

Climate Action Policy

West Dunbartonshire Libraries

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Introduction

Who we are

West Dunbartonshire Libraries provide library services for the citizens of West Dunbartonshire. We have eight branch libraries, one mobile library and five school libraries.

Our spaces are welcoming, inclusive and accessible to all. The eight branch libraries serve populations identified as being in the first or second deciles of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020), and approximately 37% of the resident population have first-hand experience of multiple deprivation.¹ As such, to reach the heart of our communities, equality, diversity, and inclusion are key principles of all service design.

	Cultural	Community Empowerment	Biodiversity	Climate
West Dunbartonshire Council Libraries	Stock Management and Development Policy			Climate Action Policy
West Dunbartonshire Council	Strategic Plan	Community Empowerment and Action Plan		Climate Emergency Declaration
West Dunbartonshire Council	Strategic Plan	Community Empowerment and Action Plan		Climate Change Strategy
West Dunbartonshire Council	Strategic Plan	Community Empowerment and Action Plan		Sustainable Procurement Guidance
National	SLIC: Scotland Public Library Strategy	Community Empowerment Scotland Act 2015	Tackling the Nature Emergency; Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045	Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019
International	Emirates Declaration on Cultural-based Climate Action	Action for Climate Empowerment (Article 6 of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)	Kumming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework	The Paris Agreement
International	Climate Heritage Manifesto	Action for Climate Empowerment (Article 6 of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)	Kumming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework	The Paris Agreement

We are passionate about providing free access to the highest quality services for our community. These include the provision of books and information; Local Studies, Family History and Archives; children's services including Bookbug, Baby Yoga, Baby Massage; Mobile Library and Housebound service; Digital Services, such as BorrowBox; Quest

¹ [West Dunbartonshire Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022/2023](#).

Computer Courses; Arts and Crafts classes; Reading Groups; Author Events; Community Gardening; activities for children and young people, including Dungeon's and Dragons.

West Dunbartonshire Libraries are committed to integrate sustainability in all areas of internal operations and outreach, with a particular aim of creating accessible platforms to inspire and enrich local climate action. We will encourage active citizenship through providing a safe and open environment for our communities to learn about local climate and biodiversity impacts, while sharing inspiring narratives that drive positive change and challenge disinformation. In doing so, we will empower local climate leaders to take positive environmental action.

As trusted community hubs at the heart of the communities we serve, libraries are uniquely positioned to raise awareness of the climate and ecological emergency and help people navigate the often-complex language and concepts around climate and environmental issues.

West Dunbartonshire Libraries Climate Action Policy is driven by multi-scalar cultural, community empowerment, biodiversity and climate policies.

International

In 2015, 195 countries signed the landmark Paris Agreement at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COP21), committing to limit global temperature rise to below 2°C against pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C. The 2°C target is understood to be a tipping point beyond which the Earth's systems will face irreversible change.

An integral component of the Paris Agreement is Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE). The overarching aim of ACE is to empower all members of society to engage in climate action, through six mechanisms, all of which are pertinent to library services: climate change education and public awareness, training, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation on these issues.

The critical importance of culture for transformative climate action has -- after decades of campaigning -- led to the establishment of the 'Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action' at the 2023 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COP 28). The participants unanimously adopted the Emirates Declaration on Culture Based Climate Action. The visionary Declaration paves the way for future integration and implementation of culture-based climate action within international environmental governance.

National

In direct response to the Paris Agreement, Scotland's landmark Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) Act is one of the most ambitious legislative frameworks for greenhouse gas emissions reduction in the world.

In 2021, the Scottish Library and Information Council led the creation of Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2025 - a bold vision to ensure public libraries in Scotland remain at the leading edge to empower communities. The strategy is rooted in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, making a commitment to just, climate resilient futures.

At the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals 2022 conference, the Green Libraries Manifesto was launched. This foundational manifesto sets our common values and commitments as libraries to drive transformational change for our planet and communities.

Local

West Dunbartonshire Council declared a climate emergency on May 29, 2019 - an official recognition of the urgent need to address and mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis at a local level.

This Climate Action Policy is deeply intertwined with the West Dunbartonshire Council Climate Change Strategy - a route map that integrates climate change mitigation, adaptation and sustainability measures into all Council operations.

