

# WHARFEDALE NATURALISTS      SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

## 1. About us

Wharfedale Naturalist Society is a charity registered in England and Wales (Charity No. 509241). In this policy, whenever you see the words 'we', 'us', 'our', 'WNS ' or 'Society' it refers to Wharfedale Naturalists Society.

## 2. Our Objectives

- To promote and foster the study of all branches of natural history (by observation, research and record keeping) and thereby to add to the existing knowledge of these sciences in the world at large and in Wharfedale in particular.
- To promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment.

## 3. Climate Emergency and Decline of Biodiversity

With natural world at the heart of we do need to ensure we manage all our activities in response to the climate emergency and the decline of biodiversity. We will be mindful in all the decisions we make and the need to reduce the release of carbon, harmful particulates and chemicals and be more sustainable in our use of all resources.

## 4. Management of the Society

**4.1 Communication with Members** We have significantly reduced our use of paper/post with a switch to email/website/online membership. However, we do recognise that all email/online activity has a carbon footprint so will be mindful of this in our frequency and size of emails.

**4.2 Committee Meetings** – we have 6 meetings a year. They are attended on average by a small number of members travelling locally so their impact is not large and car sharing/sustainable travel is encouraged. We had to move to Zoom meetings during Covid. Whilst they did work well, we find in person meetings are beneficial particularly for the social aspects. We have the option to use Zoom when travel is difficult due to bad weather.

**4.3 Banking Services** – Continue to ensure we bank with a leading provider of ethical and sustainable banking.

**4.4 Annual Review** – the creation of this report has always been at the heart of WNS. Following the significant development of the annual review in 2024 we believe we should maintain this as a paper publication. However, we will look to use a sustainable supplier/paper/ink even if there is modest increase in cost.

**4.5 New Publications** – historically WNS has produced other publications and funded the creation of literature by other local groups. Going forward our policy will be to support the creation of downloadable PDF's and promoting online distribution.

## 5. Member Activities

**5.1 Indoor Meetings** – These involve travel and heating the building we meet in. We will encourage members to use sustainable transport and car share when attending meetings. Many of our members appreciate the benefits of indoor meetings including the ability to discuss the presentations and exchange ideas and socialise with other members, purchase annual reviews and attend our AGM. During Covid we introduced Zoom meetings, they are more sustainable, accessible for people who are housebound/unable/unwilling to travel add a different dynamic and give us access to speakers beyond the local area. They are recorded for subsequent viewing and sharing and add to our archive. We will continue to have Zoom meetings.

**5.2 Nature Walks and Visits** – Accessibility by foot/cycle/public transport and distance from Mid Wharfedale (Otley/Ilkley) are a key consideration of our choice of locations. We do however recognise that this will be limiting in our ability to visit many important and interesting locations so a balance will need always look to strike a balance. We will encourage car sharing and the use of community transport to minimise individual journeys.

## **6. Work Groups/Reserve Management**

We will encourage use of sustainable travel and car sharing for workgroups.

We will evaluate the potential to replace petrol powered tools such as brush cutters and mowers with electric models when they are due for replacement.

The management of Japanese Knotweed is one of the very few instances where the only practical option is to use of herbicides. We will continue to follow best practice protocols in their selection and use. We see no occasions where we need to use pesticides or herbicides.

## **7. Partner Organisations**

We will share our sustainability policies with our members and partner organisations.

Sustainability will continue to be a key consideration for our decision to support projects

We will aim to “Act Local” in our purchases and partnerships

This policy will be reviewed on annual basis prior to our AGM

This policy was adopted by the WNS Committee on 20 August 2025