

6/6/22

Still in the garden this week. There has been a big campaign on tree planting to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Trees make an important contribution to carbon reduction. Could we find space for another tree in the garden? If we cannot, or do not have a garden, could we contribute time or money to local community tree planting projects? Every little helps.

13/6/22

There are many ways in which we can save water. One simple way is by turning off the tap while cleaning our teeth. Using a washing up bowl rather than washing dishes in the sink enables some re-use of the water, for example, on the garden. If we have the space, the installation of a rainwater butt can be a very useful source of water for the garden.

20/6/22

It's mid-summer this week, so a couple of related thoughts.

It is easy not to draw the curtains or blinds fully open when we get up in the morning, and to find ourselves switching on lights unnecessarily. Let's make the most of the sunshine while we have it and check the curtains before switching on the lights. This will save energy and money.

Conversely, if the weather gets very hot, do keep the curtains and blinds drawn in order to keep the room cool. It is better to do this than to use the energy of an electric fan. Keeping the windows open to ensure a good through draught will also help a lot.

27/6/22

Living sustainably is not just about what we do in our homes; it is also about how we live at school, at work, in hotels and cafes and in other public places. We may not have control of energy use in all these places, but we can be responsible in our use of other resources, and perhaps begin to challenge some of the assumptions of the 'throw-away' society.

4/7/22

We are now into July, and this month is being marked globally as **Plastic Free July**. Read all about this campaign at <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/>. There are many benefits of plastics, and some of us have gained from medical procedures which involve the replacement of faulty parts with plastic substitutes. However, there are many downsides. Plastic is made largely from oil products, and also consumes a lot of energy in its production. Once used, it ends up in landfill or in the oceans, and we have probably all seen the images of sea birds and other creatures found to be full of micro plastics. These materials have now even been found in humans. The additional problem is that there are so

many different types of plastic that recycling is very difficult. Even when it can be recycled, it has a very short life, unlike paper and many metals, which can be recycled over and over again. The biggest culprits are of course the single use plastics. To help you think about these, try doing the 'Pesky plastics' quiz which you will find on the home page of the website mentioned above.

As our contribution to reducing plastics, each week in July we will be focussing on one area of life in which we can reduce or eliminate our use of plastics. Some of these points have been mentioned in earlier 'eco tips' but we hope that they will help you in the attempt to live more sustainably

In the Bathroom.

- **Shampoos:** Rather than buying a new plastic bottle each time we buy shampoo, either re-fill the bottle at a 'zero-waste' shop, or try shampoo bars which can be bought at these shops, or Lush or Holland and Barrett, as well as an increasing number of other outlets.
- **Toothpaste:** Rather than tubes of toothpaste, try products like 'Dentabs'. These come in tins or glass jars, and are simple to use. (Available from zero-waste shops.)
- **Toothbrush:** Bamboo toothbrushes are now available, which of course are better than plastic. (available from Lakeland or zero-waste shops)
- **Bath gels/body scrubs etc:** Probably soap is as effective as most of these, but if we want to use them or are buying them as gifts, many are now available in metal, rather than plastic containers.
- **Deodorants:** Roll-ons can now be bought in cardboard, rather than plastic tubes, (try zero-waste shops and Holland and Barrett as well as other outlets.

11/7/22

Continuing our theme of ways in which we can eliminate or reduce our use of plastic, we focus this week on food shopping.

The best way to avoid over packaged goods is to shop locally at butchers, greengrocers, bakers and zero-waste shops. This also means that we can buy just the amount we need, and avoid food waste. However, pressures of time, distance and money mean that we are all likely to use supermarkets, at least sometimes. They are full of plastic packaging, not only plastic bags, but also cellophane wraps, and plastic trays for meat etc.

- **Fruit and veg:** rather than using plastic bags, carry a set of re-usable 'net' bags for veg. These are now sold in many supermarkets as well as in zero-waste shops and Lakeland. Avoid those fruits and veg which are already shrink wrapped or bagged, wherever possible..
- **Meat and fish:** If your supermarket has a meat or fish counter, try to buy from there rather than the pre-packaged items from the shelves. There will still be some plastic packaging, but less than from the shelves.
- **Multipacks:** These are often shrink-wrapped together, so are best avoided. They do not always represent a financial saving, either.
- **Bottled products:** If there is a choice between products in glass bottles and those in plastic, opt for the glass packaging

18/7/22

Continuing our theme of plastic-free July, this week we look at eliminating or at least ,reducing, plastics in cleaning and laundry.

