SANDWICH BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

Charity Number: 1197743

SBBOT Environmental Awareness & Sustainability Policy & Procedure

Key changes since the last version of June 2025:

- *The policy takes into consideration input from project work of personnel at Cummins Engineering, Sandwich, Kent*.

Vision Statement:

SBBOT will reduce its impacts on the environment by implementing and maintaining good environmental practices. We will ensure sustainable practices are embedded into key operations and future activities and promote environmental awareness in education and community engagement.

1. Aims of Policy:

Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust ("SBBOT") is committed to the practice and promotion of environmental sustainability. As an organisation dedicated to protecting and conserving the natural environment, SBBOT has always sought to reduce the environmental impact of its activities, ensuring that its operations align with sustainability principles.

SBBOT recognises the need to lead by example, minimising its own environmental footprint while advocating for responsible resource use and conservation in others.

Many sustainable features and practices are already in place at the Field Centre and in other areas of SBBOT's operation. These include, but are not limited to:

- a major contribution made to in-house power generation through use of solar panels
- double glazing and high insulation levels around the building
- installed air heat pump system for domestic heating
- systems in place for segregating and re-cycling of waste
- Reduction in paper towels through introduction of electric hand driers

This policy document outlines SBBOT's commitment to implementing further methods of integrating sustainable practices into its operations, decision making, and outreach efforts, to support environmental protection and biodiversity.

2. Objectives:

To meet the above Aims, SBBOT will pursue the following objectives:

- ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and standards
- measure and publicise our impacts on the environment
- ensure we continually review how we can make improvements to our environmental performance across all our activities
- work towards the adoption of a recognised environmental management system that will assist the adopters into a structured way of identifying and adopting improvements
- promote efficient resource use, waste reduction, and recycling within our organisation and community.
- Engage with members, stakeholders, employees, volunteers, partners, and the public in environmental sustainability initiatives.
- uphold and advocate local, national, and global sustainability goals.
- Publish an annual summary of progress.

3. Scope:

- This policy applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers, and, where applicable, visitors and external stakeholders such as contractors. I
- t applies to all activities of SBBOT including management of buildings and reserve areas, procurement, transport and education.
- All committees will ensure environment sustainable matters will be included in their considerations.

Overall, the work of SBBOT in this area will seek to make progress in seven key areas.

4. Key Areas of Focus:

4.1 Energy Reduction:

SBBOT replaced their oil-fired heating unit with an air-source heat pump and, as a consequence, the Field Centre only uses electricity as an energy source. Solar panels provide electricity which is currently exported to the national grid. The main uses of electricity are heating, hot water, lighting and white goods.

Monitoring and targets		
We will measure electricity use monthly in kWh and keep a running 12-month total.		
	Measures to reduce impact	**Timing (if appropriate)**
4.1.1	Investigate causes of usage spikes and implement corrective action within 3 months.	
4.1.2	Replace all lightbulbs with LED by the end of 2026	Dec 2026
4.1.3	Consider replacing remaining T8 fluorescent tubes with T5 retrofit kits rather than new fittings (cost-efficient method).	Dec 2026
4.1.4	Improve efficiency of heat pump operations (particularly radiator blockages and pipe insulation)	Aug 2026
4.1.5	Ensure that all double-glazing window-pane units are regularly checked and replaced if they have ‘blown’.	
4.1.6	Double glazing: review windows and review potential to replace units with better insulation values.	Dec 2027
4.1.7	Investigate the usage, efficiency, and necessity of all three fridges; downsize or remove by end of 2026 if appropriate.	Dec 2026
4.1.8	Maintain solar panels with annual service and performance tracking.	Dec 2026
4.1.9	Remove the ability of pigeons to nest under the panels - avoiding degradation of panels and electrics from corrosion.	Completed Feb 2026
4.1.10	Provide an up-to-date EPC rating and take note of recommendations .	Completed
4.1.11	Investigate the possibility of extending our installation of renewable energy generation, such as increasing/improving the efficiency of solar power, introduction of batteries and possibilities of wind power.	Dec 2026

4.2 Water Conservation:

Most of the water usage is for heating cleaning, washing and toilets. There are water butts to assist in watering gardens.

Monitoring		
Measure and record water use over the year via monthly meter readings.		
	Measures to reduce impact	**Timing (if appropriate)**
4.2.1	Look at opportunities to increase number of water butts for use in the gardens and for outdoor cleaning.	Aug 2026
4.2.2	Promote greywater use where appropriate.	Dec 2027
4.2.3	Minimise tap flow rates.	Sept 2026
4.2.4	Advocate for sustainable water use and the protection of local waterways and ecosystems.	
4.2.5	Publicise, encourage and implement water-saving measures within the Observatory Field Centre and encourage water conservation in all projects and community engagements.	

4.3 Waste Reduction & Management:

Most of the waste is packaging materials from deliveries. Currently we segregate recyclables, non-recyclables and glass.

