



HOLLAND HOUSE

in harmony with creation

GREEN CHARTER

A Charter of commitment to manage Holland House Retreat Centre
sustainably and in harmony with Creation
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WINNER NATIONAL "FOOTPRINT" AWARDS 2011 for environmental excellence.

Holland House is committed to a sustainable and environmentally sound future. As a Christian organisation we believe in the truth of the following passages of scripture that provide us with our key points of reference.

- 1) **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", and God "saw it was very good"** (Genesis 1:1,31)

The Earth and all Creation is brought into being by God, and it's very good.

- 2) **"The Earth is the Lords, and everything in it"** Psalm 24

The Earth and everything within it is beloved of God, and so should be by humanity too.

- 3) **"The Lord God formed the man [adam] from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And the man became a living being."**(Genesis 2:7)

"Adam" is a derivative of the Hebrew word "adamah", which means "ground". Human-kind is a beautiful harmony of mortal earth and divine spirit, and needs to remain intimately connected to both in order to be fully human.

- 4) **"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."** (Genesis 2:15)

God set a precedent for the care-taking and nurture of the Earth through the story of placing Adam in the garden. It was the first work human-kind undertook on behalf of God, and is our core responsibility.

- 5) **"Through Him [Christ] all things were made, without Him nothing was made that has been made"** (John 1:3).

Christ is in profound and intimate relationship with all of Creation. Without Him it would not exist. When we distance ourselves from Creation we distance ourselves from God. And vice versa.

- 6) **The earth has brought forth her increase, may God, our own God, give us his blessing"** (psalm 67).

We believe that the flourishing of the Earth brings blessings on all humankind irrespective of faith, nationality or tribe. It is God's will that all should be so blessed.

With these six passages of scripture as our guide, Holland House offers this document as our charter of celebration, nurture and honour of Gods creation. Everything we do, every decision we make, every supplier we engage, every vision and dream of the future we have, will be subject to the scrutiny of these passages. May Gods will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Revd Ian Spencer
Warden

FOOD AND DRINK

- 1) We are endeavoring to achieve the Soil Association benchmark of 70-50-30 with regard to produce, that is, our food and drink will be prepared from produce that is 70% fresh, 50% local, 30% organic or free-range. No more than 20% of our produce may come from other sources (e.g. yogurt, pasta, rice, etc)
- 2) We will do all we can to ensure our ingredients come from sustainable sources, changing suppliers where necessary or removing certain products or meals from our menu if found to break our code of practice.
- 3) We will continue to prepare and cook all our food onsite in the Holland House kitchen. We will not be offering our guests processed food or factory prepared meals.
- 4) We will increasingly use “seasonal produce”, which will ensure freshness & sustainability, reduce our carbon footprint with regard to food-miles, and keep in touch with the natural rhythms and seasons of the local community and environment.
- 5) We will endeavor to provide enough food for a good meal, however the quantities must be carefully considered as throwing away food is wasteful.
- 6) As much cooked kitchen waste as possible will be composted using a “hot composter”, and a conventional composter for the rest. The compost will be used to enrich and improve our own kitchen garden. In this way we will endeavor to reduce food going to landfill to zero by 2022.
- 7) Any snacks or drinks for sale around the House will be sourced from TraidCraft, FairTrade or local suppliers, with exception of some mixers, wines and occasionally brands that cannot be sourced locally. In this way we reduce food miles, our carbon footprint, and support local business.

HOUSE FURNISHINGS AND FACILITIES

- 1) Wherever possible we will clean the House with products that are natural, sustainable or environmentally kind. This includes bathroom / toilet cleaners, wood and glass polish. All such cleaning products will be antibacterial wherever possible in **compliance with our Covid Secure status**.
- 2) We will replacing all the light bulbs in the House with energy efficient ones.
- 3) We will endeavor to replace soft furnishings / bed linen and so on with natural fibre, cottons, wool and jute and so on.
- 4) Any in-house washing and cleaning will be done using environmentally kind or natural cleaning products. Out-sourced washing has been difficult to manage in this way and to date we haven't found a supplier that can guarantee cleaning products in the way we'd like. We continue to search.
- 5) We will ensure we don't waste water by careful selection and replacement of products such as showers, washing machines, dishwashers, and toilet systems.
- 6) Any disposable tools such as dusters, rags and vacuum cleaner bags will sourced from natural and sustainable supplies, and recycled / composted.
- 7) We will recycle all our glass, plastics, cardboard, paper, textiles, batteries using an authorised recycling company even though this is at cost to the business as the Local Authorities don't support business recycling.
- 8) All our waste products will be subject to the 3-R's; reduce > reuse>recycle.

OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATION

- 1) All our office supplies (paper / pens / pencils / files and so on) will increasingly be made from recycled, sustainable or environmentally kind sources.
- 2) Any old but functional office equipment will be offered for re-use to appropriate charities, or otherwise sent for recycling.
- 3) Any replacement equipment will be subject to both energy efficiency and re-use / recycling criteria (i.e. printers / photocopiers etc).
- 4) We will not leave computers or other office equipment on “standby mode” over night, but ensure all are switched off in order not to waste energy. Lighting will be reduced to a minimum with reference to Health and Safety.
- 5) All our financial management will be scrutinised such that any shares or investments held are via bona-fide ethical products or companies. We currently bank with The Co-Operative Bank for such a reason.
- 6) Paper waste will be kept to a minimum by using I.T. and electronic archiving wherever possible. All paper waste will be re-used or recycled.

GARDENS AND GROUNDS

- 1) We will endeavor to nurture the garden and grounds in ways that are in harmony with the natural environment in which they're set. This means understanding local eco-systems and finding ways to engage with, sustain or enhance them.
- 2) We will use the natural history survey of the garden and grounds by Dr Paul Smith (carried out in 2009) to identify and maintain those eco-systems, plants animal and insect species.
- 3) We will not purchase or use any product that is not from sustainable sources, or whose extraction, production or transportation causes harm to the environment e.g. peat based composts.
- 4) We will not use artificial pest control, weed control or fertilisers.
- 5) We will endeavor to ensure the gardens and grounds are a safe and hospitable environment for both people, plants, insects, birds and animals. This will include providing food and shelter for such insects, birds and animals wherever possible. We support honey-bee activity and maintain three hives in the grounds of Holland House.
- 6) We will take care of the river bank and river, ensuring against it's erosion and providing protection against any possible pollutant or other harmful damage e.g. using willow to secure the bank and allowing nettles to provide food and shelter for river-based insects (e.g damselfly).
- 7) The kitchen garden and greenhouse are a vital part of our care and nurture of the environment. As such we will only use natural products to protect and shield the crops e.g. absolutely no slug pellets.
- 8) We will endeavor to grow as much fruit, soft fruit and vegetables as we can in order to provide our guests with locally sourced, organic, fresh produce.
- 9) We will compost all our waste organic material, use it as mulch or recycle it in useful and environmentally kind ways.
- 10) Where possible and safe to do so we will leave dead or dying tress in situ to provide standing deadwood for the likes of woodpeckers, beetles and other species dependent on such habitat.
- 10) Any old gardening equipment will be subject to the reduce>reuse>recycle rule.

SUMMARY

This Green Charter is offered as a sign and symbol of Holland House's commitment to nurture, sustain and honour Gods creation. It's a working document and as such will be reviewed annually to ensure we're compliant with our commitment.