ensure that all its activities relating to its working environments will be efficient and environmentally sustainable. Key activities will include (more to be added):

- a. Prohibition of single use plastic bottles
- b. Use of forestry stewardship commission or recycled paper
- c. Segregation or recycling of waste in accordance with EDDC requirements
- d. Installation of water reduction systems where appropriate. E.g. toilets, kitchens, rest rooms
- e. Regular review of energy usage to optimise consumption

In other Council premises:

In the Council’s parks and green spaces, the planting of drought resistant species will be considered where feasible and in line with the Council’s ‘indigenous species’ drive.

Recycling and Waste:

The Council minimises its waste production wherever possible, by reducing, repairing and reusing resources, and by recycling the waste its activities produce, where facilities exist. Rubbish is disposed of safely, following the correct procedures, and only licensed contractors are used to deal with hazardous wastes.

It supports and promotes schemes developed by East Devon District Council to cut the amount of household waste generated and ending in landfill and will encourage households to recycle and compost.

The Council will consider the possibility of pollution to air or waterways in its risk assessment procedure and will use this system to minimise the risks and implement mitigation strategies.

Sustainability in the Environment:

The Council’s Planning Committee consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when commenting on planning applications and also when developing or redeveloping any of the Council’s own buildings.

The Council lobbies on the need for developing sustainable drainage in Axminster, necessitated by the town’s topography and urban development, in order to mitigate flooding.

The Council also presses for the use of planning obligations (section 106 agreements made with developers) to promote sustainable development and mitigate environmental impacts resulting from developments.

Climate Change and Energy Conservation:

The Council will monitor its energy use and improve upon energy efficiency within its buildings by adopting energy-saving measures, e.g. purchasing electrical equipment with good energy ratings.

The Council will increase awareness of energy efficiency amongst employees and encourage energy-conserving behaviour, e.g. switching off lights that aren’t needed and switching off equipment rather than using standby.

In the longer term, the Council will investigate the feasibility of sustainable supplies of energy to power its premises.

Urban Environment:

The Town Council works both directly, and with town partners, to undertake specific highways works that contribute to the improvement of the town environment. These include maintaining public footpaths and rights of ways, litter collections, graffiti removal and emptying dog and waste bins.

The Council will work with relevant partners on the issue of town centre regeneration by supporting initiatives to improve the economic prosperity of the town.

Transport:

The Council will continue to encourage sustainable transport systems and promoting non-polluting modes and means of transport within the town, such as cycling, e-cycling and walking.

The Council will investigate sustainable, minimally polluting forms of fuel for its vehicles.

Biodiversity and Green Spaces:

The Council considers the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity in all its activities, but particularly with regard to land management. The Council seeks to manage green spaces in a manner that promotes and protects biodiversity as well as providing tranquil green areas to promote mental well-being. This includes the management of invasive plants on its land and using planting schemes that exclude species known to be invasive, particularly in the local area.

The Council is committed to ensure any use of pesticides is done in an environmentally responsible manner and to replace them with environmentally-friendly alternatives.

The Council will protect and enhance the quality of Axminster’s natural environment and open spaces and to make open spaces accessible to residents and visitors.

Sustainable Procurement:

Council procurement is continually assessed for sustainability implications, with the intention of purchasing renewable/recycled, environmentally low-impact and recyclable materials, so long as the requirements of value for money and quality are met.

Where possible, the Town Council uses local suppliers to encourage economic growth within the town. Where supplies are bought in, Fairtrade is supported and encouraged as part of its commitment to the town’s Fairtrade status.

It does not support the use of Single Use Plastic items.

It does support and promote Markets and shops selling local goods and produce, recognising that sourcing materials and services locally, and supporting goods that are produced locally will reduce carbon emissions resulting from transporting produce and provide jobs for local people.

Awareness and Partnerships:

The Council will promote awareness of, and information on, environmental issues within the community. It will act as a voice for local environmental concerns to those agencies given statutory powers to tackle problems.

The Council continues to engage in partnership working with the local community, organisations and other tiers of local government in partnerships on conservation projects.

The Council also supports other groups involved in environmental work in the town.

Council Services:

The services being delivered by the Town Council will not be detrimental to the quality of life for people living, working and visiting the town. The Town Council will encourage road safety initiatives, particularly those aimed at reducing speeding by motorists.

Surroundings:

Axminster Town Council will endeavour to conserve and protect the town's outstanding natural and historic environment. It will ensure that sustainable development principles underpin the Axminster Neighbourhood Plan.