Surface cleaners: As we noted a few months ago, the containers of these can be re-filled at zero-waste shops. Alternatively, small pouches of cleaning material can be inserted into the empty bottle, then the bottle is filled with water, given a shake, and it is ready for the next clean. These pouches are available online from Smol (<https://smolproducts.com/>) and from Ocean Saver (<https://www.ocean-saver.com/>). Some supermarkets such as Tesco are beginning to introduce their own brands.

Washing up liquid: Empty bottles can be re-filled at zero-waste shops.

Dishwasher tablets : Plastic free tablets can be bought online from Smol (see above) at a very competitive price. Customers set their own frequency of delivery, and the tablets come in child-proof cardboard packs which fit through the letter box. Other suppliers work in the same way. A bonus is that there seems to be little need for other products like rinse-aid.

Laundry products: These can be bought online from Smol and ocean Saver. Laundry products can also be bought from zero-waste shops.

Give some of these a try and see how you can reduce the number of plastic bottles you consume!

25/7/22

We are now into the last week of Plastic-free July, but hopefully this is just the beginning of our attempts to reduce our use of plastic, especially single use items.

This week we will think about the kitchen.

Cling film We have looked before at alternatives to this. Food in the fridge can be covered by a plate or bowl or wrapped in a washed and re-used plastic bag, or with the liner from a cereal packet (hopefully by now we all have fewer plastic bags and are buying more of our cereals from zero-waste shops). Plates of food set out on the table in advance can simply be covered with a tea towel.

'Boil in the bag Avoid this method of cooking. Look for other recipes.

Cook from scratch Of course it is time-consuming, but cooking from scratch is much cheaper than 'ready meals' and 'take aways'. It also involves considerably less plastic- we only have to look at the number of plastic containers generated by one 'take away' meal to realise how easily these can mount up

1/8/22

Our eco-tip for this week is a little different and quite simple. We urge you to reflect on the extreme weather we experienced in the third week of July, with all its discomforts, disruptions to infrastructure, and wildfires in the UK and across Europe. These events were a reminder of the reality of climate change, and of the urgent need for us all to take action to simplify our lifestyles and reduce our impact on the planet.

8/8/22

We are always being urged to walk and cycle more, both for the sake of our health and for the sake of the planet. Perhaps we have been inspired by the Commonwealth Games to think more about cycling, and have a bike in the garden shed which has not seen daylight for many years. If this is the case, we may rightly be cautious about taking it out on the road. Local authorities and other Government sponsored organisations can help us both to ensure that the bike is roadworthy and to provide safety training for riders. Look at what is available on

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

And

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport-and-roads/road-safety/cyclists>

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

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport-and-roads/road-safety/cyclists>

15/8/22

'Most of us don't know how much water we use each day. Research shows that 46 per cent of people believe their household uses under 20 litres a day (roughly equivalent to taking a 2-minute shower) when the true figure is closer to 142 litres per person per day. This means an average family of four in the UK could use more than 500 litres each day. By making small changes such as turning the tap off when brushing your teeth or swapping a bath for a short shower, you're not only helping to save water but energy and money too, as well as protecting the environment and future supplies.'

The quotation above, which comes from <https://watersworthsavingsaving.org.uk/top-tips/>, is a timely reminder of the need to save water - several parts of the country are already facing hosepipe bans, and with our changing climate, water becomes an increasingly precious resource. This website has many tips for saving water at home and in the garden.

Some simple tips from this site include:-

- Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth.
- Instead of running the tap to cool the water for a drink, keep a jug of water in the fridge.
- Only use your washing machine and dishwasher when they are full.

22/8/22

We return this week to avoiding single use plastics.

If we have a car, and take it for a service, we will often find it with plastic seat covers. Of course we don't want grease on the seats, but if we have a dust sheet or old curtain, and pop this in the back of the car, and ask the garage to use this to cover the seat, then we can reduce plastic. Similarly, the dust sheet or curtain can be used in the car boot when we make purchases at the garden centre, and we can refuse the plastic sheets which we are offered.

29/8/22

If you are a gardener, this is the time when you are beginning to think about jobs for the next season. How about looking around to see if you can find space for a few more vegetables, and better still, if there is space for one (or even more) new trees.

