

East Portlemouth Parish Council: Environmental and Climate Commitment Statement

Adopted: 4th April 2025

East Portlemouth Parish Council recognises the urgent need to address the environmental challenges facing our community, the UK, and the wider world. We acknowledge the climate and ecological emergency declared nationally and affirm our role in protecting and enhancing the natural beauty, biodiversity, and sustainability of our parish.

We are committed to taking a leadership role in promoting environmentally responsible practices and encouraging community-wide action.

Our Commitments:

1. Carbon Reduction

- Strive towards net-zero carbon emissions for Parish Council operations by 2030.
- Encourage residents, local businesses, and visitors to reduce emissions through energy efficiency, low-carbon travel, and sustainable choices.

2. Biodiversity & Nature Recovery

- Protect and enhance local habitats including woodlands, hedgerows, coastal zones, and wildflower areas.
- Support initiatives that increase biodiversity, such as tree planting, pollinator-friendly planting, and natural land management.
- Promote native species and reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides in both public and private spaces.
- Safeguard seagrass as an important feature of the coastal ecosystems, recognising its role in carbon storage, water quality, and marine biodiversity.

Actions:

Gardening for Wildlife Booklet – In collaboration with South Hams District Council and neighbouring parishes, we are producing a Gardening for Wildlife booklet. This resource will offer practical tips on how residents can support biodiversity at home. It will be distributed free of charge to the local community to inspire wildlife-friendly gardening throughout East Portlemouth.

Wild Verges – We have left limited areas of grass uncut until the end of the summer to increase biodiversity.

3. Trees

- We seek to protect existing trees and encourage the planting of native species throughout the parish.
- Support community tree planting initiatives and collaborate with landowners and conservation bodies to identify opportunities for woodland creation and hedgerow restoration.
- Resist the unnecessary removal of trees in planning applications and promote proper tree care and maintenance.

Actions:

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) – We are currently working with South Hams District Council to identify important trees and woodlands within the parish that may benefit from protection. Where appropriate, we will seek to extend Tree Preservation Order (TPO) coverage to safeguard ecologically and visually significant trees for the long term.

4. Sustainable Land & Water Management

- Promote sustainable farming and land stewardship within the parish.
- Work to protect water quality in the Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuary and surrounding watercourses.

5. Community Engagement & Education

- Raise awareness of climate and environmental issues among parishioners through events, newsletters, and collaboration with schools and local groups.
- Encourage local climate and nature volunteers, including support for community gardens, beach cleans, and wild-life monitoring.

6. Transport & Travel

- Advocate for low-emission transport solutions and improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.
- Support community transport options that reduce car dependency, especially for vulnerable residents.

7. Waste & Circular Economy

- Promote waste reduction, reuse, and recycling schemes within the community.
- Discourage single-use plastics and support local repair, refill, and reuse initiatives.

8. Climate-Resilient Planning

- Integrate climate and environmental considerations into planning comments and responses.
- Promote resilient building practices and oppose development that threatens biodiversity or contributes to flood risk.

9. Collaborative Action

- Work in partnership with neighbouring parishes, South Hams District Council, Devon County Council, and local environmental groups to align efforts and share good practice.
- Support national and regional policy changes that enhance environmental protection and climate resilience.

Monitoring Progress

The Parish Council will review this statement annually and publish a summary of progress. We will remain open to community suggestions and evolving best practice.

Together, we can protect the natural beauty and resilience of East Portlemouth for future generations.