Our changing climate

Climate change is the long-term shift in global weather patterns. Scientists agree that humans are responsible for recent climate change, mainly by burning fossil fuels which adds heat-trapping gases to the Earth's atmosphere.

For those of us in Scotland, we are already experiencing the impacts of a changing climate: our neighbourhoods are experiencing milder, wetter winters, more summer heatwaves, and more frequent, heavier downpours. In the 'State of the UK Climate 2022' report, the Met Office detailed how since 1884, the 10 warmest years recorded have occurred in the 21st century.²

In Scotland, climate averages for 2013-2022 compared to averages for 1991-2020 show that:

- Temperatures have increased by 0.2°C; and
- Summers have been on average 1% wetter and winters 7% wetter.

By comparing current climate averages for 2013-2022 with averages for 1961-1990, the change is greater:

- Temperatures have increased by 0.9°C; and
- Summers have been on average 9% wetter and winters 29% wetter.

² [Met Office State of the UK Climate 2022.](#)

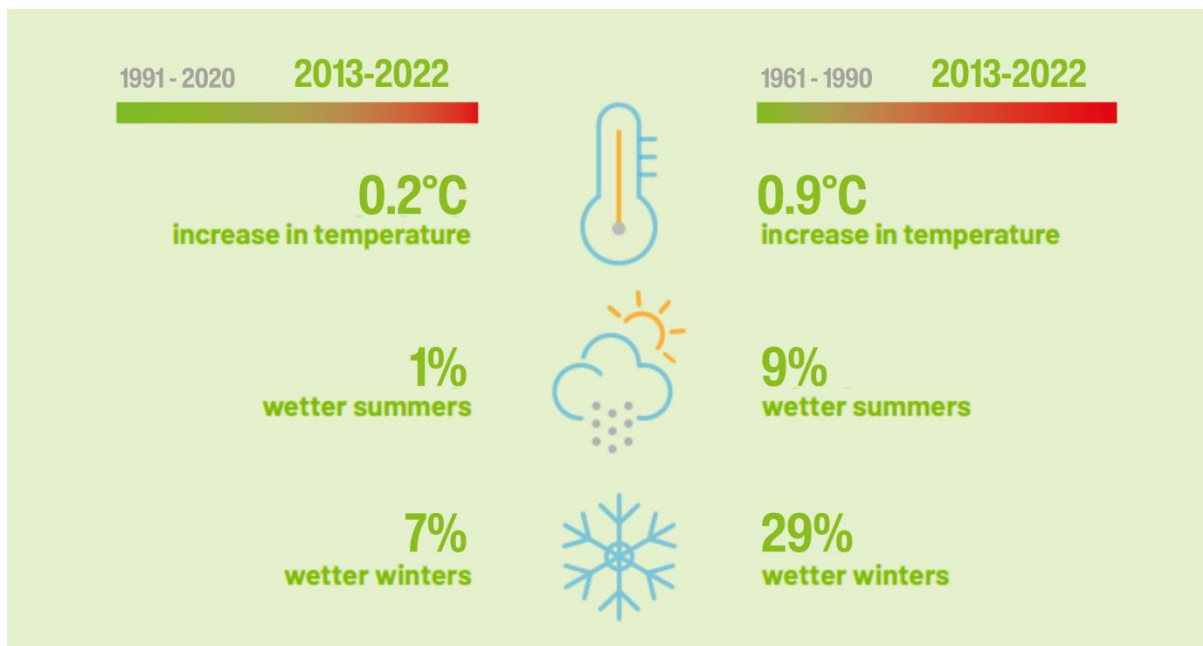


Figure 1. Scotland's Climate Averages

While the effects of climate change vary from region to region, in February 2024, West Dunbartonshire Council Libraries staff reported experiencing the following weather extremes: heavy rainfall, flooding, strong winds, heatwaves, reduced snowfall and frost, and drought. 68% of staff felt as though the impacts of flooding were the most relevant to communities across West Dunbartonshire – due to the long history of flooding in the area and the possible magnitude of damage. In the Vale of Leven alone, it is estimated that 3,300 people are at risk from flooding and approximately 2,000 homes and businesses.³

The impacts of worsening climate change and these extreme weather events exacerbate existing inequalities. For example, low-income, disabled, ethnic minority and migrant communities are faced with “intersectional climate vulnerability and greater marginalisation, exclusions, and injustices.”⁴ Over 50% of staff noted that, with an increasingly ageing population in West Dunbartonshire, elderly people are particularly vulnerable to the local impacts of climate change.

