

Sustainability report.

Measures taken by Wells City Council staff in response to the declaration of a Climate Emergency

Employment of a Sustainability Officer -

- Wells City Council appointed a Sustainability Officer in 2021 with a two year fixed term.
- Applied for and successfully obtained a grant - The together for our Planet Fund in association with the National Lottery. They took the form of 7 free workshops, each focussing on a different Sustainability Topic.
- These topics were: Energy, Food waste, Growing Your Own (Food), Travel, Biodiversity, RRR (Reduce Reuse, Recycle) and Sustainable Christmas. With assistance from: Somerset Wildlife Trust (Biodiversity), the gardeners of the Bishops Palace (grow your own), ACE (energy), The Sustainable Wells Group, Centre for Sustainable Energy and Avalon Community Energy.

Town Hall –

- DEC Renewal energy display certificate showing the building's energy rating and CO2 emissions.
- The boiler was replaced 7-8 years ago, most efficient available within budget. Computer controlled to take into account both the inside and outside ambient temperatures, take an average and adjust itself within individual rooms.
- Loft space was recently double insulated
- Ongoing program of changing to LED lighting – all regularly used rooms are now LED only. Last fitted was the Main Hall, where we were burning 1800w in floodlights we are now burning only 80w.
- Windows – those in the main part of the building towards the front are all listed and unable to be replaced. Some in the back office space do need double glazing when funds allow, the Sustainability Officer when in post looked into availability of grants but as a Local Authority we did not qualify.
- Signs around the Town Hall ask for people to please respect it as a plastic free zone and we use recyclable paper cups with the drinking water.
- With regards recycling, we have provision for recycling paper and shredded confidential papers, but a member of staff takes responsibility for plastics, tins and glass and takes them home to put with their household recycling.
- Going forward the offices and Councillors need to look at printing and paper use, as well as being environmentally unfriendly this has become expensive. Also there are plans to put a slow release light switch in the area of the Councillor cubby holes that will switch itself off.
- Once the current energy contract is up for renewal, the aim is to look at fixed rate green tariffs.
- A draught lobby was installed - functions like an air lock, it helps maintain the temperature of the building by blocking any wind directed towards the entrance and the inevitable noise and air flow through any open doors. This of course makes the building more efficient which isn't just good for the environment but is also cost effective.

Portway –

- The Portway Annexe was in a poor state of repair having been neglected for years, and the boiler system had to be completely overhauled. Once again a new programmable system was put in which was chosen for efficiency, monitoring temperature level in each room and adjusting automatically to 19 degrees.
- Again LED lighting is being rolled out throughout the whole building.
- Grants were looked into but not applicable for the age of the system.
- Being a listed building, windows again are not replaceable but would look to be sealed as best they can to reduce heat loss.
- The building came into the Council's possession with the roof completely uninsulated, and the aim is to begin double insulation of the loft spaces in the next couple of weeks.
- It was hoped there was scope for a community garden, and the fruit of the apple tree has been harvested and offered to the building's customers.

Outside Spaces -

- Recent purchase of a truck provided a dilemma – ideally following the Council's climate change ethos we would have sought an electric alternative, but due to lack of charging points/ the reduced capacity / expense of an electric vehicle, a new, low emissions diesel alternative was bought which takes Adblue - a non-toxic, non-flammable, odourless and biodegradable solution designed to help diesel vehicles meet the latest exhaust emission regulations.
- Going forward the aim ultimately is to move towards electric powered vehicles and machinery.
- Although the majority of the cemetery is immaculately manicured, the bottom end of the site is given over to wild planting and a recent tree planting project means there is new growth as well as caring for the old. Around the City, sites are being looked at for re-wilding and reclaiming areas back to what would have been natural growth, with native seeds being used.
- Wherever possible local suppliers and goods are used.
- Peat free compost is used throughout Wells in Bloom.
- It has been noted this year that whilst the WIB watering has taken place in the early morning, fuel has been saved by the simple action of turning the engine of the truck off whilst stationary and watering.

All staff have access to a Bike2work scheme

Some of these are just small actions, but overall contribute to achieving a lower carbon footprint for Wells City Council and making a difference to climate change.

October 2022