Umbrella Sussex
Environmental Policy and Action Plan

Umbrella Sussex runs Hastings Community Eco Hub. The Eco Hub's focus is on the circular economy, supporting locally led climate action and learning: By offering pathways to reduce consumption we support a sustainable future and an affordable present

Umbrella Sussex is a volunteer led organisation.

Founding projects are a community loan service and a repair project. The loan service provides access to resources that can be borrowed, used then returned to be used again. The repair project enables and normalises fixing and mending. All Umbrella Sussex projects reduce post consumer waste and encourage social co-operation and learning.

Applicability and Application

This document applies to all Umbrella Sussex trustees, volunteers, employees, contractors, participants, and third-party representatives.

We will appoint an environmental champion within our governance team to promote this policy and action plan. The Champions scope will include, but not be limited to: board and non board meetings, informal conversations with volunteers and participants, focus groups and disseminating learning from latest good practice and collaborations.

Open Data, Collaborative Working

We will publish this document on our website and encourage feedback and comment. This is a living document to be reviewed regularly. We will review publish results and learning in our annual review.

While we cannot require that organisations we work with follow our policy, we commit to open and honest learning conversations to facilitate positive climate action within our networks.

Policy Aim

To work towards being a "zero waste" organisation within 5 years.

Objectives- Creating an environmental framework that is realistic, achievable, and that aligns with our core principles of inclusion and fairness.

In recent years we have seen a shift to complex professionalised measures of environmental impact, such as carbon offsetting and embedded carbon measurements. As a resource light, volunteer strong organisation we have to consider ease of use for any policy to "come off of the page" and be of practical use. For this reason we have adopted the more traditional principles of "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle". These principles and the related targets are outlined below.

Objective 1- Lifecycle Assessment- Rede, Reuse, Recycle

Reduce	We commit to considered choices about the things we buy. We will preference local, recycled, multi use and sustainable materials and seek to avoid single use plastics and other harmful materials
Examples:	Purchase recycled paper and toilet paper Build up our supply of kitchenware to reduce reliance on "disposables". Where disposables are required seek recycled and recyclable materials Choose refillable and low impact cleaning supplies, such as the "Bio-D brand" Swap plastic washing up sponges for eco alternatives that do not leach micro plastics and chemicals into the water table Recognise global issues- preference organic, rainforest alliance and fair trade environmental quality mark tea and coffee Choose quality second hand over new Adopt a "just enough" print policy, using local print services, avoiding the temptation to over order for a lower per item, but higher, environmental cost Choose rechargeable batteries Choose loose or lower packaging, in season foodstuffs, from local grocers to avoid overconsumption and subsequent waste Invest in more sustainable electronics, for example our *recent investment in a "Fairphone" mobile, for it's commitment to repairability and honesty about supply chain and "conflict" metals*
Reuse and repurpose	Where a product is at the end of its natural life or is no longer required: We will seek repair, repurposing and redeployment over landfill disposal
Examples:	Paper: Confidential waste may be shredded and used for papier mache or composting. Non confidential waste, such as old posters, will be made into notepads to reduce reliance on new "virgin" paper supplies Fabric: Fabric scraps will become "scrap store" resources, or used in workshops, for example, making draft excluders, hand-warmers and hot water bottle covers Community Loan items which are surplus will be offered to such members of the

	community who can make effective use of them Cardboard- To be offered to on platforms such as Freecycle or taken into the scrap store to be used for projects, such as diorama making or papier mache “Parts” gleaned from irreparable items (from the repair project) will be retained in our general stores for future repairs
Recycle	Where an item is at the end of it’s lifecycle we will preference recycling, treating landfill as a last resort. Where landfill is unavoidable we will consider if future choices could lead to different – zero waste, outcomes
Examples:	Composting of organic (food) waste Batteries and Printer Ink- to be collected by specialist recycling companies Plastic- we are investigating in-house plastic recycling and in particular the opportunity to make recycled plastic filament for use in our 3D printer, which is an essential part of our repair service offer Scrap metal to be collected by a licenced scrap metal merchant

Objective 2- To Minimise the Environmental Impact of our Utilities, Software and Built Environment

As custodians of a late Victorian terraced property with no energy saving measures nor central heating we have an opportunity to make significant improvements to our built environment both for our benefit and to act as a living showcase to inspire local home and business owners

When seeking new suppliers we will include environmental impact and commitment as one of our decision making factors.

Good Practice: We currently use a green ISP, and a ticketing platform, and have recently switched energy supplier to a company which better supports renewables

We will adopt a “Switch off and Unplug” policy to reduce risk of electrical surge, which can lead to equipment damage and, in extreme cases, electrical fires as well as “trickle charge” energy loss.

When funds allow we will retrofit our building with appropriate insulation and energy saving measures, and to install a heat pump and photo voltaic (solar) energy hot water and heating system to avoid heat loss and to demonstrate good practice for home users and local businesses.

