



## Planet Care

### Our Commitment

The Findhorn Foundation (FF) is a world leading centre and community of practice, where daily life is a 'living classroom'. Our three founding principles guide our work:

- deep and discerning **inner listening**;
- **inspired action in service** to the whole; and
- the embodiment of our full human potential for **loving co-creation with all of life**.

This statement is an expression of these principles and our desire to sustain our fragile environment into the indefinite future. It is an initiative born out of a love for this place; for life and for healthy, happy communities and ecosystems. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report from 2018 concluded that as a species we have 12 years to drastically reduce our carbon emissions in order to prevent runaway climate change. How can we as an organism, as a part of our global ecosystem, support the regeneration of our natural environment? How can we minimise our ecological impact while maximising human wellbeing, happiness and positive transformation for ourselves and our visitors? Last year we had our UN Habitat Best Practice designation reaffirmed 20 years on, concluding that we as an ecovillage remain a stimulating trailblazer in the area of sustainability.

It is important for us that we continue to be at the forefront of sustainability, so that we as the Findhorn Foundation (FF), a charitable trust at the heart of the community and ecovillage, aim to inspire our coworkers, participants and visitors to take concrete steps to heal and care for the planet. We believe that the Findhorn Foundation continues to have a pioneering role in catalysing personal and societal transformation. We will continue to serve

as a beacon of hope for a better world and help develop the capacity to respond to the spiritual and environmental needs of our time.

### Our Overarching Commitments:

- ★ We are working closely with our partner, Park Ecovillage Trust (PET), to measure our carbon footprint in order to reduce our emissions. What we cannot reduce we aim to manage and increasingly [offset](#).
- ★ Continued development of our online experiences and presence in order to reduce the need for people to travel to Findhorn.
- ★ All participants who do travel here are encouraged to offset their carbon emissions from their journey but also other aspects of their lifestyle, through PET. By 2020 we aim to offset the average travel miles on behalf of our course participants while still encouraging them to reduce and offset other lifestyle carbon emissions.
- ★ We are offsetting the carbon emissions of our organisational travel miles every year by supporting the protection of the Amazon Rainforest and UK Tree Planting through [PET](#).
- ★ We have identified 12 key areas of sustainability that we are working on as an organisation, with each department exploring how they can increase what they already do for the planet, and setting themselves further goals.
- ★ We are striving to be more consistently eco with our purchasing choices and have an 'FF Recommended Suppliers' working document.
- ★ We are working with the Scottish Network to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

### Our Departmental Commitments

The Findhorn Foundation is addressing 12 key areas of sustainability. They are listed below with a summary of why they are important for the planet, what we do now and what our goals are for the future.

#### Food

The global food system is a very significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. The figures are startling: the latest conservative estimates from the [Food Climate Research Network](#) in the UK suggest that almost one fifth of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions are associated with our

food and drink. The emissions come not just from the transport of food, but from every stage of the chain: conversion of land to agricultural use, the energy used to make fertilisers, pesticides and farm machinery, the impact of agriculture on the soil (a natural carbon store), food processing, transport, refrigeration, retail, domestic use of food and waste from all the different stages. A growing body of evidence indicates that emissions from the food sector can be significantly reduced if we were all to shift towards eating less meat and dairy, more plants, and more local, seasonal and organic produce.

**What we do now:** 95% vegetarian meals at The Park and Cluny. An estimated 50% local and organic food on average throughout the year. Engaging with the Scottish Government 'Good Food Nation Bill'.

**Our goals:** That the 5% of meat/fish we consume be 100% ethically sourced (local and organic where possible). To increase our purchase of local, seasonal and organic food year on year. To increase the growing season on site. To research partnering with EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet, Health (<https://eatforum.org/about/>). To buy a large chest freezer for food storage in 2019.

## Water

Water is the primary medium through which we will feel the effects of climate change. Water availability is becoming less predictable in many places, and increased incidences of flooding or drought threaten to destroy water points and sanitation facilities and contaminate water sources.

**What we do now:** The Living Machine ecological sewage treatment currently purifies half of The Park's water. We have improved our rainwater collection in the gardens.

**Our goals:** Water catchment, storage and distribution can be further improved. Individual water conservation/mindfulness in offices/homes/gardens needs to be actively encouraged.

