

## **Environmental Sustainability Policy**

*“The first law of ecology is that everything is connected to everything else.”* Nan Shepherd

Glasgow Women’s Library recognises that increased globalisation continues to have serious consequences and detrimental effects on global climate change and believes that individuals, organisations, agencies and institutions must have a clear focus on environmental issues to redress negative impacts.

GWL has always worked with an awareness of its environmental responsibilities and instils these values and working practices throughout its Board, staff and volunteer team.

### **Our Guiding Principles:**

- We see ourselves as part of the environment, not separate from it, and recognise that our activities, however small, have an impact on our shared environment.
- We believe in the power of individuals coming together for collective action to make a difference.
- We know that climate change, biodiversity loss, and other environmental destruction disproportionately impact those who have done the least harm and who have the least power to change this.
- We believe that the structures that cause the inequalities which GWL aims to tackle are the same structures which cause environmental harm.
- We believe in modelling the change we want to see, in sharing knowledge and resources, and in learning from others about what we can do better.
- We acknowledge that we have to operate within an imperfect system and are unable to always act in ways which align with our ideals. We therefore take a pragmatic approach, balancing the various and sometimes competing demands to deliver our activities in an inclusive, accessible, professional and safe manner, within the constraints of the resources available to us.

### **What We Do:**

1. We aim to keep to our direct carbon emissions to a minimum by:

### Reducing our demand for fossil fuels for heating and lighting:

- Monitor our energy consumption and work to optimise our heating schedule according to temperature data from our various spaces. This will allow us to heat the building in the most efficient way.
- Use LED lighting throughout the building
- Favour green energy tariffs when choosing energy suppliers when they are available.
- Implement building improvements laid out in our Net Zero Handbook published in 2023 with the aim of reaching operational net zero by 2030. This includes insulating our building, improving existing services, and installing renewable energy sources.

### Reducing the carbon associated with our consumption of goods and services:

- Recycle plastics, paper, cardboard, glass, and aluminium, and be conscious of where our waste goes and how it's recycled.
- Reduce waste by reusing materials, and avoiding single use items
- Maximise opportunities for paper-free working systems and the use of technology to reduce the need to travel for meetings
- Use recycled paper and re-use stationery items such as envelopes and folders where possible
- Provide vegan and vegetarian food only at our events, and prioritise caterers who reuse their packaging or provide recyclable or biodegradable packaging
- When choosing a supplier, consider locality and sustainability as well as cost

### Reducing the carbon emissions associated with travel:

- Maximise opportunities to use technology to reduce the need to travel for meetings;
- Encourage cycling for staff, volunteers and visitors through the provision of a secure bike shelter, and information about getting to GWL by bike on the website and printed programme
- Prioritising travel by public transport, and aim to avoid air travel for UK journeys
- Prioritise local suppliers

## 2. We care for biodiversity by:

- Using environmentally friendly cleaning products mainly containing plant based ingredients which are biodegradable and less harmful to aquatic life.
- Producing publicity materials on environmentally responsibly sourced paper
- Ensuring that our outdoor spaces contains pollinator-friendly perennials and native tree species including aquilegia, hebe, rowan borage and Nasturtiums

3. We aim to influence others, share our work, and learn from others:

- Encourage suppliers to follow good environmental practices and aligning purchases to organisations that can evidence this;
- Encourage organisations hiring our venue to use local caterers and order vegan and vegetarian catering
- Ask partner organisations to consider how their activities with us align with our principles, and ensure they adhere to this policy.
- Questioning our suppliers' "green" credentials and reviewing whether they offer the most sustainable options.
- programme environmentally themed events that share knowledge around pioneering women and sustainable approaches to living in the world

4. We provide a space and a platform to celebrate and highlight women's role in caring for the environment:

- Celebrate and highlight local green spaces and initiatives through our activities;
- Ensure environmental issues are highlighted in our programme of activities and in our collections

**Our Plans:**

*"In a few decades, the relationship between the environment, resources and conflict may seem almost as obvious as the connection we see today between human rights, democracy and peace."* Wangari Mathaai

- Insulate our building using the most environmentally friendly solutions where possible;

- Continue to explore ways to mitigate climate change, e.g. planting trees, installing renewables, etc
- Develop our collections to ensure intersectional feminist and women-led environmental activities are recorded, provide inspiration, and share knowledge
- Implement an Adaptation Plan outlining measures which allow us to adapt to the changing climate

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