

A directory of eco-friendly ideas and initiatives for families and communities

Make your community greener and more sustainable Contribute to Wiltshire's carbon-neutral ambition Involve your children and have fun

Produced by Rosie Wilkinson working on behalf of the Southern Wiltshire Area Board

We have all become increasingly aware of the key issues facing humanity: global warming, climate change, pollution and environmental degradation. It is a common misconception that there is nothing individuals can do to address these problems and that the solutions lie with governments and supranational organisations.

Instead of collectively shrugging our shoulders in defeat, we can begin acting on the MANY initiatives large and small that will make a difference: in villages; across Wiltshire and, cumulatively, globally. Locally they can make villages greener and possibly even nicer places to live in. Wiltshire has declared a climate emergency and set the goal of becoming a carbon-neutral County by 2030 – everyone can play their part to achieve that ambition.

Every little individual action helps and community eco-projects are interesting and fun, especially for young people who are rapidly becoming the key movers and shakers of eco-protection.

This Directory compiles lots of practical ideas which can be undertaken by families, community organisations and Parish Councils.

Things you can do at home

The way we farm and eat can make a world of difference. Choosing what you eat based on a lower carbon footprint can help reduce negative impacts on our climate, our environment and our health. Eat locally, seasonally and organically.

- **Buy half your food locally (within 30 miles of where you live) and organic if your budget allows**
Support local producers and farmers. The shorter the food chain, the lower the carbon emissions. Organic farming has higher animal welfare standards and avoids the use of man made fertilisers and pesticides. It is therefore better for nature and wildlife and better for humans too.

www.findlocalproduce.co.uk

www.landworkersalliance.org.uk

www.slowfood.org.uk

<https://www.soilassociation.org/organic-living/30-ways-to-join-the-organic-movement/>

<https://kissthegroundmovie.com/>

- **Eat less dairy products and intensively farmed meat**

Be inventive: make small amounts of meat last for a few meals and let wholegrains and vegetables take centre stage. Add lentils to mince mix, bulk up stews with veg, stretch out a chicken for three meals. Buy the absolute best quality meat you can afford. Buy sustainable fish marked with the blue MSC label.

<https://www.rivercottage.net/recipes-in/much-more-veg>

<https://melissahemsley.com/category/vegetarian-mains/>

<https://www.msc.org/what-you-can-do/eat-sustainable-seafood/fish-to-eat>

- **Don't waste food – 6.6m tonnes thrown away every year in the UK**

Be creative with leftovers. Compost scraps or find a neighbour with a compost bin or chickens. Buy a discounted food waste composter from Wiltshire Council. Compost on the go too: take your lunchtime apple cores and crusts home with you. Use the lovely fertile compost on your garden and vegetable plot.

www.sharewaste.com

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

<https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/reducing-your-waste-and-composting>

- **Grow your own fruit and veg**

Home grown produce is fresh, tasty and wholesome and has the lightest of carbon footprints as it is transported from plot to plate.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/grow-your-own>

<https://www.gardenersworld.com/plants/vegetable-crops-for-beginners/>

*The Five Rs of waste management are: **Reuse – Repair – Refuse – Reduce – Recycle**. Adopting this mantra in life takes a bit of effort but will go a long way to reduce your impact on the environment. The rate at which we consume plastics has become unimaginable and the plastic crisis is one of the world's greatest environmental challenges.*

- **Refuse...**

....to buy non-recyclable products or those wrapped in unnecessary packaging. Use your spending power to tell companies what you want/don't want. Refuse a disposable coffee cup in favour of a re-useable one. Refuse a carrier bag and use a Bag for Life instead. Have milk and fruit juice delivered in glass bottles.

www.milkandmore.co.uk

- **Reduce**

Reduce plastic by your seeking out refill stations for milk, washing up liquid, laundry detergent, shampoo etc. Take a water bottle with you when you are on the go. Shop wisely and plan meals to reduce food wastage. Stop the amount of junk mail coming through your letter box but signing up to the Mailing Preference Service.

