

Let's Celebrate Towns 2023 – Sustainability category for Sherborne, Dorset

1. Please provide examples of any initiatives where your Town is tackling specific sustainability challenges, e.g. air quality, adoption of electric vehicles, and renewable energy production and consumption.

Renewable energy has been introduced throughout a variety of settings across the town to support climate change initiatives. Sherborne Town Council has introduced Air Source Heat Pumps, Solar PV panels, LED lighting and New Insulation to a sports changing room setting at an extremely popular sports site. This building has a public display panel installed at The Terrace Playing Fields which shows statistics on carbon savings for the premises. Sherborne Tennis Club has also installed Solar PV panels on the same site. The Council are also in the process of obtaining quotes for renewable energy to include Air Source Heat Pumps, LED lighting, new insulation and addition glazing for our Grade II listed building used by the Town Council as their main offices along with a proposal for a Solar PV canopy for the car park on site.

A carbon toolkit has been used to help identify carbon savings with a selection of handheld garden maintenance equipment trialled and purchased. Areas of focus for the town will be limiting the number of journeys made, which in turn will improve air quality, encouraging the use of public transport, cycling and walking to work.

Sherborne Town Council has a Green Sherborne Forward Plan which has set aims for its role within the town, along with a Climate Change and Environment Policy.

There is a specific section of the town council website dedicated to eco-initiatives taking place in the town with local charities and organisations included. The recycle/re-use section of the website is constantly being updated with new places to take items such as electricals, medicine packaging etc to for recycling rather than going into landfill.

Sherborne Abbey, which is a Grade I listed building located in Dorset, is one of England's most beautiful parish churches and has recently introduced Air Source Heat Pumps in acoustic cabinets as part of wider carbon efficiency measures.

Several local schools in the town have also introduced renewable energy sources which are proving effective. Local schools have very successfully attended Eco clubs and have recycle/re-use clothes bins. The Youth Club has introduced LED bulbs for all outside flood lighting and well as their main hall and craft room.

Sherborne Castle Gardens which is an extremely popular local garden centre, has installed rainwater collection tanks and a notice by each tap announces that all the water used is captured rainwater.

There are various initiatives in the town already established with sustainability in mind, these include The Climate Café, the Repair Café and Insulate Sherborne.

There are various electric vehicle charging points across the town, which are being added to all the time as demand increases locally.

The pan-Dorset Climate and Ecological Emergency Support Group meets regularly online.

We have councillors and staff on the council who are certified as Carbon Literate with more being encouraged to attend the course.

The Gryphon School recently invited students from across Dorset and South Somerset to join them as they discussed key climate change issues. COP (Conference of the Parties) is

a series of United Nations climate change conferences, which have been running since 1995, and has this year been held in Dubai. The Gryphon School decided to host their own event, and it was co-organised by Gryphon Sixth Form students and teachers.

Students from 12 schools attended the event, with each group representing a different country from around the world, having to discuss the issues that their 'country' was facing and negotiate with the other countries represented, to come up with meaningful solutions. Students aged 10-18 years old took part, generating proposals which tackled themes such as oceans, energy, forests and food, and cities. The event saw keynote speeches delivered by Peter Littlewood from the Young People's Trust for the Environment, Doug Skinner from Greenpeace, Seb Brookes from The Eden Project Portland, and Asher Budwig from Lola's Cupcakes. On the same day a Sustainable Careers Fair was held with universities including Exeter, Plymouth, Cardiff and Cambridge showcasing their sustainable courses, and large companies such as Jimmy's Iced Coffee, RSK, and Lush discussing green career opportunities. They were joined by Dorset Council, Footprint Architects, Sherborne Repair Café and DeFashion Dorset to name but a few.

Sherborne Castle Gardens stocking many locally made and sourced products with no plastic included where possible.

The centre of town has an abundance of cycle stands/parking - e.g. the Parade, the Green, Library, Digby Road, Westbury and the Town Council offices.

2. Please provide examples of how your Town is promoting circularity practices amongst businesses and communities, e.g. reusing materials, reducing waste, recycling and/or optimising resource use.

Sherborne Castle Gardens recycles electrical equipment and plastic plant pots.

The introduction of a Youth Town Council which includes representatives from all schools in Sherborne and meetings include sustainability projects including litter picking, improved cycling and walking routes. Young people for the first time this summer will be responsible for planting up over 150 hanging baskets for the town centre which use peat free compost. Support and training are being provided by Sherborne Castle Gardens. There are a number of eco and gardening clubs meeting within many school settings which promote awareness of important climate issues and take positive action with various local projects.

Sherborne Town Council celebrating the first 12 months of carbon savings at the Terrace Playing Fields following the introduction of renewable energy equipment.

When it was decided that the Sherborne Beacon would be lit at the start of the Jubilee celebrations, the Pageant Master, who was part of the organising of all the beacons being lit across the country, requested that those lighting them also try to plant some trees, specifically seven of them in a circle, with each tree representing a decade in the Queen's seventy year reign and to assist with the sustainability of our planet. Sherborne Town Council worked in collaboration with the Sherborne Area Schools Trust to plant seven trees in local school settings thereby making a figurative circle of trees in and around the town. His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset, Angus Campbell was present to help with the tree planting.

Other trees recently planted included a tree for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the Kings tree to celebrate the Coronation both planted into Pageant Gardens. Sherborne Town Council were successful in applying for 15 Cherry Trees from the Sakura Project which were planted into Pageant Gardens and the New Cemetery to create an avenue of blossom trees at both locations. The Town Council were also successful in a bid to the Woodland Trust for new hedging for the Terrace Playing Fields.