## Forestry

Forest ecosystems are vital to the health of the earth and are important carbon sinks which can play a key role in helping to combat climate change. However the ongoing clearance, overuse and degradation of the world's forests is estimated to contribute 20% of total global carbon emissions. The sensitivity of forests to changing climate means that this is likely to be exacerbated. But when

managed sustainably they can lock up carbon in their biomass and soils and produce renewable fuels for energy production, with lower net emissions than fossil fuels.

**What we do now:** Hinterland tree planting of 6000 trees since 2006 (3000 of that since 2015), working towards improving the diverse habitats on the land surrounding The Park - including 'Wilkie's Wood' - upgrading biodiversity. Wood fuel harvesting for all FF wood stoves.

**Our goals:** Sustainable management of the land for conservation. Protection of rare and endangered species. Education about all aspects of such conservation. We have a new management plan for the land for the next ten years.

### Carbon offsetting

Carbon offset schemes allow individuals and companies to invest in environmental projects around the world in order to balance out their own [carbon footprints](#). The projects are usually based in developing countries and most commonly are designed to reduce future emissions. This might involve rolling out clean energy technologies or absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> directly from the air through the planting of trees.

**What we do now:** Partnering with [PET](#) to calculate the total carbon emissions of the Findhorn Foundation community in order to reduce emissions and offset the remainder; also encouraging our coworkers and guests to offset their travel and lifestyle emissions.

**Our goals:** Support of the Park Ecovillage Trust community carbon calculation, reduction and offsetting scheme. Develop more online courses. Offset the average air miles on behalf of our course participants while still encouraging them to reduce and offset other lifestyle carbon emissions.

### Increasing ecoliteracy

Ecological literacy is the ability to understand the natural systems that make life on earth possible. To be ecoliterate means understanding the principles of organisation of ecological communities (ie. ecosystems) and using those principles for creating sustainable human communities. An ecologically literate society would be a sustainable one which did not destroy the natural environment on which it depends. It is a powerful concept that creates a foundation for an integrated approach to environmental problems.

**What we do now:** Continue running programmes like Eco Experience Week, Permaculture Design Courses, Drawdown Trainings, Wilderness Retreats and Active Hope.

**Our goals:** Develop a new set of offerings in our induction programmes focussed on regenerative and sustainable practices. Find more ways to share our vision for a sustainable future with concrete steps and goals which inspire loving action in all who come here. The Communications team are working on a short film and landing page to address sustainability. Running internal campaigns for coworkers to highlight key areas of sustainability on a rotating basis.

## Biodiversity

Human activities are currently using 25% more natural resources than the planet can sustain. As a result species, habitats and local communities are under pressure or direct threat. Biodiversity underpins the health of the planet and has a direct impact on all our lives. Loss of biodiversity refers to either the ongoing extinction of species at a global level or the local reduction or loss of species in a given habitat. The scale of the problem: in the last 50 years, we have lost 60% of planetary biodiversity and over a million species will be lost in the coming 50 years. The most significant cause was found to be climate change.

**What we do now:** In 1962 the area of The Park was a barren landscape but now it is a biodiversity hotspot and a very pollinator friendly area with a diversity of trees, shrubs and flowers.

**Our goals:** We want to increase the number of bug hotels, dead wood piles, wild flowers. We will re-establish a wildlife corridor. Increase collaboration between all who manage the land in and around The Park. Aim for all new developments in The Park to have Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

## Renewable energy & efficiency

Mitigating and adapting to climate change are key challenges of the 21st century. At the core of these challenges is the question of energy – more precisely, our overall energy consumption and our dependence on fossil fuels. To succeed in limiting global warming, the world urgently needs to use energy efficiently while embracing clean energy sources to make things move, heat up and cool down. Clean or renewable energy is collected from renewable resources which are naturally replenished on a human timescale, such as sunlight, wind, wood, rain, tides, waves and geothermal heat.

**What we do now:** Source electricity from our wind farm, heating largely from our biomass boiler, and solar hot water in some areas. FF wood stoves use only local wood fuel from the Hinterland.

