

Sustainability Plan for West Swindon Parish Council

Created by Bioregional, One Planet Living is all about living within the natural limits of our one planet. If everyone lived like the average European, we would need the resources of three planets. These principles map onto the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals and allow for a holistic approach that helps people work and live healthier, happier, and greener lives.

Our vision for the West Swindon Parish

West Swindon Parish Council manages a range of different types of land across West Swindon and will apply One Planet Living Principles to our approach to grounds maintenance and how we work.



West Swindon has green spaces and green corridors in abundance. Our vision is for West Swindon residents to live happy, healthy lives within the limits of the planet, leaving space for wildlife and wilderness.



1. Health and Happiness

- We will promote health and happiness by maintaining public open spaces for recreation and sporting use.
- We will continue to develop spaces for outdoor exercise
- We will work to ensure that cycle paths are clear of overgrowth throughout the year for pedestrians and cyclist
- We will support local volunteering and participation to help grow a sense of community and social connections
- We will support local groups who promote mental health and wellbeing

Actions @ 01.01.23:

Ongoing inspections and repairs of play equipment

Complete self installation to update Bess Road Toddler Play Area & Plattes Close

Responding to reports of overgrown vegetation

Ongoing support volunteer group clean ups (Grange Park, The Prinnels, Toothill)

Ongoing support to established litter picking groups (Westlea, Shaw, Toothill)

Encourage and support new volunteers – establishing a link with Lydiard Park Academy

Improve the green environment at Claypits Play Area and Horse Sculpture



2. Equity and local economy

- We will operate as an open and transparent local council with time for public questions and open to local scrutiny.

Actions @ 01.01.23

Promote awareness of Parish Council elections

Public attendance at meetings promoted

Online and virtual access continued

Redevelop a new website making information and reporting easier and more visible



3. Culture and Community

- We will keep village centre spaces and local areas clean and tidy
- We will care for open spaces so that they can be used for community activities.
- We will continue with our Clean and Green Fund which rewards individual and community group activity with small pots of funding for their neighbourhood improvements.
- We will be open to grant applications from local groups and projects.
- We will provide practical support to community groups and buildings where we can.
- We will improve the Parish Council's website to better promote community activities and events across the Parish community

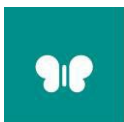
Actions @ 01.01.23

Grants scheme ongoing

Clean and Green Fund ongoing – purchase of planting and materials for local groups

Continue site visits to the copse groups

Share promotion of local events and activities



4. Land and nature

- We will promote biodiversity through the creation and expansion of natural wild meadow spaces within the Parish.
- Rotation and addition of low mow sites each year
- We will work with Swindon Borough Council's community forest officers to add new tree planting across the Parish.
- We will regularly review our grass cutting routine with the aim of promoting regrowth of wild flowers between cuts (daisies, clover, buttercups) throughout the grass cutting season.
- We will leave copses, wooded verges and tree noise barriers as wild spaces with natural planting.

- We will identify key spaces across the Parish to form Bee-line corridors.
- We will cut shrubs and hedgerows annually
- We will aim to mix container planting with bee/insect friendly flowers.
- We will keep natural ponds and waterways free of litter and flytipping as best we can from the banks, promoting these spaces as natural habitats.
- We will reduce the use of chemicals and weedkillers to a minimum and withdraw from routine applications.

Actions @ 01.01.23

Ongoing natural meadows at Toothill Park, Edgehill Haven and Shaw Ridge.

Low mow spaces agreed for

- Rear of Saltway field (walking path to be mown through)
- Rear of Bodiam Drive (maintaining the crescent and dog walking area as normal)
- Edge of Kiln Park adjacent to Whitehill Way
- Shaw Forest park – around the seating area
- Peatmoor Lake by the Chinese Experience
- Rear of Russeley Close

No routine weedkiller around furniture and obstacles

Trialled bee friendly planting in floral planters – adding new planting at Toothill, Freshbrook and Shaw village centres

Distributing wildflower seed where it is practical to do.

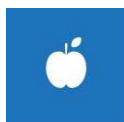
Liaison ongoing with Swindon Borough Council for additional tree planting, sites agreed and planting schemes scheduled.

Supporting local groups to purchase native wild flowers and plants (Greendown, Westlea, Shaw FAB)



5. Sustainable Water

- We will be mindful of our use of water as part of our day to day service delivery



6. Local and sustainable food

- We will support initiatives that tackle food waste and redistribution of food resources
- We will continue to provide allotments and will review other options for residents in West Swindon

Actions @ 01.01.23:

Investigating possibility of extension at Blagrove allotment site

Allotment area identified for community growing

Liaison with Swindon Borough Council on wellbeing and community resources



7. Travel and transport

- We will keep cycle ways and footpath clear and accessible.
- We will promote a clean and green environment to encourage people to make use of their local routes.
- We will aim to ensure that local bus stops are litter free.
- We will use electric vehicles where it is practical to do so.

Actions @ 01.01.23:

New all electric van for routine play inspections and general maintenance

Ongoing routine maintenance and street cleansing

Liaison with Swindon Borough Council highways on condition of footpaths and cycle ways

Reporting of overgrown vegetation on private property to Swindon Borough Council



8. Materials and products

- We will aim to source recycled products particularly for our high volume consumables.
- We will use peat free compost.
- We will support initiatives such as Plastic Free Swindon.
- We will recycle materials within our day to day operation whenever it is possible to do so e.g. reusing timber, repairing and sustaining equipment in use.



9. Zero Waste

- We will work with Swindon Borough Council to discourage flytipping and promote a safe and clean environment.
- We will work in partnership with Swindon Borough Council and promote use of door step waste collection resources and other sources of help.
- We will promote use of Swindon Borough Council's household recycling centre.
- We will work with schools to promote key messages on waste and recycling.

Actions @ 01.01.23:

Dialogue with Keep Swindon Tidy & Plastic Free Swindon with anti littering activities. Support Clear Waters, Swindon to the Sea campaign.



10. Zero Carbon Energy

- We will promote activities that move towards a low carbon future.

Actions @ 01.01.23:

<i>Reviewed Swindon Borough Council Strategies for Electric Vehicle Charging and Climate Change</i>

Conclusion:

In common with all services, West Swindon Parish Council has a finite budget and a fixed set of staffing resources to deliver services across a large urban parish area. The Parish Council has to balance practical choices with ethical choices.

With 991,000 square metres of grass, 67,000 square metres of shrub beds, 69,000 linear metres of hedging and 20 play area sites, the Parish Council cannot provide bespoke services and standards as requested by small groups and individual residents. There are also some methods of maintenance that are more achievable with the size of the team and tools available. For example, we need to use certain tools, machines and vehicles to complete the wide range of tasks and services required on a daily basis such as mechanical mowers and both a large and small tractor. Decisions are made that ensure our choices are

- fit for purpose (able to sustain use, appropriate for the job required)
- cost effective (purchase and long term use equate to good value)
- employee friendly (e.g. low vibration, lightweight, ergonomic)

The Parish Council also has to deliver a standard of service that meets its legal obligations and is suitable for local environment. Swindon Borough Council remains the land owner of public open spaces in West Swindon and sets standards for the Parish Council. Parish Councillors know that local expectations and attitudes can vary, however we will aim to be consistent, constructive and communicative about what we do and why we do it.