

All the Really Useful Stuff We Couldn't Squeeze into Our Top Tips Flyer...

Compiled by UPEG

Hello and welcome. If you're reading this, you either found our Top Tips flyer helpful and thought provoking or wondered what on earth we were talking about?! Either way we hope you find this added info useful and we promise to try and keep it updated with interesting ideas to help you live a sustainable(ish) life. 'Sustainable living' is a pretty big subject, one that's hard to divvy up into nice neat categories, because let's face it, it encompasses everything we do. Now, my life doesn't divide up into nice neat categories (in fact there is very little about my life that is nice and neat..!) but I've done my best to collect some really useful stuff from various websites and mash it together to share with you lovely Urchfont Parishioners! The key is to not beat yourself up, be kind to yourself, work out what works for you and your family... it starts with small steps, tweaks and changes that eventually create big change and make a difference. Hopefully, what we've collected here are easy, do-able, down to earth ideas and suggestions for everyone to help save the planet.

Some of the suggestions below have been stolen from <https://climatecare.org/>, some have come from us and some from the U.N.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/> and a whole chunk is from Jen Gale author of Sustainable(ish) <https://www.asustainablelife.co.uk/>

Conscious Consumption

How have we somehow ended up in a society where it's perfectly normal to go into a supermarket for a pint of milk and come out with a fence sprayer and a new pair of walking boots, when we weren't even aware we had a desire to paint the fence, or indeed go on any long distance hikes?

Conscious consumption sounds pretty dull, but we do need to wake up to, and acknowledge the fact that everything we buy has an impact on the planet, and on the people who make our stuff and grow our food. It's not about depriving ourselves of things, it's about buying and consuming more thoughtfully, buying less but better quality, buying for durability and repair. Buying things we truly love and want to treasure and keep.

And it's also about looking around and thinking about whether we could find the things we need without necessarily needing to buy new - could you swap, borrow, repair, or buy second-hand?

CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION

1. Think before you buy!
2. Commit to buying a percentage of your wardrobe secondhand
3. Join your local Freecycle or Freegle group
4. Borrow at least one item instead of buying in the next month
5. Find a Fairtrade version of a regular purchase
6. Rent your dress next time you have a posh 'do'
7. Support local independent businesses
8. Learn a new skill and make something from scratch
9. Create a list of the things you need/want and see how many you can source secondhand
10. Buy less, buy better

By Jen Gale

Zero Waste

"Zero waste" is a pretty intimidating term isn't it? The whole idea of a Zero Waste lifestyle is to send nothing to landfill. And not only that, but to really crack down on recycling as well - making full use of the waste hierarchy, and refusing, reducing and reusing wherever possible.

And there are some people who do indeed live a pretty much zero waste life. Who can fit all their rubbish from 3 years (or more) inside a small glass jar? Most of us, however, will not achieve that. I prefer to think of it as a journey - a journey towards 'less waste' to landfill, and a more thoughtful approach when I'm buying stuff as to what I'll do with it once I'm done. It's not perfect. I'm not perfect. It's Zero Waste (ish)...

Below is a list of suggestions for actions you might like to take or challenges you might like to set. How many can you already tick off? (It's absolutely ok if the answer is a big fat hairy zero at the moment!). What one thing could you tackle this week/month?

ZERO WASTE(ISH)

1. Allocate some space for recycling bins
2. Check out the Recycle Now website (www.recyclenow.com)
3. Learn to sew on a button!
4. See if you have a Repair Cafe near you (www.repaircafe.org)
5. Refuse freebies like pens and balloons
6. Put a 'no junk mail' sign on your postbox
7. Dig out your old mobiles and send them off for recycling
8. Challenge yourself to de-clutter and send nothing to landfill
9. Rehome your unwanted things via Freecycle or Freegle
10. Buy less, buy better!

By Jen Gale

It is worth noting that Sustainable Devizes group have secured grant funding to start a Repair Café but due to Covid opening has been delayed until Saturday 25th July.

Meanwhile you can still get involved with their Facebook group at:

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=devizes%20repair%20cafe>

Plastic Free(ish)

We've all seen the awful pictures of the birds with stomachs full of plastic, the dead whales washing up, and that horrific video of the turtle having a straw pulled out of its nose (if you haven't seen it, take my word for it, you will cry).