5/9/22

If we have been fortunate enough to have a holiday it is now time to try to "reset" to trying to live more sustainably. Perhaps the accommodation we were staying in gave us little control over power usage or the amount of water used, or perhaps recycling was difficult. Now is the time to try to get back into habits of sustainable living. Or it maybe that on holiday we were camping, or staying in accommodation which lacked many of the facilities we take for granted at home. This could give us opportunities for thinking about what we really need and what we might manage to do without.

12/09/22

Despite the encouraging increase in the use of charity shops and second-hand online shops, a lot of clothing and textiles still end up in landfill. Some of these are completely worn-out, but many just require small repairs or alterations to be perfectly serviceable. If there is a group of people within the church or community who could get together and help others to learn basic sewing skills then a lot of savings, both of money and resources, could be made. Pop-up workshops of this sort are appearing in a number of cities. Any volunteers?

20/9/22

We are always being reminded that we should change our toothbrushes frequently for hygienic reasons. Most toothbrushes however are made of plastic, so they will just end up in landfill. An alternative is bamboo toothbrushes. These are now available in pharmacies as well as zero waste shops, and are much cheaper than plastic ones. Give them a try!

26/9/22

After showering, it is lovely to wrap up in a big fluffy towel. But washing towels uses a great deal of water and energy. We can usually dry ourselves equally effectively with rather smaller

towels, which consume less water and energy when washed. Have a look at the size of towels you are using, and the frequency with which they are washed. If you have any linen hand towels, try putting these out for hand washing (eg in the downstairs toilet)

3/10/22

This week's tip is a repeat of an earlier one, but one which is particularly relevant as we all face the new tariffs.

When switching off electrical devices, switch off at the socket, rather than just at the on/off switch. Leaving devices on 'stand-by' wastes energy, especially when appliances display lights or clocks. Similarly, if putting a device on to charge, do not leave it on 'charge' longer than is needed.

These are small steps but they can all help.

10/10/22

It may seem that it is always raining these days, and most of us will probably have had a good soaking recently. However, it has been a very dry year, and reservoir levels are still low, with drought restrictions in place for some households and industries. We should therefore continue to be careful with our use of water, and not run taps unnecessarily. Let's not forget that water purification and pumping consume a lot of energy, so saving water also saves energy

17/10/22

Many workplaces and public buildings have lifts. Of course, some of us have to use them, either because we need to for medical reasons, or because we are carrying heavy goods or pushing pushchairs. But if we are able, and have the choice, let's try to use the stairs. This not only saves energy in the building, but it is also good for us and adds to our step count for the day!

24/10/22

Caring for the created world is not only about responding to the climate crisis; we also face an environmental crisis with many species under threat of extinction. There are many small but significant steps which we can take to help. If we have gardens, we may still be doing the autumn tidying up. Whilst some tidying is bound to be necessary, try not to tidy up too much. Even in a small garden, hedgerow corners can provide important habitats. Piles of rotting leaves are important homes for 'creepy-crawlies' which are a vital part of the food chain for birds and small mammals. Even a very small patch kept wild can make an important contribution to conservation, and we may want to think about planting a section of the garden with wild flowers which are bee and butterfly friendly. Have a look at the RSPB website for more details and ideas- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/>.

If we do not have a garden, there are many ways in which we can help with projects in local nature parks or within the local community.

(For circuit version only)

Those churches who have some green space may want to look at the ways in which this can be maintained in the most eco-friendly way, creating and preserving habitats.

31/10/22

This week's tip is a little different. It is about communication.

Hopefully, we have all found at least a few changes we can make in our lifestyles, but have we communicated these to others? Have we told our friends and families why we have changed our mode of travel, or why we are using different washing products or eating less meat? Moreover, have we told them about the new products we have discovered, and suggested that they try them?

We can also write letters- perhaps to our local councillors about public transport. Funding probably precludes an immediate solution, but at least we can provide them with evidence of demand. When we have an MP, we can also write to them about climate and environmental issues. Those who live in the City of Chester constituency can take the opportunity to talk to candidates or their representatives when they appear on the doorstep.

