

Fulham Palace Trust biodiversity & climate change resilience policy: March 2025

Fulham Palace Trust continues to place carbon reduction and environmental issues at the heart of its work. We all face an ecological and climate emergency that threatens the future of our planet.

“For over 1,000 years Fulham Palace has been a green oasis in this corner of west London. The botanical endeavours of various Bishops of London have created stunning gardens. Today our beautiful garden is open seven days a week, free of charge, enjoyed by all who visit.

It is now five years since we launched our biodiversity and climate change policy. In 2024 we were able to build a new pond and launch a new outdoor learning programme. Inside the house we were able to replace the halogen lighting in the Porteus Library with LED lighting. We continue to widen the debate on environmental issues to include the discussion of the decolonisation of horticulture.”

Sian Harrington, Chief Executive of Fulham Palace Trust

The 13 acre site of Fulham Palace that you see today is a remnant of a once extensive country estate on the banks of the River Thames, stretching from Chiswick in the west, to Chelsea in the east, and up to Willesden in the north. It was owned by the Bishops of London from 704 to 1973.

Over the past 20 years the restoration of Fulham Palace has delivered within this green space a museum, café, shop, education centre, wedding & events venue, residential accommodation and commercial office space. The income we are able to generate from these sources enables the Trust to provide free access to the garden 365 days per annum.

In the garden we have re-introduced plant varieties first grown at the Palace over 300 years ago (many for the first time in the UK and even Europe), established a range of volunteer roles including gardeners, bee keepers and green woodworkers, and re-planted the walled garden where we produce organically-grown fruit, flowers and vegetables for sale on our market barrow. Alongside this our learning and engagement programme provides opportunities for involvement for a range of audiences and

volunteers. The result is a freely accessible green lung in the heart of London, helping to tackle nature deficit for people living in the city.

The Palace site has many important statutory designations such as scheduled monument status, Grade I & II listed buildings and a Grade II* listed garden. The Palace grounds are part of, alongside Bishop's Park and All Saints Churchyard, a non-statutory Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) that is designated of 'Borough Grade 1' importance.

We cannot return the site to a past ecology due to the scale of the architectural and landscape interventions by previous Bishops of London over 1,300 years. Furthermore, we must now plan for a resilient future in the light of climate change.

Future plans for developing and supporting the site's ecology will be based upon available evidence and expert advice from London's natural history community and urban ecology specialists. These must take account of the site's various historic and landscape designations.

Fulham Palace Trust is committed to:

- introducing more planting schemes in its gardens which encourage biodiversity
- carrying out sustainable and environmentally sound horticultural practices
- measuring the local climate at our weather station and informing our visitors about the changes we are seeing in our garden
- encouraging and inspiring visitors, volunteers, staff and tenants to reduce their own pollution and carbon footprint
- reflecting ecology and climate issues in our events programming
- using green electricity tariffs
- using environmental and energy efficiency best practice when managing our estate, and when undertaking restoration and improvement.

In 2025/26 our renewed focus on our buildings and facilities includes the following:

- We will be undertaking bee surveys on site with the help of the London Natural History Society.
- We will be further improving our waste segregation to include the separate collection of all food waste from all our staff areas, kitchens

and kitchens. This will be alongside our composting waste stream. Our waste contractor will be turning our food waste into energy.

We call on our local community to look at how they can help, at home, and at Fulham Palace. Three small changes can make an impact in a positive way, we encourage you to choose from the suggestions below:

- Check with your local authority where you can recycle all waste, including batteries, clothes, electrical items etc.
 - <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/recycling-home>
 - [Rubbish and recycling - Wandsworth Borough Council](#)
- Start using refillable cleaning products – available from a wide range of suppliers
- Save rainwater or ‘grey water’ from washing up to water your plants
- Use a reusable cup for hot drinks when on the go (although at the Palace we will compost your disposable cup!)
- Use cardboard egg boxes for sowing your own plug plants, then you can plant straight out with the egg box cell still intact and the cardboard will rot once replanted.
- Put a bug hotel up on a south facing outside wall, fence or balcony to help beneficial insects such as ladybirds, lacewings and hoverflies through the winter
- If you have a lawn, allow a patch of grass to grow long and leave it uncut until the following June. This will help overwintering insects to reemerge successfully.

Detail

This declaration follows a number of changes the Palace has made to green its working practices.

Already the Palace has undertaken the following work:

- We have undertaken plant, moth, butterfly and bird surveys to provide a baseline measuring the impact of the future changes we make
- We have installed bird boxes and bird feeding areas
- We now have a well-established volunteer programme in the garden consisting of about 70 garden, bee-keeping, tree surveying and green wood-working volunteers
- We have planted over 120 fruit trees (apples, pears, peaches, almonds) in the walled garden since 2012 and planted over 100

species of plant in our Cultivating Compton beds in 2019, massively diversifying the range of plants on the site

