

# Environmental & Sustainability Policy

**Organization:** Hindu Samaj Northstowe (CIO - 16936118)

**Lead Responsibility:** Board of Trustees

**Effective Date:** January 2026

## 1. Our Vision for a Greener Northstowe

Hindu Samaj Northstowe (HSN) views the Earth as a mother (*Bhumi Devi*) to be protected. Our commitment to sustainability goes beyond following eco activities; it is a core part of our community mission. We align our operations with the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, specifically Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities) and Goal 13 (Climate Action).

## 2. Stewardship of Northstowe's Lakes and Local Ecosystem

As a Northstowe-based organization, we recognize that the town's waterbodies and green corridors are vital community assets. We are already active in protecting these spaces through our current practices:

- **Proactive Waterbody Protection:** In all our current outdoor activities and community festivals, we implement a "Strict Protection" zone to ensure no litter or pollutants enter the local lakes. We educate our participants on the importance of Northstowe's aquatic ecosystems to ensure our presence always leaves the environment better than we found it.
- **Biodiversity Advocacy in Practice:** We don't wait for a physical building to support wildlife. Through our "Seed and Sapling Giveaways," we encourage local families to increase biodiversity in their own gardens. We are committed to extending this by installing and maintaining bug hotels and hedgehog highways, and we fully embrace the requirement for integrated bird and bat boxes in our future permanent home.
- **Youth "Eco-Watch" Initiatives:** Our youth services already incorporate environmental awareness. We organize regular litter picks near the waterbodies and use these sessions to teach young people how to monitor local biodiversity. This fosters a deep-rooted sense of ownership and pride in Northstowe's natural landscape.

## 3. Stewardship of Sustainable Infrastructure

We are committed to the long-term efficiency of our "Green" building features:

- **Energy & Efficiency:** We perform annual health checks on our **solar panels and green roofs** to ensure maximum carbon reduction.
- **Switch-Off Policy:** We operate a strict "Switch-Off" protocol for all lights, AV equipment, and heating in our separate buildings when not in use.
- **Water Conservation:** We utilize rainwater harvesting and water-saving methods to maintain our onsite greenery and the tree-lined avenues surrounding our parcel.

## 4. The Circular Economy & Waste Reduction

HSN promotes a "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" culture to minimize our contribution to landfill:

- **Zero Waste Events:** For major festivals like the **Northstowe Holi Mela**, we use clearly labeled waste streams and encourage a "Leave No Trace" policy.

- **Phasing out Plastics:** We are actively reducing single-use plastics in all community teas and Prasad distributions, transitioning to compostable or reusable alternatives.
- **Community Sharing:** We host regular **Toy and Book Swaps, Second-hand Uniform Giveaways, and Seed and Sapling Giveaways** to encourage a circular economy within Northstowe.

## 5. Active Travel & Air Quality

To support Northstowe's "Active Travel" goals and improve local air quality:

- **Green Transport:** We encourage all participants and volunteers to use walking, cycling, or bus routes. Cycle storage information and carpooling options are included in all event communications.
- **Local Procurement:** We prioritize local suppliers for food, cleaning products, and office supplies to reduce "delivery miles" and support the local economy.

## 6. Education and Net Zero Roadmap

HSN is committed to a **Net Zero Roadmap**, striving to minimize our carbon footprint annually.

- **Dharmic Ecology:** We educate our youth on the intersection of Dharmic practices and environmentalism, teaching that looking after natural resources is a spiritual and civic duty.
- **Green Drives:** We remain active participants in local green drives and organize regular **Litter Picks** to keep our shared public spaces vibrant and clean.