Harbury Parish Council

Environment and Climate Policy

Adopted: 22 October 2026

Review Date: October 2030

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1. Introduction

Harbury Parish Council recognises that climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation represent significant challenges for rural communities. The Parish Council is committed to supporting practical local action that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, strengthens community resilience, protects and enhances the natural environment, and promotes sustainable development.

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the principles and objectives contained within the Harbury & Deppers Bridge Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2031, Stratford-on-Avon District planning policies, and relevant national planning and environmental legislation.

The Council reaffirms the vision within the Neighbourhood Development Plan for:

> "A socially cohesive and mutually supporting rural parish. A low carbon parish with adequate infrastructure, that respects the value of the surrounding farmland and natural landscape and offers essential services, recreation, employment and housing opportunities for people of all ages and income levels."

The Parish Council will seek to ensure that environmental sustainability and climate considerations are embedded in its own operations, decision-making processes, community leadership role and responses to planning and development proposals.

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2. Policy Objectives

The Parish Council will work to:

1. Reduce the carbon footprint of the Parish Council and the environmental impact of its activities.
2. Advocate sustainable, low-carbon development within the parish.
3. Encourage energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable transport.
4. Support climate resilience, including flood prevention and sustainable drainage.
5. Promote community awareness and participation in environmental improvement.
6. Protect agricultural land, trees, hedgerows and important habitats.
7. Support local food production, sustainable land management and rural stewardship.
8. Protect and enhance biodiversity, green infrastructure and landscape character.
9. Ensure environmental considerations are incorporated into planning consultations and parish projects.
10. Work collaboratively with residents, local organisations, schools, businesses and neighbouring authorities to improve environmental outcomes.

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3. Relationship with the Neighbourhood Development Plan

This policy supports and complements relevant policies within the Harbury and Deppers Bridge Neighbourhood Development Plan, including:

- Green Infrastructure
- Protection and enhancement of Local Green Spaces
- Landscape Design Principles
- Sustainable Design and Energy Efficiency
- Protection of significant views and rural character
- Sustainable drainage and flood risk management
- Protection of biodiversity and mature trees and hedgerows
- Sustainable transport and infrastructure improvements

The Parish Council will take account of these policies when commenting on planning applications and when undertaking Parish Council projects or initiatives.

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4. Climate Change and Carbon Reduction

The Parish Council acknowledges the need to contribute towards national and local carbon reduction targets and to support the transition to a low-carbon future.

The Parish Council will:

- Seek to reduce energy use, waste and emissions arising from Council activities.
- Encourage the use of renewable energy technologies where appropriate and compatible with local character and heritage.
- Encourage sustainable construction methods and materials, and energy-efficient building design and retrofitting.
- Consider environmental impacts in procurement decisions.
- Reduce unnecessary printing and promote digital communication where practical.
- Encourage low-carbon community initiatives and partnerships.
- Support opportunities for community energy projects where feasible.

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5. Sustainable Development and Planning

Whilst recognising the respective roles and responsibilities of the Parish, District and County Councils, when considering planning applications and planning policy matters, the Parish Council will, in addition to other relevant considerations, object to developments that are not in line with local plans, or which do not:

- Demonstrate high standards of sustainable design and construction.
- Minimise carbon emissions and energy demand.
- Incorporate energy efficiency and, where appropriate, renewable energy generation.
- Protect the rural character, landscape setting and significant views identified within the NDP.
- Include sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) and appropriate flood mitigation.
- Encourage walking, cycling and public transport use.
- Minimise light pollution and environmental disturbance.
- Provide appropriate electric vehicle charging infrastructure where feasible.
- Preserve and enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- Retain mature trees, hedgerows and natural features wherever possible
- Support adaptation to future climate conditions.

The Parish Council will normally object to development proposals that would:

- Result in unacceptable harm to biodiversity, habitats or landscape character.
- Increase flood risk or fail to provide adequate drainage.
- Remove important hedgerows, trees or green spaces without appropriate justification and mitigation.
- Cause significant environmental degradation or unsustainable traffic impacts.
- Conflict with the environmental objectives of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

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6. Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

The Parish Council recognises the importance of biodiversity, ecological connectivity and green infrastructure to the character and resilience of the parish.