Some “pollinating” signage has been displayed in small verge areas across the town which has been trialled under a management programme to encourage habitat by leaving some grassed areas longer.

Sherborne Town Council has invested in its outdoor spaces particularly since the height of covid where outdoor provision was so important to the wellbeing of residents and visitors to the town. Path enhancements to both Paddock Garden and Granville Way Sensory Garden used a sub-base of recycled materials. The Lambsfield Children’s Play Area included play equipment made also from recycled materials.

An event is currently being planned by Sherborne Town Council is to promote and host a community event in the town focussing on health and altering diets whilst emphasising the important of reducing carbon. This event will provide guidance and advise on reducing levels of meat intake, an opportunity to gain experience and taste plant based and various alternative food products, encourage buying locally, as well as guidance on reducing food waste. The event will be advertised throughout the town and will encourage residents and the wider local community to attend with the potential to open this up to Dorset wide.

Many of Sherborne’s finest independent shops have contributed to the fight against climate change. Our local businesses have researched and actively reuse and recycle materials independently. The Sherborne Chamber are already making plans for a town-wide sustainability drive that businesses can join in with for a cohesive approach to a Sustainable Sherborne.

Red Panda Eco is a family-run plastic-free brand and eco shop on South Street, Sherborne that focuses on products that are eco-friendly and sustainably sourced. They stock completely plastic-free and ethically made homewares, wellies, garden pots, wax food wraps, skincare, soaps, haircare, baskets, table decor, natural dental products, cleaning products, laundry leaves and kitchenware. They also provide sachet refills for cleaning products that are water-free for a lower carbon footprint and totally reusable. They like to provide alternatives to single-use plastics wherever they can. The shop stocks ethically made handbags, basket bags and backpacks as well as cushions and other home décor from their in-house brand Apricot Moon. Products are made from sustainably sourced, repurposed and organic materials and nearly all are Fairtrade. They wrap parcels with recycled paper or repurposed cardboard and only use paper tape. Any waste generated is recycled or composted and used on their allotments. All cardboard packaging is stripped of any plastics and used either for groundcover or in compost bins. They are also organic fruit and vegetable growers for themselves, their family and for some local greengrocers and farm shops. They teach other aspiring gardeners the ‘No Dig’ concept via Instagram and YouTube and offer help and advice where needed (see @englishmanofthesoil on Instagram). The shop compost and recycle all their waste and utilise waste from other businesses, for example coffee grounds from one of our customers Sprout & Flower in Mere. They practice what they preach as Red Panda Eco is an extension of how they like to live and we hope to inspire others to do the same. They are members of The Sherborne Chamber and sit on the Executive Committee to work for and promote Sherborne as a destination shopping town and to support our fellow independent businesses.

Everything from paper to plastic gets sorted and taken to recycling centres by Bean Shot coffee shop. Friends of the shop with a tree-planting business collect the old coffee grinds weekly to use as natural fertilisers for new trees and to improve soil structure. Their milk comes in churns from Bruton Dairy, saving over 3,000 single-use plastic bottles annually.

Sherborne Antiques Market are a great example of a green business as their stock is 'reused', all packaging is recycled and they produce virtually no waste.

Kafe Fontana recycle as much as they can, always buy locally whenever practical and use recyclable packaging where they can. They are also members of Too Good to Go, a movement to tackle food waste from shops, cafes and restaurants.

Vineyards are multi-award winners reuse packaging and recycle everything from glass to plastics to food waste.

The Skinsmith located in Digby Road is an eminence skincare shop who reuse all the packaging materials their product orders arrive and any packaging purchased is recycled and recyclable. Eminence plants a tree for every product purchased.

The Repair Café has met every third Saturday since Oct 2020. It has 35 volunteers and in 2023 alone has repaired 343 items out of 438 items brought in and saved 426.1kgs from landfill.

The Climate Café was established in Autumn 2023. A recent talk had a speaker from Dorset Waste – how to minimise your waste and recycling. They are also developing a Green Directory which will give residents and businesses info on where they can recycle and reuse items. A quarterly newsletter called Planet Sherborne is also being produced which covers all the green initiatives undertaken by residents and businesses to reduce our carbon footprint and improve the environment.

Initiatives such as the Fareshares Larder and Sherborne Food Bank all working towards combating food waste. A Sherborne Community Fridge is soon to be launched with advice and funding provided by HUBBUB.

3. Please provide examples of how your Town is celebrating green businesses and/or sustainability champions.

Sherborne Business Awards was successfully introduced into the town several years ago and has seen many businesses recognised across a variety of distinct categories. Red Panda won the Best Green/Eco Business of the Year early in 2024. This organisation is a Member of the SME Climate Hub and have been awarded Gold Plastic Free Business Champion from Surfers Against Sewage (plasticfree.org) and are Dorset Sustainable Palm Oil Community Champions (efeca.com).

Sherborne Town Council has a dedicated Green Sherborne section on its website which includes information on 'green' businesses and local organisations. The Town Council has strong links with businesses and local organisations working across the town for the best interests of the local community.

The Green Sherborne Forward Plan established on the back of a climate emergency declaration has seen many successful projects come to fruition which has included the introduction of new recycling bins, a water bottle filling station, renewable energy installations with advice and funding support from Low Carbon Dorset, electric vehicle charging points introduced along with the purchase of an electrically powered mechanical road sweeper for the town.