<https://www.blueberryden.co.uk/>

<https://thelittlegreenvillageshop.co.uk/>

www.mpsonline.org.uk

- **Reuse**

Register with your local freecycle group to get rid of unwanted items rather than throw them away, or donate to charity shops. Reuse envelopes and plastic pouches by sticking a new label on them. Use glass jars and cardboard boxes for storage. Keep plastic plant pots and use to grow plants and vegetables from seed.

www.freecycle.org

<https://www.gumtree.com/>

- **Repair/Repurpose**

Try and get your broken possessions mended before discarding and replacing. Repair cafes are springing up around the country. Have clothes altered or mended by a seamstress. Upcycle items by altering their practical use.

<https://www.repaircafe.org/en/>

<http://www.redlynch.org.uk/lover-repair-cafe/>

<https://forestrow.gov.uk/repair-cafe>

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

- **Recycle (everything you can)**

Recycling should be treated as a last resort after attempting the other 4 Rs. Seek out free TerraCycle recycling programmes in your area; plastic recycling at big supermarkets; electricals recycling; plant pot recycling at garden centres etc. Almost everything can be recycled if you know where to look.

www.terracycle.com

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

Heating our houses accounts for a third of the UK's overall emissions, however household emissions must reduce by 95% by 2050 to reach net zero targets. The UK needs a revolution in how we heat our homes. Even if we can't all swap to a greener heat source yet, we can still cut our homes' carbon footprints and might reduce energy bills too.

- **Opt for green energy suppliers and reduce your electricity consumption**

The Energy Saving Trust identifies four suppliers who clearly list the renewable sources of their energy on their websites: Green Energy UK, Good Energy, Ecotricity and Octopus Energy. Switch to low energy lightbulbs, turn off lights and don't leave TVs and computers on standby for long periods.
<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/>

- **Improve insulation for a warm, eco-friendly home**

Save energy and money by draught-proofing windows, doors, letterbox, fireplaces and loft hatches. The government is offering a Green Homes Grant offering homeowners up to £5,000 to pay for a variety of energy efficiency and heating measures such as double glazing and solar panels.

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/draught-proofing/>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme>

- **Smart heating controls**

These allow greater control of your central heating by giving access to the thermostat via your mobile or laptop. They can be retro-fitted onto most existing heating systems.

<https://www.bestheating.com/info/the-ultimate-guide-to-smart-home-heating-controls/>

Things you can do in the garden

The world is also facing an ecological emergency and huge declines in biodiversity and our wildlife. A third of UK wild bee and hoverfly species are in decline and butterflies have declined by 76%. 11 native mammal species are threatened by extinction, including hedgehogs. Birds too have suffered a gradual, yet serious demise. Wildflowers, plants and fungi are under threat: 97% of UK wildflower meadows have disappeared since the 1930s. But there are simple steps we can take in our gardens to help reverse these declines.

- **Create a wildlife pond**

The very best thing you can do to attract wildlife to the garden, no matter how big or small.

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-pond>

- **Plant for pollinators**

Butterflies, bees, moths and hoverflies all need sources of nectar and pollen to thrive. Plant large clumps or 'drifts' of single species to optimise each foraging trip.

<https://www.gardenersworld.com/plants/plants-for-bees/>
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=649>

- **Make your garden a little wilder**

The more vegetation in your garden, the more carbon you are storing. So the more plants, the better. Don't be too tidy: embrace the 'mess'! Leaf and log piles provide winter shelter. Dead wood is an amazing insect habitat. Leave hedge cutting until February.

<https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/explore-rewilding/where-can-you-rewild/rewilding-on-a-smaller-scale/15-ways-to-a-wilder-garden>

- **Think like a bird**

Plant at mix heights for different species. Put up man-made nest boxes in different positions on buildings and around the garden. Don't dead-head all your plants – unmanaged seed heads will benefit many in winter.

