

Billinge Chapel End Parish Council Environmental Policy

Background

In a statement from The Commonwealth Academies Of Science Consensus On Climate Change Dated 12 March 2018 it was concluded that:

“The consensus view of the global climate science community based on current evidence is that avoiding the worst impacts of climate change will require concerted global action to reduce atmospheric carbon.

A target to limit warming to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels was recognised by 160 nations that ratified the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change; a bold and vital step towards addressing climate change.

Meeting this target will require achieving net-zero global greenhouse gas emissions in the second half of the Century followed by active decarbonisation of the atmosphere. Our work towards this objective has only just begun.

This challenge needs to be addressed now, and the efforts required will bring enduring social, environmental and economic benefits and opportunities.”

Statement of Intent

Billinge Parish Council (the Council) is committed to actively supporting the long-term environmental health and vitality of the Parish as effectively as it can within the areas it can control. It will seek to promote and maintain a high-quality environment in the parish and encourage a community which is vibrant, safe, healthy and inclusive; a sustainable community which balances economic, social and environmental factors. The Council will make optimal use of its own resources in order to lead by example in enhancing its environment and seeking to reduce the effects of Climate Change.

Relevant Legislation Empowering and Mandating Town and Parish Councils

The Water Act 2003 places a duty on all public bodies to consider, where relevant, the desirability of conserving water supplied to or to be supplied to premises.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 mandates every public body, in the proper exercise of its functions, to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

The Climate Change and Sustainability Act 2006 gives specific powers to town and parish Councils to tackle Climate Change. The Act places an obligation on them to improve their energy efficiency as far as is practicable.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 extends the statutory offence of dropping litter and enables town and parish councils to authorise officers to serve fixed penalty notices for the litter offence under section 88 of the 1990 Environmental Protection Act. It gives town and parish councils the power to issue fixed penalty notices for graffiti and

fly-posting offences: and allows town and parish councils to create offences relating to the control of dogs (replacing the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996).

In its activities and administration, the Parish Council will seek to protect and enhance:

- The special landscape quality of the Parish and access to the countryside
- The quality of the built environment and historical features
- Biodiversity and wildlife including habitats and protected species
- Village services and local employment opportunities
- Valued green spaces within the parish including parks and opportunities for recreation and children's play
- The character, unique identity and semi-rural setting of the village
- Safety for all road users including pedestrians and cyclists.

The Parish Council will also:

Seek to conserve resources where practicable by adopting energy saving measures which ensure efficient use of water, energy and resources in all its buildings. The Council will increase awareness of energy efficiency amongst employees and users of council buildings and encourage energy saving behaviour.

In the longer term, the Parish Council will:

Investigate the feasibility of sustainable supplies of energy to power its property.

Try to source materials and services locally and procure sustainably while being aware of the requirements for value for money and quality. This emphasis on environmental purchasing should result in economic benefits as well as positive environmental enhancement.

Aim to reduce soil, water, air, light and noise pollution, littering, dog fouling and fly-tipping by prompt reporting of incidents and promoting volunteering to encourage environmental responsibility.

Act as a voice for local environmental concerns, making representations to agencies with statutory powers to tackle the issues raised.

Promote and support the use of cycling, public footpaths and public transport.

Raise the profile of, and offer information on, environmental issues within the Parish and the Borough.

Engage with local environmental agencies, councils and planning authorities.

Act as a facilitator to assist local groups to access environmental funding.

Greenbelt Land

The Parish Council supports the policy of "Brownfield Sites First" for development. However, the Parish Council recognises that although there are large areas of brownfield sites in St Helens Borough none of these are in Billinge and as such, the Greenbelt land in Billinge is vulnerable to applications for development.

Planning Applications

While decisions on planning applications rest with St Helens Council and/or the Planning Inspectorate, the Parish Council will:

1. Make representation to the Planning Authority on every Planning Application or Local Plan brought before the Parish Council
2. Consider all aspects of Proposed Developments on the local community taking account of:
 - Access and Road Traffic issues
 - Green space within Developments
 - Risk of Flooding
 - Affordable homes and social housing
 - School capacity
 - Consultation with Residents
 - Wildlife habitat
 - Overall impact on the character and heritage of the village.

The above list is not exhaustive but sets the standards for the scrutiny of any development proposals considered by the Parish Council.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The Parish Council will assess the environmental impact of every decision that it makes as a matter of due course. (In the same way that the Parish Council must assess the implications for Health and Safety on all its decisions)

This Environmental Policy will be reviewed annually with the next review due in May 2025.