# How to write an environmental policy for your organisation

## Introduction

An Environmental Policy is a written statement outlining an organisation's mission in relation to managing the environmental effects and aspects of its operations. We are all expected to be more responsible in the way we operate.

## Information

The Environmental Policy should clearly state the aims and principles of an organisation (its mission) with respect to its impact on the environment. All organisations have an effect to some degree and the policy should recognise this. The policy should also allow the management / trustees of an organisation to communicate its aims and objectives to members, users and other interested parties. Before writing the policy, you need to consider what you do and how it impacts on the environment, you can then include in the policy how you will address these issues.

## Why write an environmental policy?

The benefits associated with writing an Environmental Policy include:

* demonstrating good community leadership
* maintaining good public/community relations
* reducing incidents that result in liability
* conserving raw materials and energy and therefore running costs
* gaining support from other organisations, public bodies and grant making bodies

## What is the best format and style for the policy?

There is no standard format for writing an Environmental Policy, but the style should reflect your organisation's culture.

There are a few basic rules to follow to ensure the policy is clearly written and concise:

* keep the statement short – it should be no longer than one page of A4
* the statement is meant for everyone to see, so make sure it's easy to read and understand
* the statement must be realistic, achievable and relevant to your organisation's activities and practices
* demonstrate commitment to making the policy work and get the statement signed, dated and endorsed by the chair of the management committee or trustees

## What statements should the policy contain?

There is no standard content for an Environmental Policy, although policies normally contain the same themes, including those listed below.

You may wish to include statements on the following:

* a commitment to continuous improvement
* recognition of compliance with relevant environmental legislation as a minimum level of performance
* the education and training of users in environmental issues and the environmental effects of their activities
* the monitoring of progress and review of environmental performance on a regular basis (usually annually).

Additional issues relevant to your organisation, and which you may wish to address in your Environmental Policy, could include:

* transport – how do users of the site or building get there, are bus routes advertised, is there limits on the number of parking spaces, is car sharing encouraged.
* recycling– are recycling facilities provided e.g. mixed dry recycling and glass bins inside the building, is there provision for recycling to be collected or transferred to recycling banks, are recycling banks available in the car park if there is one?
* minimising waste – is washable crockery and cutlery used, can scrap materials, empty bottles, newspapers etc be reused e.g. by a playgroup. Are newsletters sent digitally rather than being printed? Is there a noticeboard which could be used to limit printing?
* efficient use of water – Are any taps low flow, or the push, does someone check for dripping taps regularly and arrange for them to be repaired. Can water saving devices be fitted to toilets or taps. Are oil, chemicals or paints, properly disposed of and not poured down the drain. Is there an appropriate collection of nappies and sanitary towels, to ensure these are not flushed down toilets.
* efficient use of energy – are any buildings well insulated and draught proofed, do doors have self-closers, is the heating on a timer and thermostat, are thermostats out of reach from tampering, are light bulbs, heaters, computer monitors and any other electrical equipment low energy versions, can you use ‘green electricity’ tariffs, can you generate your own electricity or heat, how do you ensure lights and electrical equipment are not left on unnecessarily.
* use of chemicals – are cleaning materials, paints, herbicides etc as environmentally friendly as possible. Are dangerous chemicals stored and used safely (including rodenticides) with appropriate Health and Safety controls
* use of timber from sustainable (managed) forests – is all wood used FSC certified or from other sustainable sources
* procedures to minimise noise disturbance to neighbours – how do you avoid disturbing neighbours
* food and drink – do you source your supplies from local producers, do you use Fairtrade products for other food and drink, e.g. tea and coffee.

## Can I follow a checklist of statements to help me draft the policy?

The checklist below may help you to draft a policy appropriate to your organisation. Choose examples of the statements that would apply to your organisation and make the statements as specific as possible for your operations:

* comply with the requirements of environmental legislation and approved codes of practice
* assess the environmental impact of all historic, current and likely future operations
* continuously seek to improve environmental performance
* reduce pollution, emissions and waste
* reduce the use of all raw materials, energy and supplies
* raise awareness, encourage participation and train committee members and staff in environmental matters
* expect similar environmental standards from all suppliers and contractors
* assist customers to use products and services in an environmentally sensitive way
* liaise with the local community
* participate in discussions about environmental issues.

