**CLIMATE POLICY**

**INTRODUCTION**

Climate Change is described as rising levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases create a greenhouse effect, trapping the sun’s energy and causing the earth, in particular the oceans, to warm. Climate change leads to localised flooding from heavier rainfall, hotter summers and cooler winters causing an increase in energy demand amongst other things, and more extreme weather events generally.

**POLICY**

The trustees of Dorchester Municipal Charities recognise that they have a responsibility towards the environment beyond legal and regulatory requirements. DMC is committed to reducing our environmental impact and continually improving our environmental performance as an integral part of our strategy and operating methods.

This policy is for all trustees and staff of DMC.

We will undertake to achieve the following:

* Comply with regulatory requirements
* Improve and monitor environmental performance
* Improve and reduce environmental impacts

As a charity it is important that cost is considered as part of the overall balance when considering any options including the most environmentally sound ones.

**Garden**

***Compost:*** The DMC gardener makes compost using garden waste on both our sites, to enrich the soil.

***Rainwaters:*** A number of water butts are located around each site to collect rain water which is used to water plants in our gardens, thus saving water.

***Wildlife & Biodiversity:***

* Several log piles on both sites encourage invertebrates as the wood breaks down.
* Several piles of garden waste left around the site encourage hedgehogs to hibernate within our gardens and we also have hedgehog tunnels to allow them to move freely from garden to garden.
* We are planting more bulbs each year to encourage greater biodiversity by providing food for pollinators throughout the year.
* The trustees are to consider planting more trees to create further homes for wildlife and blossom for pollinators.

**Communal food (Community Room)**

DMC buys local where appropriate and uses food with less packaging if possible.

**Decarbonisation of Social Housing**

DMC is aware of the Social Housing Carbonisation Fund 2022, a government fund set up to assist with the decarbonisation of social housing. DMC will apply for funds as appropriate.

**Energy and water**

***Heating and hot water:***

* At Whetstones heating and hot water is currently supplied via gas boilers and electric showers.
* At Nappers, heating is via communal gas boilers and hot water is via electric showers and small hot water heaters.
* Consideration shall be given to more environmentally sound alternatives than gas as existing boilers are replaced in the future. DMC uses the cheapest tariff for our energy supplies because our residents pay for their share of the bills, which is not necessarily a renewable energy supplier. At Nappers residents choose their own energy supplier for the electricity in individual flats.
* We encourage the saving of resources by eg switching off lights, computers, monitors etc when not in use. The office and Chubbs Room heating is switched down when not in use.

***Smart meters:***Smart electric and gas meters are installed on site for most of DMC’s meters.

***Lighting:***We are gradually changing all lighting to LED lighting in residents’ flats, communal areas and the office. We were fortunate to receive a grant from Dorchester Town Council towards the cost of replacement bulbs.

***Water:*** We encourage careful use of water.

**Insulation & draught proofing**

***Cavity wall insulation*** is present in the Whetstones buildings except 1-4W which has a solid construction. We are working with the Warmer Homes initiative to make the most of government grants for reparation work to make our buildings as energy efficient as possible.

***Loft insulation*** is present in all lofts on site.

***Lagging*** is present on pipework.

***Draught proofing*** It is the intention to ensure brush seals are on front doors where applicable.

***Windows*** are double glazed.

**New development**

The trustees aim to make new developments, such as the Nappers development, carbon neutral as far as practicable:

* Environmental considerations such as type of heating (air source heat pump, solar etc) and others highlighted within this policy, shall be considered
* It is also a consideration to improve biodiversity by including areas of planting and wildlife habitat in any new development.

**Office**

***Cleaning:*** Environmentally friendly cleaning products are used where possible.

***Ink cartridges:*** These are recycled either via the company or through Age UK.

***Paper:*** Certain documents need to be printed but thought is always given to how necessary this is at the time. Documents that are no longer required are recycled or shredded then recycled.

**Plastic**

We aim to reduce the use of plastics and encourage recycling where possible.

**Recycling**

* Everyone is encouraged to recycle using the bins provided in communal areas, the office and in the bin area of each site.
* Garden waste is collected in the bins provided.

**Showers**

Most resident’s baths have been replaced with showers in wet rooms, which saves water, in addition to the safety features this creates for more vulnerable residents.

**Transport**

Public electric charge points are accessible locally in the town centre and at the moment, DMC does not consider there is sufficient demand to provide electric charge points on site.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Rocket Lawyer, Environmental Policy template, accessed 22/2/2021 <file:///C:/Users/DMC/Documents/Environmental%20Poliocy.html>

Sustainable Dorset, *The Dorset Green Living Guide*, January 2020