

# TRIGONOS

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Trigonos is a social enterprise, a not-for-profit business that promotes economic, environmental, social and cultural developments. Sustainability means “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Both of these have been at the core of Trigonos’ objectives since it was established in 1996.

There are three sides to sustainability in business activity: environment, economy and community. When aiming for sustainable practice all three factors must be given equal consideration at a local through to a global level.

***Environment*** – Ensuring that business engages in the proper and careful use of finite resources and the management of waste so as to minimize the negative and maximize the positive impact of human activity.

***Economy*** – Ensuring that business is financially viable, engages in good employment practice and is of benefit to the economy as a whole.

***Community*** – Ensuring that business is overall of benefit to communities, their culture & heritage and does not endanger them.

The following explains Trigonos current practice and future commitments to sustainability.

### ENERGY

We will reduce our negative impact on the local and global environment through prudent use of energy:

- We have changed our electricity supplier to Good Energy who guarantee 100% renewable energy supply, reducing our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by over 10,000kg per annum<sup>1</sup>;
- E-cubes fitted to fridges and freezers where possible
- Our transition from gas and oil boilers to a wood-chip biomass heating and hot water system was completed December 2007. We hope CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be reduced by 80%, from 87 tonnes to 15 tonnes per annum<sup>2</sup>, and wood-chip consumption will be monitored;
- A solar-powered pump has been installed to power a small horticultural irrigation system. The viability of solar panels on main buildings is being looked into;
- Energy saving improvements will be made as buildings are maintained and repaired;
- All lighting uses low-energy bulbs except art studio
- Workers and visitors are encouraged to turn off electrical goods when not in use, use power-saving options and conserve heat;
- When electrical goods are replaced the most energy efficient models that meet our needs are chosen.

### WASTE

We adhere to the “reduce, reuse, recycle” principle.

- Over packaged products are avoided, whenever possible;
- We use *Evolve* recycled paper (100% post consumer waste) for most office printing;
- Recycled paper (100% pcw) will be required for out-sourced printing;
- Draft documents and file copies are printed on the back of used office paper, when available;
- Glass, cardboard, paper, plastic bottles, household batteries, aluminium and steel cans and non-compostable food waste are recycled via the doorstep collection scheme;

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on Defra calculations.

<sup>2</sup> Based on an analysis by a renewable energy consultant.

- All vegetable waste and peelings are composted;
- Plastic bags are re-used when shopping and to pack veg and fruit sold in our shop;
- Furniture, electrical hardware and other items are recycled via Antur Waunfawr, charity shops, or other local recycling agencies eg Caernarfon *Freecycle*;
- Non-reusable electrical products and other unusable items are taken to the Council recycling facility.

## **TRANSPORT**

Our position some miles from main roads and railway stations creates a challenge where transport is concerned, especially as local bus services are still being cut rather than improved. Despite this we:

- encourage workers to use public transport to get to and from work, with flexible working hours to facilitate this;
- Trigonos has two vehicles: when replaced the most environmentally friendly option that meets our needs will be chosen;
- Non-essential car journeys are kept to a minimum;

Part of our appeal for holiday groups and retreats is the tranquility and remoteness of the location. Visitors are provided with:

- clear and comprehensive information about alternatives to travelling by car, including information about our proximity to the Sustrans cycle network and car-sharing schemes.

## **WATER & DRAINAGE**

Water is plentiful in Gwynedd but consumption should be minimised due to costs associated with supply and waste infrastructure.

- Water meters have been installed;
- Rain-water is collected for irrigating the land;
- Additional irrigation of the vegetable gardens is fed by the stream with due consideration to the health of the lake and to biodiversity downstream;
- Wherever possible we use naturally draining surfaces for car-parks and walkways to reduce the pressure on drains and potential flooding associated with tarmac and concrete surfaces.

## **FINANCE**

- We hold our mortgage with Triodos Bank, who work to strict ethical principles;
- Under the Stakeholder Pension Scheme employees can invest in *The Stewardship Fund* an ethical pension fund provided by Friends Provident;
- Trigonos has an equitable salary structure which restricts the differential between the highest and lowest paid (see our Annual Report);
- Current account banking has been transferred to the Cooperative Bank, who adhere to strict ethical policies.

## **PURCHASING**

- Our telephone service is provided by the Phone Coop, a cooperative owned by its' members and with a strict ethical and environmental policy.
- We favour local suppliers, manufacturers and service providers when they meet appropriate quality criteria;
- Coops and businesses with green credentials are also favoured.

## **FOOD SOURCING & CATERING**

Food choices can have a major impact on sustainability, with implications for local economy and culture, packaging and waste, exploitation and pollution. Trigonos is a member of the Wholesome Food Association and food is produced and sourced according to their principles, ie. food is:

- grown and processed using sustainable, non-polluting methods as close as possible to those found in nature;
- wherever possible, traded and consumed within a short distance of where it was grown;
- an integral part of life and community, rather than merely a commodity for profit.

For catering purposes we:

- make maximum use of vegetables, fruit and salads grown on our own land;
- use fresh ingredients and minimise use of processed foods;
- avoid GM foods and GM derivatives;
- seek local and organic produce and fair trade items and are working to reduce our dependence on supermarkets.

## **LAND**

- No artificial fertilisers, pesticides or herbicides are used for growing food crops;
- Herbicides are used elsewhere very occasionally to help control invasives;
- Trigonos grows fruit, vegetables and salads according to organic principles for catering for our visitors and for sale locally. Due to the small scale of the venture registration as an organic producer with The Soil Association is not economically viable. We are a member of the WFA (see above);
- Traditional features of the land such as dry stone walls, slate fences, etc are repaired and extended using local materials.
- Biodiversity of wildlife and plant life is protected and enhanced; when planting, native species of plants and trees are favoured over non-native (with the exception of a few decorative borders near the main buildings);
- Woodlands and natural habitats are being considerably extended and grazing reduced.

## **MAINTENANCE, CLEANING AND CHEMICALS**

- Environmentally friendly and biodegradable materials for all cleaning and maintenance are favoured eg Ecover cleaning products;
- We avoid cleaning products containing artificial musk perfumes. These are persistent and bioaccumulative and some artificial musks are known to be hormone disrupters;
- All painting and decorating is done with natural, non-petro-chemical paints (Beeckosil and Algaia), which are free from solvents and other toxic ingredients;
- Renovation of the Art Studio (March 2008), includes new floor coverings, for which we have chosen linoleum (by Marmoleum). This is produced from renewable materials such as linseed oil, wood flour and jute and is biodegradable at the end of its useful life.

## **PARTICIPATION & SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Trigonos works with the principle of social inclusion for a healthy, creative community, where each individual is valued and encouraged to fulfil their potential. Within Trigonos:

- All public areas are accessible to people with mobility problems or using a wheelchair; there is appropriately adapted residential accommodation on the ground floor;
- Providing work experience for young people at risk is an integral part of our work;
- We play an active role in local initiatives: environmental, health and cultural and economic;
- We always consult local residents about development plans that may affect them and respond to their concerns;
- We organise cultural events related to local heritage and the environment and respond to requests from local groups to use our facilities;
- We are an equal opportunities employer.

## **LANGUAGE**

Trigonos is aware of the role of the Welsh language locally and throughout Wales. We have a comprehensive language policy that requires that certain materials be bilingual. We will continue to look at how we can further extend the role of the Welsh language within Trigonos.