

52 Eco Top Tips for your weekly parish newsletter

January – In the kitchen

1. Never put warm or hot food into the fridge or freezer as this will make the fridge work extra hard to try and keep it cold; always allow food to cool down first.
2. Use a bowl to wash up rather than a running tap and save £25 a year in energy bills. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-quick-wins
3. When making a cup of tea, only boil the amount of water that you need. You waste electricity (and money) heating water you won't use.
4. Stop using aluminium foil for cooking wherever possible; use a container with a lid that can be reused. Aluminium is a rare metal and its extraction and purification uses a lot of energy.
5. Eat less meat, particularly red meat; producing 1kg of beef produces the equivalent CO2 to you driving a 300mile round trip while leaving all your lights on at home.

February – Get to grips with your bills

1. Get to grips with your energy bills. The information on a typical energy bill can be confusing. But understanding it can go a long way to helping you get to grips with your energy use. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-quick-wins
2. Switch your electricity supplier so that you support renewable electricity generation rather than electricity made by burning fossil fuels. You could use the Green Journey price comparison site <http://greenjourney.switchgasandelectric.com/>
3. More than half the money spent on fuel bills goes towards providing heating and hot water. Installing a room thermostat, a programmer and thermostatic radiator valves and using these controls efficiently could save you around £75 a year.
4. If you already have a full set of heating controls, turning down your room thermostat by just one degree can save around £80 a year. Jumpers are in this year!

March – Going shopping

1. Make a list before you go food shopping to help avoid over impulse buying and buying food you will end up throwing away.
2. Reduce your impact on the environment by buying second hand when you can. Ebay and charity shops are good sources of reused items.
3. When you need to buy a large item research it carefully. Think about how long it could last, how much it costs to run, what it is made of, where it is made, can it be recycled at the end of its life. Better quality items often last longer and so cost you less over time.

4. Tempted to buy in impulse when you are shopping? Get in the habit of coming back the next day or week when you have thought through if you really *need* to buy it.

April – In the bathroom

1. Spend less time in the shower. Spending one minute less in the shower each day will save up to £7 off your energy bills each year, per person. Heating water uses a lot of energy. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-quick-wins
2. Turn off the tap while cleaning your teeth. The clean water that flows out of your tap needs energy in many stages of processing and transport before it gets to the tap. Don't waste it!
3. If your toilet cistern holds more than 6 litres of water (likely if it was installed before 2001) put a Hippo Water Saving device (or a brick) in it to save water each time you flush (eg <http://www.hippo-the-watersaver.co.uk/>)
4. Fit a water efficient shower head (if you've got a shower that takes hot water straight from your boiler or hot water tank). This will reduce your hot water usage while retaining the sensation of a powerful shower.
5. Switch to eco cleaning products which biodegrade in the sewerage system and don't damage aquatic life in our rivers and seas. They also contain less harmful chemical for us too.

May – In the utility room

1. When using a washing machine ensure there is a full load and turn down the temperature. Heating the water to higher temperatures uses more energy.
2. Electric tumble dryers use energy. If it's a nice day dry your clothes outside. In the winter most drying is done by the wind, so check the forecast for wind days and nights as you can hang washing overnight (as there is no dew in the winter).
3. Irons use a lot of electricity to get hot – only iron clothes that really need it.
4. Cut up old clothes or sheets that you were going to throw out, to use as clothes for cleaning jobs rather than buying new cleaning clothes.

June – Holiday highlights

1. Going for a day out to the beach? Take a bag in your pocket and pick up any litter you see.
2. Planning your day out or holiday journey? Use public transport if you can to reduce your carbon emissions. Travelling by train or ferry to Europe can be part of the adventure.
3. If you are planning to fly for your holiday make sure you carbon offset the carbon you generate from your flight eg with Climate Stewards www.climatestewards.org/

4. Holiday waste? When you are away try to take as much care to save energy, recycle, prevent food waste as you would at home.

July – Your electrical appliances

1. You can save around £30 a year just by remembering to turn your appliances off at the plug rather than leaving them in standby mode.
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-quick-wins
2. Take your phone charger out of the socket when not in use. It uses energy even when it's not charging your phone.
3. Buy A-rated electrical appliances whenever you can. They may be more expensive initially but you will save on your energy bills.
4. The location of your fridge can make a difference in how energy efficient it is. Make sure it is out of direct sunlight and not close to the oven. Keeping it against an outside wall will help the heat it generates escape easily, and always make sure that there is a few inches' space all around the fridge so that air can circulate.
5. Electrical gadgets are great, but the environmental impact of manufacturing them and disposing of them at the end of their life is high. Think before you buy more gadgets.

August – In the car

1. In the car drive away immediately when starting from cold - idling to heat the engine wastes fuel and causes rapid engine wear.
2. When driving the most efficient speed depends upon the car in question but is typically around 55 - 65mph, faster speeds will greatly increase your fuel consumption. Slow down and allow a little more time for journeys.
3. Change your car breakdown cover to a company that campaigns for better environmental transport measures, rather than being part of the road transport lobby eg Environmental Transport Association www.eta.co.uk
4. In the car switch your engine off if you pull over or are stuck in traffic for even a minute. It saves you fuel, reduces the nitrous oxide pollution for you and those around you and cuts noise pollution.

September – Lighting your home

1. Light bulbs! If the average household replaced all of their bulbs with LEDs, it would cost about £100 and save about £35 a year on bills.
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-quick-wins

2. Use natural light when you can to save energy. Sit by the window. Decorate your home in light colours to maximise natural light.
3. Turn your lights off when you're not using them. If you switch a light off for just a few seconds, you will save more energy than it takes for the light to start up again, regardless of the type of light. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-quick-wins
4. If you have lights in your garden use solar powered lights that charge during the day and don't require electricity.

October – Keeping Warm

1. Make sure you close your curtains when it gets dark to stop heat escaping.
2. Get draft proof to stop losing heat. Professional draught-proofing of windows, doors and blocking cracks in floors and skirting boards can cost around £200, but can save around £25 a year on energy bills. DIY draught proofing can be much cheaper. Installing a chimney draught excluder could save around £15 a year as well. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-quick-wins
3. Make sure your hot water tank is insulated with a thick jacket. It will save you lots of money not to mention reducing your carbon emissions.
4. Has your loft got loads of insulation? It's one of the cheapest and easiest ways to save energy and will pay for itself in hardly any time.

November – Recycling

1. Check you know what can be recycled in your area, if you're not sure check the council website.
2. Set up simple systems in your home to make it easy to recycle. Where do you need a paper and card recycling bin, what about a compost bucket?
3. All your plastic bottles can be recycled, from mouthwash to salad dressing – so put them all in your recycling bin! In most boroughs, you can recycle all your plastic bottles, tubs and pots, and their tops and lids too.
4. Be pedantic about your recycling! Think about every item you put in the bin; should it go to landfill? Loo rolls come on card tubes, sweets come in foil or paper wrappers, apple cores can be composted and most packaging can be recycled now.

December – Eco Christmas ideas

1. Be creative in the gifts you give this Christmas; make sure your desire to be loving is not damaging the environment.
2. Getting ready for the festivities of Christmas. Buy as much locally produced, in season food and particularly veg as you can. Try not to over cater and waste food.

3. Wrap and rewrap. Why not reuse your wrapping paper. Take a bit of care unwrapping your presents (it adds to the gift experience), save the paper and reuse next year.
4. Enjoy the feast of Christmas! Don't forget to recycle your rubbish. Don't waste unwanted presents find new homes for them through the charity shop or on ebay.
5. Get ready with your environmental New Year's Resolution. How will your care for creation in the coming year?