And I think we're all pretty aware of the need to reduce our reliance on single use plastic, but it's hard isn't it? Once we become aware of the problems with plastic pollution, we suddenly start to see quite how ubiquitous it is - how full our bins are, and how much of our weekly shop is encased in it. Like living 'zero waste', the goal of 'plastic-free' is a pretty overwhelming one. And while most of us might not ever be 'plastic-free' we can all be 'plastic-free(ish)' and take steps to reduce our use of single use plastic.

Some of it comes down to developing new habits (remember reusable items like bags and coffee cups are only better if we actually remember to reuse them!), and some of it is about finding alternatives that work for us and our families. You could use waste free shops or shops which have refill stations such as The Little Eco Shop in Devizes <https://www.thelittleecoshop.com/> or our own, very local Planks Farm Shop <http://www.planksfarmshop.co.uk/> and choose Fruit and veg options that don't use plastic. More on that in our Food section! Buy in bulk where you can, especially things like shampoo, handwash, and laundry liquid etc. Make a stand and strip the plastic off your shopping and make the supermarket get rid of it - why can't they sell cabbages and cauliflowers unwrapped when broccoli and carrots are.....

PLASTIC-FREE(ISH)

1. Do a plastic audit and pick ONE thing to change
2. Make sure everyone in the family has a reusable water bottle
3. Find a reusable coffee cup you love and remember to use it!
4. Pop a reusable bag in your handbag and glovebox
5. Make or buy beeswax wraps to replace clingfilm
6. Take your tupperware shopping!
7. Look into options for plastic-free periods
8. Ditch the wet wipes
9. Try swapping to bar soap
10. Buy less, buy better! Not all plastic is bad plastic - refuse single use

By Jen Gale

Sustainable(ish) Food

We all need to eat, and all of our food has a carbon and a water footprint, so it makes sense that this is an area where we can all have an impact and take some simple steps to reduce our own carbon footprints.

If you're expecting to be berated for eating meat or liking a splash of milk in your cuppa, rest assured that's not going to happen. There is no judging or condemning here, but one thing we can all probably agree on is the need to cut back on meat and dairy, but as with all things sustainable living, food is a complex issue. There is still lots you can do to eat more sustainably, and one thing we can ALL do is to tackle food waste (did you

know that 50% of all food waste occurs in the home?!). Sustainable Devizes Group have a local food directory of producers and suppliers on their website at <https://www.sustainabledevizes.org.uk/>. These independent businesses were of course invaluable during lockdown when initially many supermarkets struggled to cope. Let's hope people continue to support them post-Covid!

FOOD

1. Shop your cupboards
2. Try Meat-free Monday
3. Meal plan!
4. Visit the Love Food Hate Waste website for inspiration for your leftovers (www.lovefoodhatewaste.com)
5. Eat with the seasons
6. Cook from scratch at least once a week
7. Download the Olio app (www.olioex.com) and start sharing food with your neighbours
8. Research the feasibility of a veg box
9. Investigate food waste composting options
10. Buy less, buy better - think organic, and local

By Jen Gale

Sustainable(ish) Home & Away

This category is all about our homes - the energy, water and other resources we use, as well as things like our bank accounts and pensions (yes, dull, but massively powerful!),

as well as travel and transport. If you do nothing else, switch your energy to a 100% renewable supplier! I promise you it's not the headache you think it's going to be, and it could even save you money. Get a [free quote here from Big Clean Switch](#) and you could slash your household carbon footprint in less than 10 minutes!

HOME AND AWAY

1. Switch your energy to a renewable tariff (www.bigcleanswitch.com)
2. Switch off standby
3. Swap your bulbs for LEDs
4. See how often you can do without the tumble dryer
5. Batch cook
6. Have a car-free day once a week
7. Bike or walk journey's under 2miles
8. Replace one flight with the train
9. When you're away, support local independent businesses
10. Check out all the beauty and culture on offer within our own shores

By Jen Gale

Sustainable(ish) Family

Whether you've got 2.4 kids, or it's just you and the cat, or your friends are your family, this is where you'll find ideas and resources for helping to have those all-important

conversations with those we love (I can't guarantee that the cat will have much input...). Making changes ourselves can be difficult enough, but that's nothing compared with trying to make changes while bringing the rest of the family along for the ride. And it will obviously vary from family to family and depend on the age of your kids.