- We have planted an herbaceous border consisting of over 150 different types of plants
- We have a succession of flowers throughout most of the year starting with early daffodils selected for their benefits to pollinators
- We have reduced the number of sycamore trees of similar age which were crowding out other plants and creating a 'mono-culture' on site. Healthy woodland habitats depend upon having trees of varying age
- We are growing fruit and vegetables in our walled garden according to organic principles, for sale on our market barrow, contributing to local health and wellbeing
- We use biological controls to control pests in the vinery and orchard
- We control, and if necessary, remove invasive species of plant such as Japanese knotweed and tree-of-heaven. These species can have a negative impact upon biodiversity and the built environment.
- We have installed a water collecting tank which we use to water plants in the walled garden
- We have built a composting area where we are able to produce leaf mould as well as garden compost and mulch for our planting areas
- We are reducing the amount of bought in peat free compost and using our own garden compost mix instead
- We leave patches of nettles and have established log piles throughout the site.
- We help insects and invertebrates to overwinter on site and have set up bug hotels up on south facing walls. The bug hotels get cleaned out annually each spring.
- We use brushwood to stake our perennial plants using sustainable coppices of hazel on the site.
- We make homemade wigwam structures and leave them up over winter as we have found them to be hibernating habitats for ladybirds and other beneficial insects.
- We have put in wattle fences made from sustainably cut hazel
- We have put in dead hedges to create a habitat for small mammals and other wildlife when we have surplus woody garden waste – rather than burning or skipping
- We consider soil health and leave herbaceous plants uncut for as long as possible through the winter to prevent soil compaction and which also act as a winter food resource for birds
- We sow green manures to protect the soil and over winter in the veg beds
- Thanks to the support of the Kusuma Trust we have built a wildlife pond to attract and support amphibians, insects and birds. We have

planted the pond with 40 species encouraging further biodiversity. We also have two small half barrel ponds which provide further opportunities for water habitats

- We have sown a suitable woodland margin seed mix in our wooded area to increase plant species and biodiversity
- We have been managing our existing long grass areas and annually sowing yellow rattle, a hemi parasitic species that reduces the vigour on grasses to allow natural species to re-occur.
- We have reduced mowing in areas of the Palace where a tightly cropped lawn is not necessary, and have developed a mowing plan to try to maintain a variety of grass habitats and different lengths, plus leaving up to ¼ of all long grass areas uncut to allow insects and invertebrates to overwinter
- We have purchased trimmers and hedge cutters that are battery powered rather than petrol
- We have changed light bulbs in the buildings over to LED lights, including in the Porteus Library in 2024, and installed insulation in our roof spaces in our 2017-19 restoration project
- We make sure that all takeaway cups, plates and cutlery in the café are biodegradable and are now composted by the garden team alongside coffee grounds, fruit and vegetable waste from the café.
- We have increased the number of vegetarian and vegan menu items available in the Café where we also provide water for re-filling water bottles
- The weddings and functions menu now includes a 'no waste' option.
- We have increased bike storage and bike parking on site for staff, tenants and volunteers
- We have been running an Apple Day for over 10 years, highlighting the traditional celebration of the harvest and focussing on our home-grown apples and vegetable harvest
- We make newspaper pots to sell some of our home-grown plants in, so we can retain and re-use our plastic pots
- We are collecting the chicken manure from our Pekin bantam chickens and use it in our homemade compost
- We have changed the cleaning products used by the housekeeping team in the house. The new products completely eliminate single-use plastics with an on-demand refill service. What is more, with the appropriate tools, we are able to dose each product appropriately each and every time we use them
- We are increasing the amount of proper segregation and recycling in all our office areas from paper, kitchen waste, batteries and old equipment

- We are reconditioning IT devices whenever possible rather than buying new, cutting down on WEE waste, the use of rare raw materials necessary for most IT devices and contributing to the circular economy ethos
- We are understanding the way we use electricity and gas better through analysis of usage data at different times of the day and week. We lowered the flow temperature from the boilers down by 2 degrees on advice from our boiler maintenance firm
- We are striving to keep our mechanical and electrical infrastructure maintained and calibrated to ensure it is as efficiently run as possible
- We continue to use online meetings where possible, saving travel costs and time
- We have refurbished one of our cottages, Timber Lodge, and the dwelling is now powered by solar panels and heated by an air source heat pump. A highly efficient gas boiler has been installed in Coachman' Lodge meaning that the dwelling is also more energy efficient compared to before
- We continue to improve staff and volunteer awareness and provide technical training as relevant
- We are monitoring our waste contractor appointed in 2023 to ensure that they continue to follow best practice. Our current contractor, First mile sends zero waste to landfill, sends all non-recyclable waste to generate green energy, and operates a low emission fleet of vehicles.

Going forward we are making the following commitments:

- To continue to hold an annual fair to mark Earth Day (this year's Green Meet event will take place on 11 May 2025) and continue to develop our Apple Day message of seasonality and food miles
- We will pursue our action plan for long term habitat management. This will include supporting natural regeneration and, where suitable, planting environmentally resilient and ecologically suitable plantings as well as other measures to support biodiversity
- We will continue to monitor developments in the garden machinery market and introduce battery powered equipment as it becomes proven technology
- We will continue to put up more bat boxes
- We will produce a long-term tree planting and natural regeneration plan to ensure that we have different age cohorts of trees and that we are managing our tree stock with the long-term aim of supporting biodiversity and that fits the history of the Palace
- We will continue to replace any existing lighting with LED lighting

- We will continue to consider our supply chains and procure with sustainability in mind by either buying local and by the consolidation of orders
- We will support trees in crisis such as ash and elm, allowing them to grow in the hope that some will have resistance to disease, and if they die we will use their trunks for log piles and create greater habitat diversity
- We will engage a wider range of visitors and community groups to access the Palace and the work we are doing in the areas of biodiversity and climate change through workshops and talks
- We will investigate the longer-term possibility of re-introducing water into the moat which will provide opportunities for other water habitats in addition to the pond established in 2024
- We will always consider green energy suppliers when renegotiating our energy contracts as well as considering green energy systems such as air source heat pumps and solar panels when refurbishing or building on site, subject to planning and scheduled ancient monument restrictions.