Environmental Targets: 2026- 2028

1. Towards zero waste

Aim	How we will Achieve It	Barriers	Period
Go paperlite - Cut our “fresh” paper use by 50%	Adopt a “print on demand” system for workshop handouts and a “just enough” system for printing posters and fliers Remake old posters into notepads Make workshop handouts and other digital resiurces available online	Digital Inclusion- We will always provide paper alternatives for participants who are not IT confident	2027 4th quarter
Switch to 90% refillable and biodegradable cleaning and hygiene products	Replace products as they are “used up”, and purchasing in bulk and from local “refill” shops	Some chemical cleaning products may be necessary to maintain compliance with food and premises hygiene standards	2027 2nd quarter
End use of freshwater for garden use/ watering plants	Install a water butt and rainwater storage tank Consider aero/hydroponic planting for reducing overall planting water use	Cost of system	2027 2nd quarter
Cut food waste by 80%	Install a compost bin for teabags etc.	Cost of Compost bin	2027 1st quarter
	Buy unpackaged/ smaller amounts of fresh food	No barriers foreseen	2026 final quarter
Identify areas to improve the energy efficiency of our building	Commission a building audit to identify areas for improvement	Availability of specialists	2027 1st quarter
Improve the energy efficiency of our building to minimise power	Install a heat pump, solar panels and insulation	Cost of system	2027 final quarter
	Replace lighting with energy efficient LEDS as the old ones wear out	Cost of replacements	2028 final quarter
Promote “Greener Travel” for volunteers	Create secure bike storage and reopen rear access via the 83 Queens Road twittern	Need to negotiate with landowner, clear path, and install boundary gate	2027 2nd quarter
	Create a “mud room” for wet weather gear	Identification of suitable space	2027 2nd quarter
Work towards our Zero Waste 2031 aim	Create a baseline taking into account current waste generation	Cost and local availability of lower waste alternatives	2027 2nd quarter
Aim	How we will Achieve It	Barriers	Period

Education. The Community Eco Hub is here to educate and inspire participants and the general public. This last part of our action plan focuses on “looking outward” , education and collaboration

Aim	How we will Achieve This	Barriers	Period
Run at least 4 zero waste workshops annually	A mixture of drop in and programmed workshops including our zero waste fabric gift wrapping (December 26), and Draft excluders (February 27)	Volunteer time, fitting in early workshops while building works are still underway	2027 last quarter
Set up Scrap Store to support zero waste alternatives to landfill	We will build a “scrap shed” in our yard, fitted with shelving and scrap bins to hold self generated and donated scrap.	Delay in (secured) grant funding to create the infrastructure	2027 second quarter
Start “Shore to Shed” foreshore programme	Become an official “Litter Hub” with Clean-up UK Appoint a volunteer to lead regular monthly beach litter picks	Delay in (secured) grant funding to create the infrastructure Availability of volunteers to collect and catalogue foreshore waste for reporting and reuse	2027 final quarter
Promote access to our specialist waste bins amongst the general public	Recycle at least 20 kilos of Electrical Waste, Printer Ink and Batteries annually	Availability of volunteers to undertake media campaign	2027 last quarter
Promote achievable sustainability via networking and outreach	Offer at least 4 building tours and talks. Attend at least 2 networking events annually	A need to complete building improvements in order to showcase them	2028 1st Quarter
Promote “Greener Travel” for participants and the public	Create secure bike storage and reopen rear access via the 83 Queens Road twittern	Need to negotiate with landowner (83 Queens Road), clear path, and install boundary gate	2027 2nd quarter
	Create a “mud room” for wet weather gear	Identification of suitable space	2027 2nd quarter
	Build a bus stop bench to be sited on our boundary, which is around 100 yards from an unsheltered bus-stop	Materials and volunteer time	2027 1st quarter
Normalise and enable at least 200 discrete	Offer at last one drop in repair session a week raising to 2 by the end of the year	Availability of competent volunteers to undertake repairs and promote service	2027 final quarter

repairs annually			
Encourage the recirculation of consumer goods	Run at least 1 generalist and 1 specialist “Free Shop” event annually, e.g. a seed swap, unwanted Christmas gift exchange or prom dress drop	Availability of volunteers and suitable promotion Challenges of using the space while improvements are still ongoing – lack of heating and downstairs toilet	2027 final quarter
Increase community loan service lending by 40%	Promote the service to new users and review opening hours/ days to enable easier borrowing and returns. Recruit and train 2 further volunteers	Availability of volunteers and suitable promotion	2027 final quarter
Support biodiversity with a bee garden, to be supported by grey/rain water and composting programme	Convert a small area of yard, explore opportunity for a living roof	Space and volunteer time	2027 3rd quarter
Facilitate local environmental community groups	Provide affordable meeting space and free “notice board” space for at least 6 local groups annually	Suitability of space while improvements (including heating and downstairs toilet) are pending	2027 final quarter
Aim	How we will Achieve This	Barriers	Period

Key:

Green	Easily achievable without additional resources or where resources are already identified or allocated
Amber	Required some additional resource, collaboration or volunteer commitment
Red	Significant (unidentified) financial input and plus professional input required

Document Author: Shelley Feldman, Director
November 2026

Review Date: Quarterly