**Broadstairs & St. Peter’s Town Council Environmental Strategy**

**Adopted by Council 25 January 2021 minute 398**

**General Introduction**

The **environment** is defined as ***the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates***. It is acknowledged that there are increasing man-made pressures on our environment which need to be mitigated through positive action. To this end Broadstairs & St Peter’s Town Council (B&SPTC) have established an Environment Sub-committee.

The Environment Sub-committee has drafted this Strategy which sets out the broad vision and ethos of Broadstairs & St Peter’s Town Council. It aims to provide the framework within which the Town Council can positively engage with the community and businesses over the next 10years. The strategy provides enough detail to include annual actions and budgets while being flexible enough to seize new opportunities as they arise. This is a living document which will be regularly reviewed and developed. Together with the Tree Strategy, the Environmental Strategy will feed into the Neighbourhood Development Plan, which in turn feeds into Thanet’s Local Plan and will help to inform planning decisions.

While the Town Council wishes to lead on this important issue, we know that we cannot deliver this strategy on our own. Everyone, from the Government through to individual residents, has a role to play. The changes we are all able to individually make will vary in scale, but each is important as we work towards our shared aspiration to reduce our carbon footprint and improve the quality of our environment.

To achieve the aims of the Environmental Strategy the Town Council will need to allocate a budget to the Environment Sub-committee who will also endeavour to realise additional funding from relevant external sources.

The Town Council will endeavour to lead by example, reflecting on its own practices and keeping abreast of any new developments and policies which may be useful to further our stated aims.

The Town Council’s Environment sub-committee has identified three key areas.

1. **Improving air quality**
2. **Improving biodiversity**
3. **Improving the built environment**
4. **Improving Air Quality**

**What is Air Quality?**

Good air quality pertains to the degree to which the air is clear, clean, and free from pollutants such as smoke, dust, and smog among other gaseous impurities in the air. Air quality is determined by assessing a variety of pollution indicators. Local air quality is monitored by Thanet District Council.

**Why is Air Quality Important?**

When air quality is poor pollutants in the air can be hazardous to people, particularly those with lung or heart conditions. Clean air is a basic requirement of a healthy environment for us all to live in, work, and bring up families. Air quality has improved significantly in recent decades, but we must remain committed globally to take active measures to reduce the most damaging pollutants and to take actions to improve the air we breathe.

**Threats to Air Quality**

Burning of fossil fuels, transport, wood burning, pesticides, deforestation and loss of open green spaces.

1. **Improving Biodiversity**

**What is Biodiversity**?

Simply put, biodiversity encompasses all living things including people, plants, animals, fungi, micro-organisms, the habitats in which they live and the ecosystem they are part of. Biodiversity is all around us in a variety of different habitats such as our coastline, woodlands, parks, fields, gardens, and roadside verges. Biodiversity is the result of millions of years of evolution, shaped by natural processes and, more and more through the influence of humans.

**Why is Biodiversity Important?**

Biodiversity is necessary for the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. Wildlife supports the healthy ecosystems that we depend on and these biodiverse ecosystems help us stay healthy in a symbiotic relationship. Biodiversity adds character, beauty and distinctiveness to an area and enhances our well-being and mental health. Our local, natural landscape helps to shape our culture, inspires artists, writers, and composers and is an integral part of our identity. Biodiversity plays an essential part of the solution to climate change and it is our responsibility to look after it.

**Threats to Biodiversity**

As the human population increases so it exacts more pressure on the natural world and the balance and relationship between them can be harmed. Major threats to biodiversity include climate change, pollution and habitat loss which necessitates action in order to protect what we have and to mitigate further loss. Pollution can take many forms from litter, effluent, noise, and light which all need to be managed effectively. The Government’s current ambition of building 300,000 new houses each year, together with the requisite road infrastructure, is a threat to our open, green spaces. Recent proposed changes to both planning and farming legislation could also potentially put pressure on the natural world.

1. **Improving the Built Environment**

**What is the Built Environment?**

The term refers to that of our surroundings which has been built by man and which is differentiated from the natural environment. It includes not only buildings but any man-made infrastructure that supports human activity such as roads, pavements, street furniture, public utilities etc.

**Why is the Built Environment Important?**

The built environment gives us a sense of place. In Broadstairs and St Peter’s there are designated conservation areas and areas of high townscape value which help to shape and preserve the character of the town. Effective [development](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Development) of the built environment depends on a commitment to a clear course of action over the short, medium and long term. The Local Planning Authority is TDC and the Highways are managed by KCC, Broadstairs & St Peter’s Town Council have a consultee status.

**Threats to the Built Environment**

As the population grows so the demand for homes and the pressure on road infrastructure and public utilities increase. Threats to the built environment may be brought about by changes to national planning regulations, financial constraints, and local authority priorities. Unfortunately, there are also incidents of defacing the built environment due to anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, graffiti and littering.

The challenge we face with regard to climate change is recognised across the globe, as is the need for immediate action if we are to respond to the danger this poses to our shared environment.

The UK Government and Kent County Council have both pledged to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Thanet District Council declared a climate change emergency in 2019 aiming to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Broadstairs & St Peter’s Town Council have recently declared their own commitment to climate change and have formed a new Environment Sub-committee in order to work towards these goals.

**The EAG very much looks forward to working together with residents and community partners as we bring forward various initiatives which will be documented in an Action Plan.**

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