Environmental Policy

1. Collings Park Community Garden

Collings Park Community Garden is a unique, locally managed piece of land that will continue to be developed in response to and reflect the needs of the community in which it is based. Environmental sensitivity and sustainability is integral to the Trust's whole approach.

2. Policy Statement

Collings Park Trust (CPT) will ensure that environmentally sensitive and sustainable practices are observed during the development and ongoing maintenance of the Community Garden.
CPT will comply with all relevant environmental legislation and, where necessary, will liaise with the Environment Agency and/or Plymouth City Council's Environmental Department for advice.

3. Raising Awareness

CPT will encourage all persons involved with the project to read and comply with this policy. It will also encourage and support activities designed at raising awareness of environmental and sustainability issues.

4. Sustainable Land Management

In its management of land, CPT will seek to reduce harm to and take opportunities to enhance wildlife and the natural environment.

5. Actions and Behaviors

CPT will seek to ensure that policy is translated into plans, actions and behaviors which support that policy. Commitments:

Waste
Minimise the amount of waste which is generated; re-use or recycle wherever possible. Assessments of the site (both the built and non-built features) will be undertaken and designs will be planned that seek to incorporate and reuse as many of the existing site materials as practical.

Existing on-site elements or those salvaged from off-site, such as structures, and other landscape materials, will be considered for reuse first before purchasing new materials. Reducing the consumption of materials is the preferred method of materials management, which will reduce the requirement for new materials and prevent the generation of waste.

Work towards zero net waste

We will continue to source options to reduce waste throughout the life of the project, by mulching and composting landscape trimmings.

Use plant trimmings as compost to nourish soils

Reduce waste during site maintenance by utilizing vegetation trimmings for compost and mulch. This will reduce the requirement for fertilizers by supplying nutrients in a slow-release manner. It will also capture rainwater onsite, decrease runoff, and provide increased soil moisture. The use of peat-based compost will be avoided.

Preserve and improve the health of the soil

Retain topsoil, prevent erosion and sedimentation, minimise grading and take protective measures to prevent or minimise the compaction of soil. Restore soil function in areas of previously disturbed soils to rebuild their ability to support healthy plants, biological communities, and water storage and infiltration. Manage organic matter levels, and the balance of soil organisms in existing soils.

Protect and use existing vegetation and species

Before any major work is carried out ensure that an Environmental Impact Assessment is undertaken by suitable qualified person/persons in order to identify any protected species and the habitats of animal species. In the event of protected species being identified, ensure that appropriate action is taken to minimise disruption to those species or, if necessary, relocate those species to an appropriate alternative environment.

Use of Non Toxic Pesticides and alternative approaches to pest control

Select planting which attract insects (for example alyssum, yarrow, dill and fennel), that will in turn feed on unwanted pests. Use of nets for protection if appropriate. By rotating annual flowers and plants where appropriate to

make it more difficult for pests to become established. Ensuring plants are effectively pruned, removing dead wood.

Should alternative measures for pest control fail, then botanicals which are natural rather than synthesized will be used, to minimise contamination to soil, ecosystems, and park users, consumers of vegetable produce.

Use vegetation that promotes a community identity and a sense of place
Use appropriate plants adapted to site conditions, local area, climate, and design, to support biodiversity, reduce insecticide use, and conserve water.

Manage landscapes effectively to reduce potential damage
Control and remove any invasive species to limit damage to local ecosystems.

Manage water on site
The garden will be designed to capture rainwater runoff by reducing impervious surfaces, and harvesting rainwater, which will be used for irrigation. Where possible, plants will be grouped together with those of similar water needs to maximise irrigation efficiency.

Purchase local and sustainably-produced plants and materials
Research options for plants and materials before purchasing. Selecting plants and products from companies that are striving to use sustainable practices will help to reduce any negative effects on the environment. By endeavoring to select local materials that require reduced energy for production, and transportation, the emission of greenhouse gasses can be decreased.

Reduce urban heat island effect
Use vegetation and consider the use of reflective materials to reduce the effects on microclimate and on human and wildlife habitat.

6. Community Wellbeing and Environmental Awareness

To ensure that as many people for the local community can access the garden, it will be developed to accommodate children, the elderly, and people of all abilities. Consideration will be given to the following:

Raised beds, wider paths, and benches will all be used to create a more usable space. This will be achieved by creating, where possible, pathways at least 3 feet wide which will allow space for wheelchairs and by ensuring that path materials are firm and smooth with a texture that reduces the possibility of slipping or tripping. Minimise changes in the slope and grade of paths, where possible.

By creating areas of the garden specifically designed for those with sensory impairment, for example a scent garden.

By adjusting the height and depth of raised beds to facilitate access for gardeners with restricted movement or issues of balance, if appropriate, for example if there is a community allotment area.

By providing benches or picnic tables provide areas for users to safely sit, including shaded areas.

By ensuring that there is a specific area for children to use to grow plants. To link-in with local schools and pre-schools, enabling them to carry out educational activities.

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