

## Hitchin Community Gardens Environmental Baseline

Action	What we already do	What we can do to improve
<b>Save Energy</b>		
Lighting – low energy bulbs	Council replaces light bulbs in pavilion – unknown whether they are low energy or not	Check what the Council uses and ask for low energy bulbs to be used in future. Ensure low energy fittings are proposed for pavilion conversion
Hot water thermostats	Don't use hot water at present. This will apply when we have the pavilion conversion done though	Keep thermostats for hot water at max temp of 41°C
Heating thermostats	Heating rarely used – mostly outdoors. Will apply to the pavilion conversion though	When pavilion conversion is done, keep thermostats for heating turned down to 21°C. Ensure they're positioned away from hotspots or draughts.
Radiators	n/a	
Hot water tank	Properly lagged with an insulated jacket.	
Windows	No heating used so insulation unnecessary at present.	Ensure windows are double glazed and draught-proofed in new conversion proposals
Working from home	Most of our energy usage is from working at home.	Ensure everyone knows the importance of not leaving devices on standby and only boiling small amount of water at a time.
Carbon offsetting	We plant new trees, shrubs and plants every year helping to offset the CO2 emitted	
Electrical appliances	Not used at present	Make provision for getting an instant water heater instead of a kettle when Cafe/kiosk alterations done.
Power tools	Used rarely and charged at home	
Electricity usage for pavilion	Not used by us but meter readings are high – needs investigation.	Talk to Council about where the energy use is going and if it can be reduced.

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<b>Save our Resources</b>		
Paper	Use scrap paper for printing out minutes and documents. Reuse envelopes where possible.	Use recycled or part-recycled paper for all our leaflet and promotional printing. Raise awareness of the need to conserve paper on emails – eg 'think before you print'
Re-usable goods	We use proper mugs for all except large events eg Open day and Apple Day.	Use re-fillable cleaning product bottles.

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General litter	NHDC contractors John OConnors dispose of it – unknown whether any is recycled	
Green waste	All green waste is composted on site.	
Woody waste	All woody waste is chopped up small and made into habitat piles or taken to NHDC composting facility.	
Plant containers	Reused where possible.	
Water use outside	Mains water used for watering.	Get a water butt for allotment. Find a solution for the garden where a water butt could be a drowning hazard and vulnerable to vandalism
<b>Water use inside</b>	<b>Toilets flush using mains water, taps are time-set, but sometimes leak.</b>	<b>Ensure new taps in pavilion conversion are spray fitted and toilets are dual flush, to conserve water. Investigate grey water usage.</b>
<b>Conserving water use in the garden</b>	<b>We have an area of the community garden devoted to dry shady planting to illustrate what to plant for drought resistance. We use mulches to conserve water and promote their use through our website.</b>	
<b>Recyclable waste</b>	<b>We recycle all our paper waste, glass, cans, cardboard, and we raise awareness of the need to do this.</b>	

Action	What we already do	What we can do to improve
<b>Shopping ethically</b>		
<b>Soil fertility and mulching</b>	<b>We use our own compost and occasionally buy in organic soil improvers where necessary</b>	
Soil improver	Organic	Investigate source
Compost	We only use peat-free and sustainably sourced	
<b>Bark mulch</b>	<b>We get this from local tree surgeons working nearby or in the park</b>	
Refreshments	We use Fair Trade or locally and sustainably sourced wherever possible	
Plants	We buy local wherever possible. Unknown if peat is used as the growing medium.	Enquire of each nursery as to whether peat is a constituent of their growing medium. Raise awareness to local nurseries of the environmental issues around peat.
Timber	We only buy FSC standard (or recycled). We reuse old pallets to make our compost bins.	

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Apples for apple day	We only buy from local sources	
Disposable plates and cups for events	We recycle paper plates and plastic cups at events.	
<b>Stationery</b>	We don't currently use recycled paper for printing	Investigate recycled or part-recycled alternatives
Bank account	Cooperative bank - ethical	
Toilet roll	Recycled	
Cleaning products	We use eco-friendly cleaning products, soaps, handwash gel, etc wherever possible	
Raising awareness	<p>We showcase local growers and producers at our Apple Day each year and we promote buying local, organic fruit and veg when in season. We raise awareness of the impacts of issues such as food miles and year-round availability of seasonal produce.</p> <p>We have an allotment and use it to promote food growing in small spaces.</p> <p>We raise awareness at events of the environmental issues around peat.</p>	Promote food growing within a conventional garden setting by showing how forest gardening works in a demonstration area at the Garden.

<b>Action</b>	<b>What we already do</b>	<b>What we can do to improve</b>
<b>Travel wisely</b>		
Meetings	Where practical we use public transport or sustainable modes (cycling or walking) to attend events and meetings.	
Gardening sessions	Over half of us use sustainable modes – walking or cycling - to get to the garden	
Outings and long distance journeys	For longer journeys we use public transport wherever practical, or car sharing if not.	
Cycle storage	There is none at the Rec	Consider where cycle storage could be installed and approach the Council
Biodiesel	Not used	Investigate sources of biodiesel for diesel-run vehicles
Information	We provide public transport info on how to get to the garden on our website	

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<b>Care of our area</b>		
Biodiversity on our sites	We maintain and cultivate our sites with wildlife benefit in mind.	
Biodiversity in the Rec	The Council maintenance contractors are removing habitats under hedges and shrubs for ease of maintenance.	Talk to the Council about optimising biodiversity
Healthy Living	We grow vegetables with our learning disabled gardeners who take home and cook what they harvest.	
Chemicals	We do not use chemicals – we garden organically	
Litter in the park and river	We clean up our sites and around them whenever we are there and the Council's contractors litter pick the Rec but the river always has litter in it.	Organise a quarterly river clearance day? Could join forces with other local groups to do this or help create a Friends of Ransom's Rec group.
Raising awareness of caring for the environment	We hold monthly volunteer community activities to re-engage people with the natural world and caring for the environment. In the summer we also hold weekly therapeutic gardening sessions open to all in the community.	
	We run weekly social and therapeutic horticulture sessions for adults with learning disabilities encouraging an interest in nature, horticulture and healthy eating	
	We hold an Apple day every October to raise awareness of the importance of buying local produce in season and to showcase local producers and environmental groups and promote the benefits of gardening and growing your own food.	
	We run veg growing classes teaching people how to grow their own food in small spaces	
	Our annual open day promotes the benefits of gardening and care of the environment	
	We run permaculture courses based on the principles of earth care, people care and fair shares	