SUSTAINABLE(ISH) FAMILY

1. Watch a sustainable(ish) movie or documentary together
2. Switch to re-usable nappies - at least some of the time
3. Embrace hand-me-downs for kids clothes & toys!
4. Have conversations with friends and family
5. Do a plastic audit together
6. Take plastic-free snacks out with you
7. Go cold turkey on baby wipes..!
8. Get together with a group of friends and have a toy swap
9. Make it a family tradition to do a #2minutelitterpick at the beach or park
10. Experiment with a plastic-free version of pet food if you can find one

By Jen Gale

Sustainable(ish) Celebrations

If there's ever a time when even hardened climate change deniers might start to question our addiction to stuff and its impact on the planet, it's Christmas. I'm sure I'm not alone in finding it all a bit overwhelming - the sheer volume of stuff that we need to

find space for each January; how quickly the kids tire of the toys that they pestered so passionately for; the bin bags of wrapping paper sent to landfill.

And it's not just Christmas is it? It's birthdays, Easter, Valentine's Day, Father's Day... They all now seem to demand that we buy to show our love. But all of this stuff has a massive impact on the planet, so how do we celebrate, how do we show our love and appreciation without trashing the planet?

SUSTAINABLE(ISH) CELEBRATIONS

1. Save your Christmas cards to use as gift tags next year
2. Refuse the temptation to buy any new Christmas decorations!
3. Buy one present second-hand
4. Buy fairtrade flowers or chocolate
5. Aim for plastic-free party bags
6. Give a charity gift
7. Have a 'zero waste(ish) party'
8. Get together with a group of friends and have a toy swap for stocking fillers
9. Have a 'no presents' Valentine's pact with your other half
10. Try an 'alternative Advent calendar' with experiences or books rather than plastic tat

By Jen Gale

Want to be an Activist?

Ooh! This is a bit radical for Urchfont Parish Council, I hear you cry, but don't panic we're not suggesting for one minute that you get all shouty and carry placards (although

that can be fun, but it's not for everyone!). The good news is that there's room for all kinds of activism, and even simple things like the choices we make each and every day when we're choosing what to eat, what to buy, what to wear, can be little acts of activism. One of my favourite quotes is this one from Anna Lappe: "Every time you spend money, you're casting a vote for the kind of world you want." Powerful stuff eh? As well as thinking about the kind of world we want when we spend our hard-earned cash, simply having conversations is hugely powerful - in a gentle way, these conversations, and our own actions, create ripples that spread, that influence others, and change the world.

Below are examples of all kinds of activism, which may not sit under the traditional definition, but are about doing things differently in a consumer, disposable society, which I see very much as activism(ish).

EVERYDAY ACTIVISM

1. Vote with your money for the kind of world you want
2. Make your voice heard - let businesses know if there are things you want them to change
3. Donate - support the causes you care about
4. Have conversations with friends and family
5. Share useful posts on social media
6. Write to your MP
7. Write to your local council
8. Vote! Vote for the parties putting the planet first
9. Join in with Fashion Revolution every April and ask #whomademyclothes
10. Buy less, buy better - buying less is a radical act!

Even More Practical tips...

This is my overflow section for those of you who just can't get enough! In this section I've gone into a little more detail about energy efficiency and some extra stuff...told you it was really hard to categorise all of this info on sustainable living!

HEATING CONSERVATION

- Draughts waste a lot of energy by losing heat. One quick and relatively cheap win is to put a brush or seal on your doors to prevent air escaping round the edges. Letterboxes and keyholes also lose heat and can be covered too. Gaps in floorboards and skirting boards also let in draughts; you can fill in these gaps with newspaper, beading or sealant. Get a rug. Carpets and rugs keep your house warm and your thermostat low.
- Stick aluminium foil or reflective panels behind radiators. This reflects heat back into the room rather than being absorbed into walls.
- In winter close your curtains at night to stop heat escaping.
- Make sure your loft has loads of insulation. It's one of the cheapest and easiest ways to save energy and will pay for itself in hardly any time.
- Consider insulating your cavity walls. If you live in an older house, which has no cavities, consider asking a builder to put insulating plaster board on the interior of outside walls. Builders may also be able to put insulating layers on your walls from the outside.
- Why not contact your local low carbon group – they may have a thermal imaging camera to you can make arrangements with them to photograph your house on a cold night and see where the hotspots are.
- You can reduce 50% of your heat loss through windows by installing double glazing, which in turn could cut your heating bill up to £90 a year. Make sure they are properly installed though, as gaps around the outside will lose heat. (Visit the Energy Saving Trust for more details)
- Turn your thermostat down to 18°C and put on an extra jumper.