Our vision

With over 40 million visits per year, Scotland’s public libraries are the most popular service local government provides. As we are reminded in ‘Forward: Scotland’s Public Library Strategy,’ libraries “are an essential part of Scotland’s social fabric, supporting and inspiring people to fulfil their potential, for over 150 years.”⁵ The very existence of libraries is a powerful symbol of institutionalised sustainability: we are the trailblazers of community resource-sharing, whose foundations are built on a justice-led story of free access to accurate and trustworthy information.

Through public accessibility and trust, libraries have long provided “platforms for listening to communities and hubs of multicultural and intergenerational exchange, capacity building, and knowledge-sharing” – as is recognised in the Climate Heritage Manifesto.⁶ Against this proud history, we must evolve our service provisions to address the planetary emergency - an emergency attributed, in part, to the scarcity of social imaginaries capable of conceiving

³ [SEPA Flood Risk Management Plan: Clyde and Loch Lomond Local Plan District 2021.](#)

⁴ [Adaptation Scotland Community Adaptation Route Map.](#)

⁵ [Forward: Scotland’s Public Library Strategy 2021-2025.](#)

⁶ [The Climate Heritage Manifesto for COP27.](#)

plausible low carbon, just, climate resilient futures. When “there is no truly sustainable development without access to information, and no meaningful, inclusive access to information without libraries,”⁷ it becomes our social *and* environmental imperative to “engage our audiences in climate action through storytelling and inspiring narratives that drive positive change and challenge disinformation.”⁸

As a library service reaching the heart of communities we serve, we recognise our unique position to raise public awareness of and build resilience to the climate and ecological crises. As signatories of the Green Libraries Manifesto and further outlined in our strategic commitments, West Dunbartonshire Libraries will “lead by example through our own environmental actions and use our power and reach to inform and inspire people to take positive action and build resilience in the diverse communities we serve.”⁹

Librarianship is a powerful and essential tool for climate mobilisation.

⁷ [IFLA: No Truly Sustainable Development Without Access to Information, and No Meaningful, Inclusive Access Without Libraries.](#)

⁸ [Creative Industries Council: Creative Climate Charter.](#)

⁹ [Green Libraries Manifesto.](#)

Strategic Commitments

Our strategic commitments are primarily focused on public programming and internal processes. We do not control or have influence over the energy-efficiency of our buildings or energy providers, as they are centrally-controlled by West Dunbartonshire Council Asset Management.

The foundation of our strategic commitments is the [Green Libraries Manifesto](#), written by CILIP in partnership with Arts Council England, British Library, Libraries Connected and Julie's Bicycle.

Programming

- i. 20% of all public library programming – including author talks, children and youth activities, and arts and craft workshops – will directly educate and/or inform library users of the climate emergency, sustainability, and local climate and biodiversity impacts.
- ii. Our programming will platform voices who are disproportionately impacted by the climate and ecological crises; and/or engage with audiences who are disproportionately impacted by the climate and ecological crises, such as low-income, disabled, ethnic minority and migrant communities.
- iii. We will encourage active citizenship through providing a safe and open environment for our communities to learn about local climate impacts, while sharing inspiring narratives that drive positive change and challenge disinformation. In doing so, we will empower local climate leaders to take positive environmental action.
- iv. Develop place-based heritage projects with Local History Officers and Archivists that champion circular, regenerative ways of living not dependent on exploiting people and nature and/or raise awareness of local industrial-colonial histories that contributed to the climate emergency.
- v. In our school libraries in particular, we will support children and young people to be leaders in a green and just transition and to take action at home, at school, in communities, and in the workplace. We will create accessible platforms for children and young people to share their voice.
- vi. Develop partnerships which support more resilient, fairer and healthier communities. Consider partnerships within West Dunbartonshire Council – such as the Environmental Health Team, who continue to support the measurement of air quality outside Clydebank Library; and Greenspace, who authorise Outdoor Bookbug sessions in local parks – and out with the council, such as grassroots climate justice organisations.

