

# The Worshipful Company of Gardeners

## Climate Action Plan



**Adopted 24 April 2024**

## **Executive Summary**

The Company does not own or rent any real estate *per se*, but does employ staff. Therefore, the achievement of the pledges set out below will require a nuanced and collegiate approach, testing the Company's ability to influence those we purchase services from about the benefits of reducing their climate impacts, and by association, The Worshipful Company of Gardeners' (WCoG).

The Climate Action Plan below sets out the actions and commitments that the Worshipful Company of Gardeners make in the context of its carbon footprint and its reduction, within its approach to environmental sustainability and biodiversity. It is imperative that the Company is able to demonstrate its commitments and actions are measurable and achievable. The methodology proposed is a five-stage process:

1. Understanding the reasons for undertaking the process.
2. Defining and measuring emissions.
3. Verifying the WCoG carbon footprint.
4. Reducing and/or mitigating, and/or 'off-setting', emissions.
5. On the completion of 1-4, producing periodic reports on emissions and reduction measures taken.

This approach has been and will continue to be implemented in the context of the Livery and its contribution to the Company's carbon footprint by direct, indirect and partnership associations, and the Livery's contribution as a Company and individually to mitigating that figure. It notes the work that has been undertaken to date on this matter and the objectives and means by which that work will be extended and verifiable in the future by the application of the best scientific and industry practice and methodologies.

By undertaking this work the Company and its partners, service and product providers can gain important knowledge about inefficiencies in their operations and supply chains that were not previously evident. A well designed climate emissions reduction plan and strategy should focus on consistency, comparability, and accountability.

The measurement and reduction of actual and verifiable carbon footprints is both a complex and time-consuming process. This is especially the case when assessing the emissions from the Company's suppliers and their services and products, which can be difficult to accurately track. It is likely therefore that this initiative will remain a 'work in progress'. Nonetheless, it is both important for the Company to continue to be in the forefront of this initiative, and to exemplify and share its traditions of environmentalism and knowledge-based expertise.

## **Background information**

During 2022, Livery Companies were invited to work collaboratively to prepare Livery Company Action Plans as a first response to the challenges of climate change. This resulted in the formation of a pan Livery Climate Action Group (LCAG), chaired by Alderman (now Sheriff) Alison Gowman, with the important role of supporting Livery Companies develop their Climate Action Plans and also to

provide informed input to the then Lord Mayor's contribution to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26). The Company's representative on this group was, and is, Dr Heather Barrett-Mold OBE, Senior Past Master.

The WCoG has been an active and knowledgeable supporter of the objectives of the LCAG and has undertaken an initial indicative assessment of its primary emissions and footprint (2022). The data derived from this by Dr Heather Barrett-Mold, ably assisted by the previous Company Clerk, Major Jeremy Herrtage, and shown below, was reported to Court in the Spring of 2023. Subsequently, a Carbon Emissions Footprint Working Party was established with the responsibility of extending the initiative.

### **2022 Assessment of Carbon Emissions Footprint**

Data was collected to give an indicative baseline figure to raise awareness of the company's carbon emissions and wider impacts on the environment. This included an indicative range of activities undertaken by the Livery, Members and staff on Company business'. The outcome is set out below.

1. Car mileage 23696/year 6.61 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/year (note equivalent to 296 journeys of 80 miles)
2. Train mileage 94368/year 5.33 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/year (note equivalent to 1200 journeys of 80 miles)
3. Coach mileage 3600/year 0.48 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/year
4. Taxi mileage 200/year 0.05 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/year
5. Air mileage 7000/year 1.67 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/year
6. Homeworking 1 FTE 0.65 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/year
7. Overnight stays 330/year 46.83 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/year (standard hotels 73.62 tonnes if luxury hotels)
8. Meals 1310/Year 3.11 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/year

**Total 64.73 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>/year**

It is necessary to record that the Company does not own or rent real estate and therefore all events, meetings, etc., are organised at other Livery Company premises and/or commercial outlets. Therefore, a crucial approach to reduction of emissions is collaborative working of the Company's working groups and Livery officers when renting premises or buying in services to seek carbon footprint information and to ensure that those footprints are the smallest possible in the context of the services required and provided.

### **Proposed Overall Approach, Aims and Objectives arising from the above**

The reduction of our direct and indirect carbon emissions whenever and wherever contextually possible, by the careful management of our current impacts, and applying best 'Industry practice'.

Arising from the data reported above, the CFWP commenced preparing a Climate Action Plan that would further reduce our impact on the environment, and encourage our direct and indirect suppliers to do the same thing.

The actions referred to below are formulated to reduce our current impacts and report them to Court. Furthermore, the Company's Livery's assistance will be encouraged to record their significant individual, personal initiatives that reduce their carbon footprint so that that can also be recorded and applied to mitigate the overall net carbon footprint of the Company.

1. Revise the current methodology and re-calculate the total in the table above, adding new categories and figures.
2. Provide an annual statement detailing progress towards reducing our carbon emissions and wider environmental impacts and those of our 'supply chain'.
3. Reduce overseas trips, where possible replacing them with UK based events and/or virtual meetings.
4. Undertake a review of lunch and dinner menus and the provision of vegetarian and or low carbon alternatives. The benefits of this approach will take time to achieve their potential.
5. Upon the retirement of previous Company Clerk and the appointment of a new Clerk a new form of contract was introduced, 'a Working from Home' contract resulting in a modest reduction in our carbon footprint.
6. Work is on-going in relation to assessing the carbon footprint of our printed material; while this footprint is likely to be modest, account will be taken of best industry practice and where possible incorporated into our approach.
7. Through its Flowers in the City committee, establish a closer working relationship with The Corporation of London and especially its parks and open spaces service as the CoL implements its Environmental, Biodiversity and Climate Footprint policies. For example, organise an annual 'Tree and plant planting week' that will contribute to the mitigation of carbon footprints in the City of London and reduce the need for inorganic fertilizers. In particular, **to** use wherever practicable trees and plants from the 'nitro fixing' family and genera of plants-commonly referred to as *Leguminosae* but more accurately referenced as *Fabaceae*. Such initiatives are anticipated to provide reductions and mitigation strategies in the CoL's overall carbon footprint.
8. Continue our focus on sustainability, carbon impacts and scientifically verifiable, 'offsetting procedures', especially in the context of landscape design and planting. This is particularly apposite as the CoL policy for building development and re-development is resulting in more and various 'Roof Top Landscapes' which currently number more than 145.
9. Continue and develop our undertaking to make a positive impact by championing and sharing our strategic carbon footprint ambitions with schools, universities, colleges, and with the Nuffield Scholarship organization to promote knowledge-based research into sustainability and practice, in particular as it may affect our commitments.

10. Further opportunities exist for the Company's working parties, etc., such as the Horticultural Committee, Finance Committee, Future Gardeners Charity, and the Education Committee to assess their footprint and take such actions as are practical to reduce the impacts of operations and procurement of services and products, etc.

### **Those activities will draw upon**

The undoubted expertise and practice of the Livery and make available company learning, good practice, and expertise to facilitate sustainable development and progress towards zero carbon emissions.

### **Acknowledgments**

We wish to express our gratitude to those that have shared their approach to developing a Climate Action Plan, which has assisted us to benefit from their considerable endeavours. In the spirit of their example, we also wish to share our approach to this issue in the hope that it provides further insights for those just beginning this invaluable process.