## Do I need to review the policy and if so, how often?

To check that your organisation's current activities comply with the Environmental Policy, a review needs to be undertaken on an annual basis. If your organisation's activities or operations change significantly, the policy may need to be amended.

## Legislation

Writing an Environmental Policy is undertaken on a voluntary basis in the UK and the structure and content are, therefore, not regulated specifically by UK legislation.

## Action Planning

Once you have finalised your Environmental Policy, you will need to create an action plan to support it. A template action plan can be found here (Embed the document). The action plan will help you monitor your progress against your environmental commitment.

## Further help and support

## Team Manager – Environment

## Tel: 0115 914 8441

Email: environmentalissues@rushcliffe.gov.uk

## Further Reading

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-responsibility-for-charities>

<https://www.redbridgecvs.net/sites/redbridgecvs.net/files/SampleEnvironmentalPolicy.pdf>

**An outline environmental policy**

Environmental Policy for Buciol Village Hall

Buciol Village Hall is a community run hall used by village organisations and people for social activities in the village of Buciol.

We seek to encourage social cohesion in a positive environment while minimising any wider environmental impacts.

We seek to fulfil all our legal obligations and demonstrate good practice.

We will achieve this by:

* Encouraging efficient use of utilities (energy and water), using signs and have an hourly check of the building when open. A time switch will be used to switch on and off the heating outside of the hours of use. High levels of insulation will be used in the construction of the building. We will seek to generate electricity using a central heating system that drives a micro generator.
* Promote waste minimisation by providing a scrapstore for the playgroup and getting recycling facilities provided in the car park. Notices by the bin will remind users to recycle where possible.
* Displaying bus timetables.
* Providing fairtrade coffee and tea for users

The village hall management committee will be responsible for overseeing this policy, but it will be implemented on a day to day basis by the booking secretary.

We will review and improve the environmental policy before each AGM and provide details of our success at the AGM.

Signed

Chair of the management committee

**Please Note**: The information in this briefing is a guide only and is not a definitive guide to environmental policies or legislation. Your own circumstances also need to be taken into account

The following page provides examples of environmental policies

Produced by Rushcliffe Borough Council, 2006, 2013 and 2021 with material taken from the Envirowise website which is no longer available

**Example environmental policies**

 

Our Environmental Policy

**The Rector and the Select Vestry of St Molua's recognise that concern for all components of the environment is a fundamental responsibility of all Christian people as stewards of God's creation. The following policy was therefore adopted by the Select Vestry at its meeting on 13 December 1999.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **We are dedicated to carrying out all of our functions and activities in a way which minimises negative impact on the environment.** | **It is an objective of the Parish to co-operate with statutory, voluntary and community bodies in an attempt to reduce negative impact on the environment.**  | **We are committed to ensuring that all activities undertaken on Parish premises or on behalf of the Parish will comply with legislation.** |

**In keeping with this policy we will :**

* **monitor and improve energy use**
* **inform and update all staff, parishioners and contractors on policy**
* **set targets for reduced waste generation**
* **include environmental considerations in decisions of the Select Vestry**
* **minimise the risk of land, water and air pollution**
* **generally apply sustainability objectives in all aspects and activities**
* **promote recycling within the parish**
* **attempt to make ongoing improvements to this policy**

**Since the policy was first published parishioners have been kept up to date with developments through the parish magazine "Contact".**

**More recently, individual members of our Environmental Stewardship Committee have been addressing specific environmental issues through a series of articles which again have been published in "Contact".**

**If you have any questions, views or ideas that you would like to share with the Environmental Stewardship Committee please email us at** molua.stormont@btinternet.com

Online at [www.stormont.down.anglican.org/environ.htm](http://www.stormont.down.anglican.org/environ.htm)

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Blundeston and Flixton Parish Council is committed to the environment, its preservation and enhancement. The Council are in favour of encouraging the use of bicycles, walking and environment friendly transport and replacing normal light bulbs with energy efficient ones. The Council does all that it can to encourage the conservation of water, energy, peat, tropical hard wood and the disuse of harmful chemicals.

The Council is doing all that it can to encourage biodiversity, habitat enhancement, habitat creation and making the same available to the local public for their enjoyment and education.

The above policy was unanimously agreed by the Council at their meeting on 7 October 2002.

Online at **www.blundeston.org.uk/parish\_council1.html**