Collections Development

- i. All staff involved in stock selection and management should follow guidance in the [Stock management and Development policy](#) when making purchases. Following our aim 'To support the Council's values and objectives,' sustainability will be included as a factor in decision making alongside price. Items with a higher upfront cost may be chosen if they minimise environmental impact, and are fairly-traded (e.g. FSC certified products or Sustainable Typesetting®). See [BIC Environmental Accreditation and Standards Map](#) and [Julie's Bicycle Sustainable Procurement Guide](#).
- ii. Diversify our collections to directly respond to local climate challenges and community needs, such as: encourage and seek donations of seeds and gardening tools to expand the seed library and tool collection at Alexandria Library Garden to support food sovereignty and access to locally grown, nutritious food.

- iii. Develop a dedicated 'Climate Hub' on the SirsiDynix online catalogue and/or libraries website, we will help people find verified information, to combat climate disinformation, and improve climate and environmental literacy for all ages. By providing up-to-date and accurate information, we will help people navigate the often-complex language and concepts around climate and environmental issues and make better-informed environmental choices.

Estates

- i. At all library branches outwith Alexandria Library, review management and maintenance plans of outdoor spaces and consider opportunities to help improve biodiversity, adapt to climate impacts (such as more rainfall and flooding events), and also create more pleasant community spaces.
- ii. Maintain and sustain Alexandria Library Garden, including: liaising with West Dunbartonshire Greenspace for general maintenance (hedge cutting and mowing the grass) and periodic treatment of Japanese Knotweed; and working in partnership with Christie Park Primary to ensure continued youth stewardship.
- iii. Identify potential climate change hazards in the workplace and take action to build resilience and protect workers from the unavoidable impacts of climate change.
- iv. Liaise with West Dunbartonshire Council to record and report our utility use (electricity, gas, other fuels, water) at each library branch, so we can accurately assess our emissions and make informed plans on how to reduce this figure going forward.
- v. In the context of any Council-led repairs or renovations to library branches, members of the Senior Management Team must champion the West Dunbartonshire Council Climate Change Strategy – particularly with regard to taking action to reduce energy consumption and improve energy and water efficiency in our buildings.

Procurement

- i. Anyone with procurement responsibilities must complete the Scottish Government's Sustainable Procurement training (furthering the commitments listed in West Dunbartonshire Council Sustainable Procurement guidance).
- ii. All providers should be asked to supply their environmental policy with a quote, which can help us to make decisions and also influence their own sustainability. If they do not have an environmental policy, we will ask for some details of how they're working towards greater sustainability. For information about choosing and liaising with suppliers, see Julie's Bicycle Sustainable Procurement Guide.
- iii. When possible, reused or recycled materials should be procured in lieu of new products.
- iv. Food and drink procurement for all internal and external events should prioritise locally produced, zero waste, ethically sourced and Fairtrade goods.

Waste

- i. In commitment to reducing waste and diverting materials from landfill, we will ensure there will be a clearly-labelled mixed recycling bin, food waste facilities and landfill receptacle in each staff room and in public zones of each eight branch libraries.
- ii. All staff, freelancers and volunteers are expected to use available recycling and food waste facilities where they are working.
- iii. We will minimise the environmental impact of printing publicity materials by: carefully managing the amount of printing across the service through prioritising display-posters rather than leaflets and using FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) 100% recycled paper where possible. All outdated posters and leaflets will be reused as scrap paper.

Travel

- i. We will support and encourage staff, freelancers (including authors), volunteers, and visitors to use land-based green travel, such as public transport, walking and cycling.
- ii. We are committed to using public land transportation, rather than flights, for any work-related opportunities, such as CILIPS or SLIC conferences.
- iii. When the service requires a replacement Mobile Library and delivery van, we will explore investing in a fully electric and accessible vehicle.
- iv. Event planning and promotion must include information around sustainable travel to encourage visitors to make sustainable choices.

Digital Carbon

- i. We will improve understanding and measurement of digital emissions, including those from cloud services and SirsiDynix, so we can accurately assess our emissions and make informed plans on how to reduce this figure going forward.