ELECTRICITY CONSERVATION

- Buy A, A+ and A++ rated electrical appliances.
- Switch to energy saving light bulbs or LEDs, when your old bulbs break. They last around 10 times longer than ordinary light bulbs; they will save you money and come in loads of different styles.
- According to the 'Powering The Nation' study completed by Energy Saving Trust, between 9-16% of the electricity consumed in homes is used to power appliances on standby. On a bill of £500 this accounts for as much as £80! Turn them off at the wall, alternatively plug appliances into a power strip then you can turn them all off with one flick of a switch.
- When using a washing machine ensure there is a full load and turn down the temperature.
- If you have lights in your garden use solar powered lights that charge during the day and don't require electricity.
- Take your phone charger out of the wall. It uses energy even when it's not charging your phone.

WATER SAVINGS

- If your heating system still has a tank, make sure it's insulated with a thick jacket. It will save you lots of money not to mention reducing emissions.
- A dripping tap can be not only annoying but if it is a hot tap it can cost you in both water costs and water heating costs. Remember, water also has a carbon footprint associated with it from processing.
- Always use the correct size saucepan, and when heating water only use the amount you need.
- When making a cup of tea, only boil the amount of water that you need.
- Turn off the tap while cleaning your teeth.
- If your toilet cistern holds more than 6 litres of water (likely if it was installed before 2001) put a Water Saving device (bag) in it.
- Use far less energy and water by having a shower instead of a bath. Although beware – power showers can use more water. Which? have a number of water saving suggestions for shower users.
- If you use a dishwasher, don't rinse your plates before you run the machine.

FOOD AND THE FRIDGE

- 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.
- Make sure you defrost your fridge and freezer on a regular basis.
- Set your fridge to only as cold as you need it and shut the door immediately on removing or adding what you need, or the fridge has to work harder to restore it to the cold setting. You should check the seal regularly as well, if it is damaged then cold air will be escaping.
- You should never put warm or hot food into the fridge as this will make the fridge work extra hard to try and keep it cold; always allow food to cool down first.
- Defrost frozen food in the fridge as this helps to keep it cool as it thaws.
- Freeze fresh produce and leftovers. You will save food and money.
- Composting food scraps can reduce climate impact while also recycling nutrients
- Avoid pre-heating the oven. Unless you need a precise baking temperature, start heating your food right when you turn on the oven.

DRIVING TIPS

Cars are generally very energy inefficient and travelling by train, bus or bike is much better for the planet. If you can't manage without a car, changing your driving habits can help reduce its greenhouse emissions. Find out how much your car produces with our [car calculator](#).

- Anticipate road conditions and drive smoothly, avoiding sharp acceleration and heavy braking. This saves fuel and reduces accident rates.
- Plan your journeys to avoid congestion, road works and getting lost.
- Drive away immediately when starting from cold – idling to heat the engine wastes fuel.
- Some newer cars tell you when to change gear, however if you are driving an older vehicle, check your revs – change up before 2,500rpm (petrol) and 2,000rpm (diesel).

- The most efficient speed depends upon the car in question but is typically around 55 – 65mph. Faster speed will greatly increase your fuel consumption.
- Check your tyre pressures regularly – under-inflated tyres are dangerous and can increase fuel consumption by up to 3%.
- If you're stuck in a jam, switch the engine off if you expect to be there for more than a minute or two. Cutting the engine will save fuel and reduce emissions.
- Avoid short journeys – a cold engine uses almost twice as much fuel and catalytic converters can take five miles to become effective. Cycle or walk instead.
- Accessories such as roof racks, bike carriers, and roof boxes significantly affect your car's aerodynamics and reduce fuel efficiency, so remember to remove them when not in use.
- The heavier the content of your car, the more fuel it requires to move it. Keep your boot clear of heavy objects where possible.
- Get your car serviced regularly to keep it running efficiently.

FLYING

We realise that sometimes people have no choice but to fly but the best thing for the planet is if you don't fly at all, the resulting emissions can often represent the biggest chunk of your carbon footprint. Many short haul flights can be replaced by other forms of public transport such as trains or buses. In the meantime, if you have to fly you can offset your flight using our [flight calculator](#).

- When you have to fly, always consider if you can combine trips.
- It's best to fly direct rather than stopping over, aeroplanes use a lot of fuel taking off and landing.

AT THE OFFICE

During the Corona Virus crisis many people have been working from home. A lot of the things mentioned in this Office section are the same as you would do in your home office, but if, post-Covid, you are feeling adventurous, you can always have a go at persuading your boss to go green as well! Why not point them in the direction of this business calculator?

- Only use the lights you need. Turn off lights in unused rooms. Better still, get your building to install occupancy sensors.