The Parish Council has developed a separate biodiversity policy and a nature recovery strategy and action plan in order to:

- Support the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats, species diversity and ecological networks.
- Encourage biodiversity net gain in development proposals.
- Support the preservation and enhancement of Local Green Spaces.
- Encourage the planting of native trees, hedgerows and wildflower areas.
- Promote wildlife-friendly management of Parish Council land.
- Support measures that improve soil health and natural water management.
- Encourage the conservation of the River Itchen corridor and associated habitats.
- Support pollinator-friendly initiatives and the reduction in pesticide use where appropriate.
- Encourage community participation in biodiversity and conservation projects.

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7. Flooding, Water Management and Climate Resilience

The Parish Council recognises the increasing risks associated with climate change, including flooding, extreme weather and overheating.

The Parish Council will:

- Support development that incorporates sustainable drainage systems and natural flood management.
- Seek to ensure development avoids areas of flood risk and does not increase flooding elsewhere.
- Support the protection and restoration of natural watercourses and floodplain functions.
- Encourage rainwater harvesting and water conservation measures.
- Promote climate-resilient landscaping and planting.
- Work with relevant agencies and landowners to support flood resilience and emergency preparedness.
- Identify the location and provision of cool spaces in summer and warm spaces in winter.

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8. Transport and Air Quality

The Parish Council supports transport policies that reduce carbon emissions, improve safety and encourage sustainable travel.

The Parish Council will:

- Encourage walking and cycling through appropriate infrastructure improvements.
- Support safe pedestrian and cycle connections within the parish.
- Encourage improved public transport accessibility where feasible.
- Promote electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Support initiatives that reduce traffic congestion and vehicle idling.
- Encourage active travel to schools, community facilities and local services.

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9. Waste, Resources and Sustainable Procurement

The Parish Council will seek to minimise waste and encourage efficient use of resources.

The Parish Council will:

- Reduce, reuse and recycle materials wherever practical.
- Encourage the use of recycled and sustainable materials.
- Seek environmentally responsible suppliers and contractors.

- Avoid unnecessary single-use plastics in Council activities and events.
- Encourage community recycling and waste reduction initiatives.
- Consider whole-life environmental impacts in purchasing decisions.

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10. Community Engagement and Education

The Parish Council accepts its leadership role and also recognises that local environmental improvement depends upon community involvement and awareness.

The Parish Council will:

- Promote awareness of environmental and climate issues affecting the parish.
- Encourage residents, businesses and community groups to participate in local environmental projects.
- Support educational and awareness activities with local schools and organisations.
- Publicise practical actions residents can take to reduce environmental impacts.
- Work collaboratively with local groups, statutory bodies and neighbouring councils.
- Support local markets, services and businesses providing locally produced goods using sustainable materials and methods.

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11. Parish Council Operations

The Parish Council will seek to lead by example in its own operations.

The Council will:

- Consider environmental implications in all major decisions.
- Review opportunities to reduce energy use in Council-owned or managed facilities.
- Encourage digital working where appropriate.
- Use environmentally responsible maintenance practices on Council land.
- Monitor opportunities for grants and funding to support environmental improvements.

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12. Monitoring and Review

The Parish Council will review this policy periodically, normally every three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, planning policy or local priorities.

Progress against the aims of the policy will be considered by the relevant working group and reported to Council's as part of monitoring the ongoing work programme and planning consultation processes.

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13. Conclusion

Harbury Parish Council is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment for current and future generations. Through this policy, the Council aims to support a resilient, sustainable and low-carbon parish that retains its rural character, biodiversity and strong community identity while responding positively to the challenges of climate change.

References

This policy has been informed by:

- Harbury and Deppers Bridge Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018–2031
- Stratford-on-Avon District planning policies
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Relevant environmental and climate legislation and guidance