

Environmental Sustainability Policy

Policy template provided by Vet Sustain to be completed by the practice

ST. JAMES VETERINARY GROUP 2025

ABOUT US

We are St. James Veterinary Group, one of the longest established independently owned practices in South Wales, been in existence for nearly one hundred years. We are based in Swansea and nowadays, our veterinary group is owned and managed by three experienced and qualified directors: Mr. Gareth Field, Mr. Geraint Jones, and Mr. David Steele. We have a multidisciplinary team, with some elements having certificates in different fields of veterinary medicine. We work with small animals, and we have 6 branches in total, a hospital working 24/7 and 5 branch practices.

We are able to offer a wide range of services: Pet Health Club, weight and nutrition clinics, behaviour/wellbeing consultations, rehoming stray cats, 24h emergency service and nursing care, house visits, ambulance, chemotherapy, dentistry, ECG, endoscopy, bronchoscopy and rhinoscopy, insurance, laboratory, soft tissues and orthopaedic surgery, Animal Health Certificates, prophylaxis consultations (vaccinations, worming and flea treatment), ultrasonography, digital radiography and recently started on acupuncture.

Our **vision and purpose** are to provide clinically excellent and compassionate veterinary care.

Our **strategy** is caring about our patients, each other and our clients. Enjoying and taking pride in what we do, who we are and where we work. Recruiting, developing and retaining the best people possible. Investing in our people, facilities and equipment. Delivering clinical excellence 24/7.

Our **Goals** are:

- . Animal welfare - To prioritise the health and well-being of all animals, working closely also with local animal charities and always aiming to rehome healthy stray animals rather than euthanizing them.
- . Client education and assistance - To provide education and assistance to clients on all aspects of animal care, including public health awareness.
- . Continuous improvement - Striving to improve and progress veterinary care for the benefit of their patients, clients, and the wider profession.
- . Exceptional veterinary care - Aim to be recognized as a provider of exceptional veterinary care.

Our **Values** are:

- . Respect and kindness - everyone matters.
- . Support - we support each other in what we do.
- . Job satisfaction - we want to enjoy and take pride in what we do.

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- . Freedom - appropriate care to each patient.
- . Solutions and development - we focus on solutions and continuous improvements and strive to grow and be the best versions of ourselves.
- . Professionalism - we take pride in delivering our services.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

St James Veterinary Group recognizes the importance of sustainability in our daily operations and its impact on the environment, our clients, and the community. As a veterinary group, we have identified key impacts and we are committed to reducing our environmental footprint, promoting sustainable practices, and contributing to a healthier planet for future generations, whilst upholding the highest standards of animal health, welfare and clinical care for our patients.

KEY IMPACTS

Our practice carbon footprint is 224.79 tonnes CO₂ per year

We have identified the following key business activities that contribute to our overall environmental and carbon footprint:

1. *Use of fossil fuels* (e.g., natural gas usage).
2. *Use of electricity energy* for lighting, heating, cooling, and equipment functioning.
3. *Waste generation & disposal*, that includes hazardous waste (e.g., antimicrobials, parasiticides and other pharmaceuticals, sharps, needles, single use medical plastics), infectious waste (infected biological or non-biological tissues), and non-hazardous (can include recyclable and non-recyclable materials). All those resources can harm environment and ecosystems, if not handled properly, contaminating water ways and soil.
4. *Use of anaesthetic gases and spray/aerosols* (anti-odour products for personal or environmental use, pest control).
5. *Use of water* for cleaning, washing, sterilization, drinking that can strain water resources.
6. *Carbon emissions from transport of personnel & animals*.
7. *Carbon emissions from staff & customer travel*.
8. *Procurement of goods and services*: The production, use and disposal of office supplies (e.g., paper, pens, stamps), medical and pets supplies, furniture/equipment,

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technology/electronics (printers, diagnostic and monitoring machines, telephones) can have significant environmental impact.

OUR ACTIONS

Having identified the key environmental impacts of our practice, we commit to reducing these through a journey of continual improvement. By utilising the following principles of the Vet Sustain **Greener Veterinary Practice Checklist**, we pledge to contribute to a **healthy environment for our employees and patients through the following actions:**

Practise responsible resource use:

- Review and optimise waste management, implementing the 3Rs: reduce waste, reuse materials whenever possible, and recycle.
- To have enough recycling bins and labelled appropriately, describing clearly what can be disposed on each.
- Members of team to wear PPE to have a look through the bins and check correct segregation regularly.
- Encourage staff to think about alternative ideas for the reuse of certain materials at the end of its useful life and by the other end, when an object is needed, staff to think about possible ones we already got that can fit the purpose intended, instead of buying new ones. Latter action also to be applied to resources and services provision.
- Prioritize eco-friendly suppliers and products whenever possible.
- Replace the paper storage of information by digital supports. Reduce of paper usage by alternative strategies that allow easy transfer of information to digital storage (p.e., anaesthetic sheets send to digital clouds or computer software).
- Reuse of medical material (p.e., reuse of surgical drapes, encourage everyone to have their own surgical hats).
- Undertake a waste survey annually, analyse results and take actions accordingly.
- Monitor and conserve energy, water, and other resources in our daily operations: Tap waters sealing performance to be monitored regularly. Habits of switch off lights whenever possible. Routines of checking that electrical equipment and water resources were turned off in consult rooms and other practice areas, at the end of the shifts or procedures. To be written on a wall board any defaults detected on materials that can prompt to waste of resources.
- Green Team to regularly evaluate the responsible resource habits of staff and encourage them to improve whenever needed.