**Our goals:** To source 100% low energy LED light bulbs across Cluny and The Park. To upgrade office and residential accommodation to be more energy efficient. To reduce the use of fossil fuels and ask our Cluny gas supplier and Park electricity supplier (when importing) for 'Guarantees of Origin for renewable energy'. To encourage coworkers to car share and travel by land where possible.

### Value and supply chain sustainability

Significant environmental impacts for many organisations lie either upstream with our suppliers and purchasing choices, or downstream with our product use and disposal practices. Our purchasing choices reflect our values – we are only as sustainable as our suppliers!

#### **What we do now:**

Homecare: Source 100% LED light bulbs; 100% eco cleaning products; 100% cotton bed linen.

Kitchens: 50% organic and local food on average through the year.

Gardens: All gardens buy organic products and do not use chemicals.

Administrators: FF buys 100% recycled paper & flipchart paper. Mindful use of all materials.

Maintenance: Reusing resources like timber; upgrading caravans, furniture, bikes.

IT department: Provide information to coworkers about the most efficient use of computers.

#### **Our goals:**

Homecare: Will put signs in toilets to save water, in bungalows to save energy. Will make checking the thermostat (18 degrees celsius) part of the Saturday rota.

Kitchens: Increase our organic purchasing and local production and sourcing in 2019 to 60% and a strategy to find funds for 2020 and beyond.

Gardens: Upgrade our rainwater collection, do more mulching, plant more fruit trees and bushes

Administrators: Source non toxic whiteboard/flip chart pens, non plastic pens etc.

Maintenance: Buy 100% eco paint; avoid plastic in carpets and other materials; LED lights only.

IT department: Buy printer cartridges that can be recycled efficiently.

### Circular economy (produce no waste)

An alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract maximum value from them whilst in use, then recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of each service life.

**What we do now:** Boutique clothes sharing, Council recycling, upcycling of old furniture, raw food waste composting, reusing discarded paper for notes. Waste is taken to Moray Waste Busters.

**Our goals:** Park kitchen has plans to improve systems of food storage by end 2019. Cullerne will buy a freezer to store food for longer by 2020. We are researching new solutions for our cooked food waste.

### Plastic pollution

79% of the plastic produced over the last 70 years has been thrown away, either into landfill sites or into the general environment. Just nine per cent is recycled, with the remaining 12% incinerated. With more than eight million tonnes going into the oceans every year, it is estimated there will be more plastic than fish by 2050 and 99% of all the seabirds on the planet will have consumed some. It is thought the sea now contains some 51 trillion microplastic particles – 500 times more than stars in our galaxy.

**What we do now:** Communal eating and bulk buying reduces plastic use. We opt for natural alternatives like bamboo, wool, marmoleum wherever possible. We responsibly demolish old caravans and bungalows and replace them with eco mobiles and permanent eco dwellings. We avoid synthetic materials with microfibres.

**Our goals:** We aim to use REVOLVE accredited products only. Our kitchens and homecare aim to buy only biodegradable bin bags.

### Sharing economy (everything has many lives)

Sharing economy is often used to describe economic activity involving collaborative consumption, collaborative economy or peer economy. It refers to a hybrid market model of peer-to-peer exchange.

**What we do now:** The FF encourages coworkers to share lifts and use Moray Car Share, and departments to share tools and materials. There are FB groups for info sharing like The Park Connected and The Park Sustainable.

**Our goals:** To continue to work in collaboration with the whole community and its organisations through the Enquiry Circle and other such vehicles to ensure we are finding the most sustainable and appropriate systems to achieve our aims as a whole system.

## Subtle activism

Subtle activism is the art of using our own subtle energy field and presence in relationship with the subtle and spiritual forces of the planet to promote wholeness, healing, emergence or transformation. It's a process of using tools of consciousness and spirit for the benefit of some situation upon the earth, working with principles of partnership and resonance. It offers an important and powerful complement to physical and social action, as well as a wider context for it. It's a way of adding our energy in a positive way to the forces that are seeking to create wholeness in our world; a way of holding the world in our hearts; a way of blessing.

**What we do now:** We meditate as a whole community monthly, in smaller groupings weekly and as individuals often daily. Our monthly community meditation has a global following thanks to live streaming it online.

**Our goals:** To change the world one heart at a time in co-creation with the intelligence of nature.

*Updated May 2019  
Created January 2019 by Gabrielle Buist*