

Draft

Lowestoft Town Council Recycling and Renewables Policy

This policy introduces recycling and renewables goals designed to meet the needs of Lowestoft and contribute to a cleaner and more sustainable environment for all.

Why Recycle and Why Use Renewable Energy?

We use resources from the Earth to live comfortable, healthy, safe lives today's modern society and none of us want to go back to a primitive life without modern conveniences, plastics or computer chips. But we also realise we have a responsibility to use those resources in a sustainable and responsible way.

Recycling takes a basic element like iron and uses it over and over and so gives us the benefit of using the iron without the disadvantages of finding, mining it, and processing the ore. A glass milk bottle is used 25 times before it needs to be melted down and reformed into a new bottle. A plastic milk container is a single use item and pollutes the earth forever, and possibly us, too. Plastic breaks down to tiny particles called micro-plastics and we are finding these tiny particles in our food, in the soil, and in our water. We don't know how these micro-plastics will affect the health of our children, but in the interests of the "precautionary principle", it's best if we don't tempt fate and we practice prevention, instead of looking for a cure.

Using renewable energy is the flip side to the recyclable coin. Again, the goal is to impact our Earth as lightly as possible. Using renewable energy is the ultimate form of recycling, since we're harvesting the energy of sunlight and wind and using it again and again in a carbon-neutral way.

There are two ways to achieve environmental value. One way is to understand that the reuse or recycling of a material takes advantage of the fact that the energy that was used in the initial production of the material is probably greater than the energy that will be used for recycling. The other way to achieve value is that the generation

of renewable energy displaces the use of fossil fuels. So we can see that value can come from two forms – as a material resource (for example, recycling) or an energy resource.

Lowestoft Town Council will lead by example and use as few non-recyclable items and non-renewable energy sources as we can. We feel a deep responsibility that goes well beyond our statutory obligations to promote a healthy, sustainable life for everyone in our parish and to achieve that goal we will develop concrete actions and policies, which are outlined in this document.

Targets

We will work to ensure Lowestoft makes progress in meeting local and national legislative targets as well as these parish targets:

Target 1- Lowestoft Town Council created waste will be reduced to a minimum.

Target 2- Work to increase the amount of household waste is to be recycled, in accordance with the policies of the East Suffolk District Council waste management plan.

Target 3 - Urge the East Suffolk District Council to introduce an organic waste collection for all households and to increase the equitability of service provision.

Target 4- Urge the East Suffolk District Council to develop better recycling facilities to recover our resources. Promote the development of a mixed recycling (also known as co-mingled) Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). Enhance organic waste treatment facilities.

Policies

Goals

Minimise waste production – an underpinning priority to reduce the amount of waste produced by the parish

Minimise landfill - landfill is the waste management option of last resort and is only appropriate for a very small proportion of the waste stream

Maximise recycling/organic waste treatment

Local solutions where possible

Reduce water use

Reduce carbon-based energy use

Policies

Neighbourhood Involvement Will be Encouraged

The LTC will work to promote the development of reuse networks with local charitable organisations and ventures across the parish. We will work in partnership with these organisations to develop focused messaging on waste prevention. We will continue to engage with residents about reducing and recycling all forms of waste, composting, Free-sharing and Free-cycling, and urge responsible waste disposal when all other alternatives have been exhausted. All of these schemes will aim to cut the amount of waste going to landfill.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Lowestoft Neighbourhood Plan will promote a sustainable society and encourage recycling, recyclable materials in construction, and the use of renewable energy to power our houses, business and transportation infrastructure whenever possible.

The Plan will promote adequate space for shared or individual waste and recycling collection containers without jeopardising the aesthetic values of the community.

Influence District and County Planning to Promote Recycling and Renewable Energy

LTC has a statutory duty to promote responsible land-use management plans and consults with the East Suffolk District Council, the Planning Authority determining planning applications within the parish boundary. As such, LTC has an important role to play in facilitating the provision of waste management infrastructure. We will work closely with developers and Planning Officers to ensure that new developments are designed to accommodate recycling facilities, environmentally sensitive waste management solutions, and work to develop housing and business solutions that maximise low-or-no carbon transportation strategies.

As the parish grows, LTC will continue to influence the planning process. We will provide comment on all planning applications to ensure they have sufficient waste and recycling collection facilities and will embed in our neighbourhood plan guidance to promote recycling, responsible waste disposal, responsible fresh water use, and promote low-or-no carbon transportation. We are an important contributor to development masterplan discussions for large projects, and we will continue to work with developers to influence the design of new developments to deliver convenient, simple and future-proof facilities for all residents.

We promote underground containers or communal facilities throughout developments to reduce the number of bins on pavements, improve the value of communities and to deter fly-tipping. Underground or communal containers reduce the need for frequent visits by several collection vehicles. We will work to ensure safe and sufficient access throughout the parish for collection vehicles without risk to vehicles or pedestrians.