Staff Development

- i. The Climate Action Team will support colleagues to embody the ethos of sustainability and deliver sustainable practices in all library services.
- ii. To empower leaders at all levels of our organisation to take positive action and develop environmentally sustainable practices, all members of the Climate Action Team will be certified as Carbon Literate. We will continually support further training and professional development to expand our environmental understanding, as individuals and an organisation.
- iii. All members of staff will complete a non-accredited Carbon Literacy training, led by members of the Climate Action team and/or external facilitators.
- iv. Sustainability training -- including non-accredited Carbon Literacy training, led by members of the Climate Action Team and/or external facilitators, and the WDC Climate Change and Sustainability iLearn module -- will be mandatory in staff onboarding.

Communication

- i. Through monthly social media posts about our sustainability commitments and actions, and the uneven impacts of the climate and ecological crises, we will use our unique reach and position of trust to share inspiring narratives that drive positive change and combat climate disinformation.
- ii. Support sector cross-pollination and development by sharing learnings with the Green Libraries Network.
- iii. Attend relevant events and workshops, such as CILIPS or SLIC conferences, to advocate for transformational change in the libraries sector.
- iv. Make this Climate Action Policy and any related strategies publicly available online.

Governance

- i. The Climate Action Team meet bimonthly - with the primary aim of pushing for ambitious, credible and publicly communicated environmental commitment and action, aligned with local environmental and climate change ambitions, targets and plans.
- ii. Members of the Senior Management Team, with particular guidance from the Service Development Librarian, are required to ensure that their decisions and the work of West Dunbartonshire Libraries comply with the Climate Action Policy in both letter and spirit.

- iii. The Climate Action Policy will be developed and reviewed annually by the Climate Action Team.

Responsibility

This policy applies to all staff, freelancers (authors, artists, gardeners etc.), and volunteers. Staff, freelancers and volunteers are required to ensure that, in any activities that they undertake or projects that they manage as part of their duties, the Climate Action Policy is complied with in both letter and spirit. Members of the Senior Management Team, with particular guidance from the Service Development Librarian, are required to ensure that their decisions and the work of West Dunbartonshire Libraries comply with the Climate Action Policy in both letter and spirit.

Glossary

Carbon Literacy	<i>Carbon literacy is an awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities, and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis.¹⁰</i>
Circular Economy	<i>The circular economy is a sustainable system designed to eliminate waste and keep resources in use, creating economic, environmental, and social benefits.¹¹</i>
Climate Change	<i>Climate change is the long-term shift in global weather patterns (different to local weather, which can change day to day). Scientists agree that humans are responsible for recent climate change, mainly by burning fossil fuels.¹²</i>
Climate Justice	<i>Climate change will affect different people and places unevenly, and so is likely to lead to inequalities within and across nations, and between current and future generations, so creating injustice.¹³</i>
Digital Carbon	Digital carbon is the CO ₂ emissions that are produced by data. Data generation, processing, and storage consumes vast quantities of electricity.
Just Transition	<i>The imperative of a just transition is that Governments design policies in a way that ensures the benefits of climate change action are shared widely, while the costs do not unfairly burden those least able to pay, or whose livelihoods are directly or indirectly at risk as the economy shifts and changes.¹⁴</i>
Paris Agreement	In 2015, 195 countries signed the landmark Paris Agreement at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties, committing to limit global temperature rise to below 2°C against pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C.
Sustainable Development Goals	The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 'Global Goals' developed by the United Nations as part of their 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The goals orbit the themes of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection.
The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	<i>The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international government treaty first adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The framework's objective is to prevent dangerous interference with the global climate through stabilising the levels of greenhouse gas found in the atmosphere.¹⁵</i>

¹⁰ [What on Earth is Carbon Literacy?](#)

¹¹ [What is the circular economy?](#)

¹² [Sniffer: Creative Climate Futures Project Glossary.](#)

¹³ [What is Climate Justice?](#)

¹⁴ [Just Transition Commission: A National Mission for a fairer, greener Scotland.](#)

¹⁵ [Julie's Bicycle Climate FAQ's.](#)