7/11/2022

We may not immediately think about e-mails when we think of our carbon footprint, but these have a significant impact. It is reckoned that the average e-mail costs 0.3 gm of carbon. (This is for a short e-mail; you can find a breakdown of the effects of longer messages at <https://carbonliteracy.com/the-carbon-cost-of-an-email/>) Most of this comes from the sender's device, but there are also effects from the data centres and the recipient's device. We can all help. Probably every day we receive messages on which we immediately click 'delete'. Many of these may be from organisations or companies with which we once had dealings, and we remain on their mailing list. If we scroll to the bottom, we can click 'unsubscribe' which should stop these messages, although some companies make unsubscription more difficult. Please don't unsubscribe from the Church and Circuit mailings!

Another simple step we can take is to avoid the 'reply all' option, except where it is really necessary. Obviously there are times when we need to share our ideas with a whole group, but often a reply to sender is all that is required.

These are tiny steps in themselves, but collectively, we can make a difference.

14/11/22

21/11/22

Part of our response to the climate and environmental crisis must be to read and think critically about the issues, so that we can evaluate the most appropriate actions. So this week's tip is a book recommendation. It is the Archbishop of York's Advent book 2022 'Sleepers Wake - getting serious about climate change', by Nicholas Holtam, SPCK. The author is former bishop of Salisbury and lead bishop on the environment. This book gives us much to think about

'Sleepers Wake, the Archbishop of York's Advent Book 2022, explores the reality of climate change and how Advent is an opportunity for us to wake up, sense

the urgency and begin to make radical change'

28/11/22

If we are trying to reduce the use of chemicals around the house, and also the excess of plastic bottles, then we might want to explore the use of citric acid for household tasks. This is a natural product, which is available in granular form from Zero Waste shops such as Just Footprints, and also from outlets such as Wilko. A small amount of this goes a long way. It can be used for de-scaling kettles etc, as well as for tasks such as cleaning the loo.

You can read all about how to use it on this blog: <https://www.fastklean.co.uk/blog/cleaning-tips/5-items-that-can-be-cleaned-effectively-with-citric-acid/#:~:text=of%20a%20container.-,Showers/bathrooms,products%2C%20albeit%20with%20less%20toxicity>

5/12/22

Christmas is coming, and if we are giving gifts, we may already be thinking about wrapping and sending them. Literally miles of wrapping paper are used every year, representing a lot of resources. So here are a few suggestions for 'greener' wrapping.

Firstly, recycle wrapping paper whenever possible- much of it can be used again next year, and the year after, and the year after that.....

Secondly, think about the wrappings being used. Could we use colourful pages from magazines, or plain white or brown paper, perhaps stamped with stars or Christmas trees?

Some may have discovered the Japanese decorative art of wrapping in colourful cloth, and tying with ribbon. These materials can of course be used over and over again.

If we are buying wrapping paper, try to avoid those which come on cardboard rolls and are covered in cellophane. We should also particularly try to avoid metalised foil wraps, or those with glitter on, as these cannot be re-cycled.

Finally, Sellotape (and other similar products) are made of plastic, and so are a problem. Non-plastic tapes are available now, but even if we do not have these, being frugal in our use of Sellotape makes it much easier to open the parcels and to re-use or recycle the paper.

12/12/22

We are always being urged to eat less meat and this year, with the combination of the cost of living crisis and the problems of avian flu on turkey farms, may be the year in which we try a vegetarian Christmas. There are lots of exciting vegetarian recipes available- have a look <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/vegetarian-christmas-recipes>; this is just one of many examples. Even if we are keeping to traditional turkey, we can try to reduce our meat consumption a little by making plant-based, rather than meat-based stuffings, and by looking at the balance between meat and vegetables in the meal. We can also make sure that there is no food waste by exploring the wide range of 'turkey left-over' recipes. Have a look at https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/foods-and-recipes?gclid=CjwKCAiAv9ucBhBXEiwA6N8nYLMjyeAyJaojZGeYMJxa63zKiHp8jThZ_QTo_mvpywIwHw8HgOpz5xoCbUoQAvD_BwE; this site has lots of tips on avoiding all sorts of food waste, not just at Christmas. Finally, of course, remember to boil up the bones for stock. This can be frozen for later use.

1/12/22

Happy Christmas to all from the Wesley Eco Group.

This week's tips are simple:

Try to avoid food waste by not preparing more than is needed;

Recycle all packagings and wrappings that can be recycled- and separate those which you can keep for re-use;

Instead of watching as much television as some have become used to at Christmas, try getting out a board game and playing this as a family. Even more simply, there is nothing like a raucous game of 'Pit' (other games are available) to liven up a Christmas evening.

Enjoy!