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Be sustainable in our operation:

- Review traveling and transportation ideas to minimize carbon emissions: Reduce mileage through mindful appointment planning, consolidating appointments to avoid unnecessary journeys, medication checks to be performed at time of vaccines whenever possible, ongoing medication dispensed at the maximum period possible between checks, set up some consults to be performed by telemedicine; members of team encouraged to come to work by bicycle or car sharing whenever possible; practice meetings by online attendance, preferably.
- Animal friendly and compassionate welfare practices at all times and education of the community: through consultations, while providing medical care or information shared in practice's digital platforms, and presence on annual events like the Gower Show.
- Minimize the detrimental environment impact of anaesthetic gases, by using regional/local anaesthetic medication whenever possible and reducing nitrous oxide; ensure efficient use of inhalation anaesthetic gases by optimising flow rates and anaesthetic times, and using and maintaining closed circuits with effective gas scavenging equipment; efficient pre-anaesthetic protocols that minimise the amount of anaesthetic gases needed; to provide guidance and training on flow rates for the practice team; friendly, compassionate and adequate handling approaches to patients with the intend to reduce levels of anxiety pre-anaesthetic procedures that can impact the amount of medication dose needed
- To instal solar panels and to acquire O₂ generators in the near future.
- Our practice provides different resources of preventive healthcare for pets: Weight and behaviour clinics; Pet health Club Health Checks every 6 months, benefits to be provided individual case based; thorough 1st consultations for new acquired pets by the vets accompanied by supportive digital information send by email; preventive health care information on the practice website.
- Members of the green team to ensure environmental legislation compliance regularly and share with rest of staff.

Use medicines responsibly:

- To advise clients to return unused medications to the practice for appropriate safe disposal and a box in each reception is available for collections of that purpose (see also Antibiotic Amnesty by NHS Midlands 2022). That information to be shared during consultations, by reception staff when clients picking up prescriptions and in on our website, sent by email, social media posts, on reception board displays/TV.
- Educate the team to prevent medication to be disposed through the sink or toilet, but instead, in appropriated bins.
- Responsible use of parasiticides: ecto/endoparasiticides policy in development; eggs counting lab routine; having a guidance/use decision making tool available for clients, for each patient to be determined what product to use and how often; that information should be shared in waiting rooms posters, web and social media platforms. South

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Wales is considered a high-risk area for lungworm infection, mainly in dogs, for that reason monthly treatment for our patients is recommended.

- Each practice manager has in place good stock control routines that prevent drug wastage.

Empower the team and disseminate information to our community:

- All the practice members to be familiarised with the sustainability policy content, to be involved and to contribute for the implementation of those practices. The Green Team to encourage continuous empowering of the team and dissemination of sustainability ideas, so clients and community can also be informed about a more sustainable way of living.
- It's paramount the feedback and participation of everyone, so the email address is **greenteam@stjamesvet.co.uk** also available for all the staff, clients, suppliers and community to send sustainability ideas for the practice.
- Policy to be available on our practice website.
- Sustainability courses and CPD training to be encouraged and provided to all staff.
- Clinical Governance regular meetings to have sustainability topics to discuss.
- Green board in the staff rooms of each branch to collect and share sustainable ideas. A green idea can be reminded and written in the top of the green boards regularly.
- Sustainability information to be shared through the practice website, social media posts and waiting room areas.
- Good Health and wellbeing to support all aspects of practice operations: Practice members have a friendly and compassionate way of being that also easily welcomes any new additions to the team, clients and animals; the Practice has a free confidential Employee Assistance Program that can provide mental health counselling, CBT, 24/7 helpline for live chat and support, online legal advice, medical information and other sources, that can contribute to happy and healthy teams.
- The Green Team Group to meet once a month to discuss the implementation, good practice and progress of the sustainability program.

Create a green group/green lead:

The Green Team Group is composed by:

- Marlene Brás (Parkway, Walter Road and overall coordinator),
- Rebecca Richards (Neath),
- Victoria Cole (Morriston),
- Emma Westley (Whitegates),
- Hazel Loney (Penllergaer),
- Rick Barrowman (Overall coordinator and management representative).

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OUR TARGETS

As a practice we have set the following targets:

- Reduce energy consumption: Reduce energy consumption by 10% within the next 12 months through efficient equipment, lighting (to instal solar panels in the near future) and actively encouraging new eco-friendly habits through all the team.
- Increase recycling, reuse, reduce of materials and go paper free: Increase recycling rates by 20% within the next 6 months by implementing active recycling programs for paper, plastic, glass, metal; developing strategies to reduce the use of paper and printers.
- Reduce water usage: Reduce water usage by 10% within the next 12 months through efficient fixtures and practices.
- Reduce waste: Reduce waste sent to landfill by 25% within the next 12 months through reduction, reuse, and recycling initiatives.
- Reduce the use of anesthetic gases: Reduce the use of anesthetic gases by 10% within the next 12 months investing in team's training and courses on anesthetic monitoring.

Through our commitment with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Practice Standards Accreditation Scheme Sustainability Award, we aim to support the UK's commitment for net zero by 2050 through the actions outlined and a continuous improvement.

COMMUNICATION

We communicate this policy to all stakeholders including staff, clients and suppliers encouraging feedback and participation from all. We provide necessary training to raise awareness of environmental matters and allow opportunities to contribute to changes.

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COMMITMENT MADE ON: [30/05/2025]

SIGNED:



Marlene Brás, Veterinary Surgeon

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