We will work to ensure that suitable waste storage facilities are included in all developments and that these facilities allow for recycling storage in addition to residual waste.

Carbon Management

LTC has a responsibility to reduce carbon emissions that result from our parish activities. To that end, we will use renewable and carbon free energy resources whenever possible.

Parish vehicles will be electric whenever possible. Public transportation, walking and cycling will be encouraged for all citizens and used when practical by our employees.

Making Choices Between Goals, Costs and Practicality

When alternative energy and carbon neutral choices are to be made, the LTC will use a model of “value for the money” to guide those choices. However, “Value” can also be defined in economic, resource use and environmental terms. Where the financial cost of recovering a material is lower than that of disposing it, value can be generated for our community. In resource use terms, value can be defined as deriving a product from waste that is at least as useful as its ‘natural’ counterpart, thereby displacing the use of virgin resources.

Precautionary Principle will Guide Decisions

The **precautionary principle** says that when human activities lead to unacceptable harm that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, we should choose to avoid or diminish that harm. This paper will not lay out the arguments for or against climate change and other environmental debates, but instead take the position of “first, do no harm.” Not producing waste in the first instance is the key to sustainable waste management, whereby prevention is better than cure. Using as little carbon based energy as possible contributes to a thriftier, cleaner, healthier society, which can only be seen as a benefit.

Equality of Service Provision Policies

The LTC recognises that not all households are equally served when a one-size-fits-

all waste policy is introduced. Some households are large, while others are just one person. Some households have large gardens that allow for composting and storage of items until they can be taken to the dump, while others do not. Some people have cars that allow them access to the dumps, while others rely on public transportation which means they can't haul messy, fragmented or large items to public dumps. We will promote equality of service provision principles, which means that those on limited income, who don't have cars, and who have larger families have options created that will allow them to recycle and dispose of waste in a responsible manner.

The Lowestoft Town Council will encourage Equality of Service Provision initiatives. This could mean that large households could have the option of purchasing extra waste disposal services at a small cost (see Purchasing Bin Bags). If green bins for garden waste are to be charged, then two sizes should be offered so that small flats and apartments who don't have much garden waste pay a much smaller fee. The District Council should initiate large items disposal days once a quarter where skips are located around the town where large items can be disposed of for free.

A more equitable system for waste disposal might not cost the District Council any extra since it will help alleviate fly-tipping, which is very costly to clean up. The value of these proposals should not simply be weighed against revenue-neutral criteria, but under the broader values noted in "Making Choices".

Street Bins

The LTC will actively encourage the expansion of street bins and dual use (recycling on the go) street bins. We will expand the number of bins available to the public in our parks, play areas, and buildings.

Recycling at Events

The LTC will require that all events on its property have a waste disposal plan and we will encourage all events to offer recycling options to their event customers. Most events produce similar types of waste materials such as paper, cardboard, drinks cans, plastic bottles and food packaging. All these items are valuable resources that can be collected for recycling and reprocessed into useful materials.

Recycling of Glass

The LTC will promote glass recycling wherever possible, by promoting the establishment of more glass recycling bins and promoting returnable drink, beer and milk containers.

Recycling of Food Containers

The LTC recognises that plastic and styrofoam plates, cutlery, and cups contribute to unrecyclable landfill. We urge that all take-aways, fast food, street food vendors, restaurants, and events use either recyclable or reusable containers, plates, etc. and provide a place for their customers to bin them. By leading by example, we will use reusable or recyclable paper, plastic, china, metal and glass containers, vessels, and cutlery at our events and in our offices, with the emphasis on reusable, over recyclable. We will not provide plastic straws at any event and will request that our caterers do not use plastic decorations on food and non-recyclable boxes, trays, and serving utensils.

Packaging

The LTC will encourage the use of low or no packaging options and encourage the use of recyclable packaging, reusable bottles, and minimise the use of all plastics. Its own purchasing decisions will endeavor to be guided to use as little extraneous packaging as possible. While we realise that parishes have little influence in choices made by national manufacturers in their packaging decisions, we will urge the creation of national standards that reduce packaging and the use of non-biodegradable plastics. We note that the use of plastic carrier bags have been drastically reduced since a small fee has been charged for them and we urge that national incentives for recycling plastic bottles and other non-recyclables be introduced.

Purchasing of Bin Bags

We will urge that the East Suffolk District Council institute a bin bag purchase scheme, (such as that used by Wokingham District Council who sells 10 bags for £4), so that those who have extra rubbish have an easy and legal way to dispose of it. We recognise that large families have a greater need to dispose of more rubbish and that despite all efforts sometime they simply accumulate more than can be fitted in a bin. Some times of year, like Christmas, and some family events, like parties, can create much more rubbish than is expected. Lack of options on what to do with this extra rubbish leads to fly tipping and improper disposal where our gulls and foxes get into the rubbish and scatter it around.