Monitoring		
Explore how we can measure the different wastes generated		Dec 2027
	Measures to reduce impact	**Timing (if appropriate)**
4.3.1	Explore and implement further opportunities for improving waste-management applying the principles of eliminate, reduce, reuse, recycle, disposing:	

	• Elimination of waste – by trying to avoid wasteful practices in the first place • Reduction of waste – by minimising the amount of waste that we do produce • Re-using – by using items as many times as possible • Re-cycling – by re-cycling as much as possible, including items which have already been re-used • Disposing – of anything else in a responsible way	
4.3.2	Food waste to be segregated from other wastes and provisions made for its collection. These regulations will come into force on 31 March 2027	March 2027
4.3.3	Investigate the potential to Introduce a composting system (food digester / hot composter / wormery)	Dec 2027
4.3.4	Review signage and advice for recyclables, general waste, food waste, and compost.	Dec 2027
4.3.5	Further reduce paper towel usage by looking at opportunities to increase the number of automatic hand dryers.	Dec 2026
4.3.6	Continue to Promote digital communication and the minimisation of printing to reduce paper and printer ink use.	
4.3.7	single-use plastics and non-recyclable materials will be minimised, and reusable products will be prioritised.	
4.3.8	provision will be made for the safe re-cycling of batteries, and electrical equipment, using WEEE-certified contractors as applicable (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment)	Dec 2026

4.3.9	Refillable ink printers or re-manufactured toner cartridges will be used where possible	
4.3.10	where practicable, efforts will be made to both source and re-cycle items such as equipment or furniture through such organisations as the local Free-cycle groups (subject to quality and health and safety considerations).	
4.3.11	We will ensure that potentially hazardous waste items are properly recycled through local Council e-cycling centres.	

4.4 Sustainable Transportation:

Due to SBBOT's location, there is a reliance on private transport for members and visitors. Although there is little that can be done with the location, we believe improved practices can make a difference.

	Measures to reduce impact	**Timing (if appropriate)**
4.4.1	Employees and volunteers will be encouraged to use public transport, carpool, walk or cycle to work and events.	
4.4.2	Explore the feasibility and cost to install electric car charging points.	Dec 2027
4.4.3	Remote working options will be supported to reduce the need for travel.	
4.4.4	Travel for organisational purposes will be minimised, with virtual meetings used whenever possible.	

4.5 Sustainable Procurement:

The main items of procurement are for the shop and cleaning and maintenance activities. We already promote the use of environmentally friendly cleaning products but we recognise there are more opportunities to improve.

	Measures to reduce impact	Timing (if appropriate)
4.5.1	wherever possible, priority will be given to the purchase of environmentally friendly consumable products, such as cleaning materials	
4.5.2	priority will also be given to sourcing items that are energy-efficient, made from recycled materials and produced by ethically responsible companies, such as Fair Trade, FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) etc.	
4.5.3	other things being equal, local suppliers will be prioritised to reduce the carbon footprint of transportation.	
4.5.4	consideration will also be given to habitat protection in the procurement chain	
4.5.5	Consider the creation of a “Local Sustainable Goods” section in the shop featuring local crafts, books, honey, or reused wildlife themed materials.	Dec 2027

4.6 Biodiversity & Habitat Protection:

We manage our facilities to minimise negative impacts on the environment. This includes minimising the use of pesticides and insecticides and ensuring safe storage and use of hazardous materials. We encourage wildlife-friendly practices (pollinator-friendly plants, minimal disturbance).

	Measures to reduce impact	Timing (if appropriate)
4.6.1	we will and ensure spill-prevention materials are available and used when handling hazardous materials.	Dec 2026
4.6.2	We will ensure that potentially hazardous waste items are properly recycled through local Council re-cycling centres.	

4.7 Education & Awareness Raising:

SBBOT provide extensive educational programmes that promote environmental awareness. We raise public awareness through outreach campaigns, partnerships, and events that include environmental stewardship. However, we recognise there is always more we can do.

	Measures to improve impact	Timing (if appropriate)
4.7.1	Install a visitor-facing sustainability display highlighting the sites sustainability: solar output, waste performance, water & electricity reductions, and habitat initiatives.	Dec 2026
4.7.2	provide regular training and education to staff, volunteers, members and other stakeholders on sustainability practices and environmental issues being undertaken by SBBOT.	
4.7.3	Provide opportunities for feedback from members, staff and volunteers on sustainability issues.	
4.7.4	Consideration will be given to working towards appropriate “Green Standards”.	Dec 2026

5. Monitoring & Reporting:

We will conduct a review each April on progress against stated objectives/commitments. A summary will share with stakeholders at the AGM.

6. Continuous Improvement:

We are committed to continuously improving our environmental sustainability practices. as new technologies and best practices emerge, we will adapt our policies to further reduce our environmental impact. As an essential aspect of our advocacy and outreach programmes, in which we promote the conservation of biodiversity, we will engage in projects that emphasise the sustainable use of resources.

We will undertake annual environmental audits against this policy.

Concluding Statement:

Sustainability is at the core of SBBOT's mission. Through focused action and responsible operations, we will contribute to a healthier planet and inspire others to join us in creating a sustainable future.

Date Approved by SBBOT Council: April 2026

Expected Date of Next Review: April 2027