Sustainability Guide for REPF Projects

Every organisation (parish council, charity, community group) – no matter how big or small – can take action to **reduce the carbon footprint of their project**, **lower costs**, and **protect themselves and the people who use their services from the effects of climate change**.

Improving the energy efficiency of community buildings

For any building improvement works or construction, think about how your project could reduce carbon emissions and save your money. Identify opportunities to create an energy efficient building by following the energy hierarchy:

- **Reduce energy use** – for example installing high levels of insulation and efficient glazing for your building. An energy audit will help you create a step-by-step plan.
- **Use energy efficiently** – such as LED lighting, or heating and lighting controls to ensure these systems are only used when needed
- **Use renewable energy sources** – such as solar energy, air source heat pumps or other low carbon energy sources.

Sustainable purchasing

When going to the market for quotes, ask for the most sustainable options to help compare like-for-like. It's useful to look at the whole life cost, particularly for low carbon technologies such as solar or EVs that will save energy and money in the long run.

Consider where materials and people involved with the delivery of your project come from – locally sourced means lower mileage and a smaller carbon footprint. Try to incorporate recycled materials where possible and think about the longevity of your project. For example, recycled plastic for benches or boardwalks will often last a lot longer than wood. If you are using wood, look out for sources of reclaimed wood, and ensure any virgin timber comes from local, sustainably managed forests.

Reduce Waste

The easiest way to reduce waste is to avoid creating it in the first place. Design out waste from the very beginning of your project by keeping products and materials in use – what can be reused, or repurposed by someone else in the community? Ask yourself if you need to buy everything new, or is there an option to borrow or lease, or buy second-hand? You can also minimise landfill waste by using suppliers who can remove and recycle your old equipment and materials. Don't forget to think about saving water too. Using low-flow toilets and taps and recycling grey water will all help to reduce costs and your carbon footprint.

Sustainability for smaller projects

When it comes to doing your bit for climate and nature, why not think about the following:

- Buy local, or where possible, borrow or rent from another Club or your local Library of Things
- Encourage volunteers or customers to come by bike, public transport, walk or lift share
- Think how you can remove single-use plastics and encourage zero waste
- Tell people about your climate goals and celebrate your sustainable successes

Get inspiration from Sustainability Stories taken from across the district – featuring solar and air source heat pumps, LEDs, EV chargers, nature recovery projects and natural flood management.

Useful resources

Low carbon communities – Low Carbon Hub supports organisations to save energy, undertake energy audits and develop renewable energy projects.

Nature recovery and conservation – local environment groups such as **Wild Oxfordshire** work with communities across the county.

Tree planting – if you would like to get involved in tree planting, check out our **tree planting guide for communities**.

Reducing flood risk – climate change is already increasing flood risk. Community groups have a vital role to play, both to prepare for a potential future flood event and to recover afterwards. The **Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit** supports communities to reduce their risk.

Waste reduction – CAG Oxfordshire have a list of useful resources for groups wanting to run campaigns to reduce waste such as **repair cafes**, swap shops, community fridges, and **plastic free communities**. Try one of Oxfordshire's **Library of Things**, or tool hire and reclaimed timber from **Oxford Wood Recycling**.

Other Climate and Nature funders

Westmill Community Grants – also funding for community energy assessments. Register your interest with Low Carbon Hub

FCC Communities Foundation – energy efficient capital projects, renewable energy and nature recovery

Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment – Local Environment Fund for nature recovery and public access

Oxfordshire Community Foundation – Thriving in Nature Fund

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