- Turn off your computer monitor when you leave the office at the end of the day.
- Do you really need those hard copies, or can you save it on your computer instead?
- Think before you print – but if you have to print at all, print double-sided – you can even print multiple pages to a sheet.
- If you have a fruit or snack that you don't want, don't throw it out. Give it away to someone else.
- Ask if your company is signed up to the cycle to work scheme. If not, they can find details on the [government's website](#). You could also ask if your company will install showers on site. Post-Covid fewer people will be wanting to use public transport so it's even more important for businesses to be bike friendly.
- Perhaps see if you can teleconference and work from home occasionally. During the Covid crisis homeworking has become the norm and it will be interesting to see if this trend continues in a post Covid world.
- Speak up! Ask your company to engage in initiatives that will not harm people or the planet. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/be-the-change/>
- Examine and change everyday decisions. Can you recycle at your workplace? Is your company buying from suppliers engaging in harmful ecological practices?
- Corporate responsibility counts! Encourage your company to work with civil society and find ways to help local communities achieve their goals.

SHOPPING AND RESTAURANTS

- Shop Smart—plan meals, use shopping lists and avoid impulse buys. Don't succumb to marketing tricks that lead you to buy more food than you need, particularly for perishable items. Though these may be less expensive per gram, they can be more expensive overall if much of that food is discarded.
- Buy Funny Fruit—many fruits and vegetables are thrown out because their size, shape, or colour are not "right". Buying these perfectly good funny fruit, at the farmer's market or elsewhere, utilizes food that might otherwise go to waste.
- When you go to a restaurant and are ordering seafood always ask: "Do you serve sustainable seafood?" Let your favourite businesses know that ocean-friendly seafood is on your shopping list.
- Shop only for sustainable seafood. There are now many apps like this one that will tell you what is safe to consume.

- Shop vintage. Brand-new isn't necessarily best. See what you can repurpose from second-hand shops. My teenagers buy and sell their clothes on Depop <https://www.depop.com/>
- Donate what you don't use. Local charities will give your gently used clothes, books and furniture a new life.
- When you shop think about all the potential toxins in household, personal care and beauty products. Think Dirty is an app that makes figuring out exactly what you're slathering on your face, lips, bod and, yikes, then, washing down the drain!

FINANCE

- Stop paper bank statements and pay your bills online or via your mobile.
- Invest in ethical funds (if you have any spare dosh!)
- Choose an ethical bank and support community energy projects

Gardening

- Rake your leaves manually. Avoid the noisy, exhaust-churning leaf blower and get some exercise.
- Use organic, peat free fertilisers and products
- Plant trees, shrubs and hedges at home and elsewhere (join us tree and hedge planting this winter, the more the merrier!)
- Invest in composting garden as well as food waste
- Relax, put your feet up, lock up your mower and enjoy watching the busy bees by joining in with NoMowMay
- Go for nature friendly plants and flowers
- Install bird feeders, bird baths, nest boxes and water butts
- Grow your own fruit and veg

LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Trust me, there are a great many sites offering advice on reducing emissions. Here are just a few you could visit...:

UK GOVERNMENT

The UK government provides advice on emission reductions and statistics on an international and domestic level. They also explore the challenges and obstacles that can delay action.

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/>

The Energy Saving Trust (EST)

EST provides valuable recommendations on how we can all help fight climate change and become more efficient with our use of energy.

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

SUSTRANS

Cycling is a fantastic way to get around cities, with more and more safe cycle routes available and advice to be found on using bicycles as your primary mode of transport. Sustrans provides sustainable transport advice for the whole of the UK, much of which is applicable worldwide:

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/>

FOOD SOURCE

Fresh, seasonal and/or local food is not only more flavoursome but is most often better for the environment than shopping at large supermarket chains. Find a farmers market local to you at:

<http://www.farmersmarkets.net/>

THE SOIL ASSOCIATION

The Soil Association offers “a taste of the good life” on their website, giving tips on how to revive the rustic and rudimentary joys of life.

<http://www.soilassociation.org/>

TRAVEL

Taking the train can be a quick and cheap way to travel within and around Europe. Book early to avoid disappointment.

www.seat61.com

SUGGESTED BOOKS, LITERATURE AND FACEBOOK GROUPS

Jen Gale's book Sustainable(ish) and website: <https://www.asustainablelife.co.uk/>

Sustainable Devizes website and Facebook Page:

<https://www.sustainabledevizes.org.uk/>

https://www.facebook.com/sustainabledevizes/?ref=page_internal