

Diseworth Heritage Trust

Environmental Policy Statement

Date created: June 2015

Review date: June 2018

The Trustees of Diseworth Heritage Trust, responsible for the operation of the Diseworth Heritage Centre, are committed to managing the building in such a manner as to reduce its impact on the environment to the minimum possible, given the constraints of a listed building over 250 years old.

The building is owned by the Trustees who therefore have the authority to implement any policy which supports this aim. They undertake to conduct all business activities in a responsible manner, consistent with the long-term preservation of the building, the continuation of the Centre as a repository for material appertaining to the history of the village, as an amenity for the benefit of the surrounding community and as a self-sustainable business. A major part of this commitment is to preserve the existing ecology of the building's environment, in particular the historic graveyard at the rear of the premises.

During the initial survey of the building, a maternity colony of rare Bats was discovered in the roof of the main hall and work was halted until they had dispersed. Special access openings were made in the gable ends and a number of bats boxes were installed in the graveyard. These are inspected regularly by a qualified expert.

The building, originally a small Baptist chapel dating from 1751, and listed Grade II, was made redundant after severe flooding in 2000. It was repaired, renovated and converted into a Heritage Centre between 2007 and 2009, with the aid of a generous HLF grant, all the work being undertaken to the highest conservation standards and with due concern for the environment of the building and its site.

The listed status of the building limits the Trustees as to the scope of the further environmental measures they might take to decrease its carbon footprint. At conversion, an automatically controlled, gas-fired, underfloor heating system was recommended and installed, limiting scope for future conversion to renewables. We are further constrained by our location in a small, isolated village with no evening bus service.

To meet this commitment the Trustees undertake to:

Monitor energy consumption closely in order to minimise our carbon footprint. Environmental monitoring devices have been installed to help understand and control the environment within the building.

Promote the responsible and efficient use of water in the building.

Use recycled materials within the building where possible, e.g. much of the office furniture is second-hand.

Reduce the consumption of raw materials and the production of waste in all our activities. Encourage the use of environmentally sound or sustainable resources or products wherever possible.

Recycle as much waste material as possible.

Make all possible efforts to source materials and services locally. Any catering necessary is locally sourced and volunteers or small local businesses carry out much of the maintenance.

Encourage visitors to use public transport where possible, and groups to use car-sharing schemes where practicable. The website holds details of how to access the centre from major transport centres.

Protect the surrounding environment, its flora and fauna, and, most especially protect the adjacent Diseworth Brook, from damage to its banks, blockage likely to cause flooding, or pollution due to any of our activities.

Comply with any relevant environmental legislation.

Make all our volunteers fully aware of the above policies and our commitment to good environmental practice and ensure that they follow the guidelines. Encourage visitors to do likewise.

Ensure that a copy of this policy is readily accessible within the Centre.

Similarly, make our potential visitors and our community aware of our environmentally friendly policies via our website.