

GRCC Environment Policy

1. Aims of Policy

GRCC acknowledges the connection between the climate and other environmental crises and the aggregate effects of GRCC's activities, policies, and procedures on climate change and the environment at a local, regional, and global level. Recognising GRCC's responsibility to reduce the organisation's carbon and environmental footprint, the aim of this Environment Policy and associated Climate Change Action Plan is to provide guidance to GRCC's staff, Trustees, and volunteers on how to effect positive impact. We recognise that we must all in our roles, as individuals and teams, work together to reduce GRCC's environmental impact.

2. Environmental Impact

GRCC recognises the impact our activities have on the environment, such as:

- increase in greenhouse gas emissions and depletion of fossil fuels from:
 - heating / electricity use at Community House;
 - car travel to / from work, meetings, and other external activities;
 - transportation of materials for consumption as part of our work;
 - use of cloud computing (hosted desktop and data storage) and AI, which are energy intensive.
- water consumption:
 - at Community House;
 - use of cloud computing (hosted desktop and data storage) and AI, which use substantial quantities of water for datacentre cooling;
- depletion of resources, such as:
 - use of paper at Community House;
 - rare earth elements used in AI systems, smartphones, and computers;
- air pollution and Ozone depletion from:
 - transport usage, whether by staff, Trustees, or volunteers' travel, or transportation of materials;
 - use of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), such as in photocopier ink toner used at Community House or in commercial printing ordered by GRCC;
- increase in waste products being sent to landfill or incineration.

GRCC Trustees have devolved responsibility for driving forward this Environmental Policy and the Climate Change Action Plan to the SLT, and expect them to be fully committed to the policy and action plan.

3. Mitigating Action

GRCC takes mitigating action, including following the principles of the Five Rs of Waste Management, to reduce our environmental impact. Good practice guidelines are promoted to GRCC's staff, Trustees, and volunteers including through the Climate Change Action Plan.

Energy Efficiency at Community House

GRCC highlights measures to minimise energy usage at Community House with staff, Trustees, and volunteers, including making good use of natural rather than electric light, switching off all lights and equipment, and closing internal doors at the end of the day, and choosing more energy efficient products and technologies when older office equipment needs to be replaced. Good use is made of the timer and thermostatic controls for heating, and all radiators have been fitted with thermostatic radiator valves to enable control of individual room temperatures.

Efficient use of water at Community House

GRCC makes the most efficient use of water. We achieve this by raising awareness among GRCC staff, Trustees, and volunteers of water efficiency, through use of more water efficient products and technologies (through best practice), and by following the relevant measures in our Climate Change Action Plan.

Travel

GRCC recognises that the nature of its work with rural communities in a county with limitations to public transport availability inevitably requires a certain level of car use.

GRCC minimises the dual impact of fuel consumption and exhaust emissions by adopting measures to promote responsible transport use by GRCC staff, Trustees, and volunteers. These measures include use of public transport wherever practicable; connecting to public transport hubs for meetings / events where possible, and highlighting this in publicity; promoting car sharing between GRCC employees, volunteers and other partners with whom we work; multiple-destination journeys; and cycling / walking for local journeys.

GRCC's Flexible and Hybrid Working Policy enables use of public transport, walking, or cycling as reasonable alternatives for the commute to work, and secure cycle storage is provided in the enclosed garden. Reduction in project mileage allowance encourages creative solutions to reduce need for car usage, including use of Zoom and Teams rather than attending in-person meetings.

Minimising Waste and Recycling

GRCC promotes a strategy of managing our waste by adopting the Five Rs (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle) of waste management, which provides a hierarchy for minimising environmental impact by prioritising waste prevention over disposal.

Refuse includes avoiding single-use items and avoiding items with excessive packaging. Reduction includes minimising the amount of printing in favour of electronic versions of documents, and using double-sided printing as the default. As part of our digital projects, we actively repurpose GRCC-issued laptops and smartphones as they are replaced. The final option of recycling is achieved by having centres for recycling paper, cardboard, plastic, glass,

cans, batteries, and food waste at Community House, plus promoting use of similar centres in other venues.

Resource Consumption

GRCC adopts a responsible purchase and procurement policy which considers both the impact of the product on the environment, and the wider ethical concerns of goods and services that are purchased. GRCC encourages staff, Trustees, and volunteers to source locally produced food and drink for catering and to contract with local catering companies.

GRCC considers energy efficiency when procuring new equipment and alternative energy suppliers when contracts are due to be negotiated. In addition, GRCC's work includes projects that encourage the circular economy, for example redistribution of local refurbished IT hardware, and GRCC has specifically sought out more environmentally friendly servers for hosting internal digital platforms.

Service Delivery

In delivering its own services GRCC considers potential environmental and social impact, e.g., when considering location of venues for events. GRCC leads by example by hiring community buildings for GRCC events, such as village and community halls, and venues which have good links to public transport, and through use of online meetings for service delivery.

GRCC promotes environmental awareness and individual and corporate responsibility through our work with stakeholders (both communities, and partner agencies). We encourage stakeholders to adopt environmentally sensitive policies and practices, within the spirit of GRCC's own policy.

4. Monitoring and Delivery

- The policy and Climate Change Action Plan will be monitored by a team of staff members.
- GRCC uses the [Green Impact](#) environmental quality toolkit, developed by the National Union of Students, as its framework for self-assessment of its environmental performance, and for driving forward continual improvement.
- GRCC is legally bound to meet all relevant environmental regulations and laws, and will regard this as the minimum standard of environmental performance.
- GRCC ensures that staff, Trustees, and volunteers are aware of this environmental policy; of their impact on the environment; and that environmental improvement requires the support of the whole team. This is achieved through the induction of staff, Trustees, and volunteers, through team meetings, and through encouragement and demonstration of best practice across all levels of the organisation.
- GRCC staff are also informed of amendments to practice and of achievements at Team Meetings, although environmental issues will also be discussed in the interim.
- Environmental considerations are included as part of Risk Assessment and business planning.

5. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years to revise, update and amend wherever necessary and to check for implementation. In the event of major changes, the policy will be ratified by the GRCC Board of Trustees.