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/>

- **Give your mower a rest**

Letting your grass grow longer between cuts not only saves energy, but also encourages wildlife into your garden. Longer grass is more drought-resistant, too. Try cutting every 3-4 weeks and let the flowers on your lawn bloom. Leave some areas to grow longer and create a meadow area.

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/about-us/news/no-mow-may-how-to-get-ten-times-more-bees-on-your-lockdown-lawn>

- **Ditch the poisons**

Avoid using dangerous chemicals that harm wildlife as they can kill the pests **and** their predators. Ensure your garden has as much variety as possible so that no one species can gain control. Encouraging birds and insects will keep pests down naturally eventually. Grow companion plants alongside vegetables.

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-make-your-garden-chemical-free-zone>
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=1023>

<https://www.growveg.co.uk/guides/companion-planting-for-vegetable-gardens/>

Community projects

Here are some ideas of what other communities have set up.

- **Community fridge and larder**

Collect surplus food from shops and outlets and make available to all.

<https://www.hubbub.org.uk/the-community-fridge>

<https://bhfood.org.uk/directory-hub/community-fridge/>

- **Community apple day**

Create a mixed 'community juice' from spare apples that would otherwise be left to rot.

<https://applepressing.co.uk/>

<http://www.sustainableiverton.org.uk/appleproject/>

- **Plastic Free community**

Join the fight against avoidable single-use plastic.

<https://www.sas.org.uk/plastic-free-communities/>

<https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/resilience/plastic-free/>

<https://www.ckermouth.org/going-green-in-ckermouth/>

- **Repair Café**

Put together a team that can fix, glue or sew broken household items. Recycle anything that can't be fixed. 'Don't Bin It, Mend It!'

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

<http://www.redlynch.org.uk/lover-repair-cafe/>

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

<http://www.theseam.uk/findaseamstress>

- **Clothes swap**

Organise a swap event or nearly new sale. Refresh wardrobes without breaking the bank and stop good clothing going to waste.

<https://www.nct.org.uk/local-activities-meet-ups/nct-nearly-new-sales>

- **Eco bricks**

Organise an eco brick learning workshop and build something out of the plastic blocks.

<https://www.ecobricks.org/>

- **Establish a mini recycling centre**

Set up collection points for items that can't go in the blue bin and send to TerraCycle: crisp packets, confectionary wrappers, cosmetics, batteries, water filters, printer cartridges, inhalers, pet food pouches etc

www.terracycle.com

<https://wiltshireairambulance.co.uk/media/1615/recycleinfopack.pdf>

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

- **Switch school/village hall/church/sports club to green tariff**

Choose an energy supplier with a strong shade of green: Green Energy UK, Good Energy, Ecotricity and Octopus.

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/>

- **Start up a nature/wildlife/vegetable growing club**

Link up with existing local groups and conservation charities.

<https://hazelhill.org.uk/>

<https://www.pittonandfarley.co.uk/clubs/charitable-3/friends-of-bentley-wood/>

<https://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/langford-lakes-steeple-langford>

<http://www.redlynch.org.uk/friends-of-langley-wood/>

- **Set up a Hedgehog Highway**

Hedgehogs have declined by 90% and are now vulnerable to extinction. They need space to forage and find mates: ensuring our gardens are less fortress like so that they can pass freely through gardens is the most effective way to help them.

www.hedgehogstreet.org

[Kirtlington Hedgehog Highway](#)

Parish Council projects

Friends of the Earth has produced this Climate Action Plan for Councils:

[https://takeclimateaction.uk/sites/files/climate/documents/2020-](https://takeclimateaction.uk/sites/files/climate/documents/2020-06/Climate%20Action%20Plan%20for%20councils%20June%202020.pdf)

[06/Climate%20Action%20Plan%20for%20councils%20June%202020.pdf](https://takeclimateaction.uk/sites/files/climate/documents/2020-06/Climate%20Action%20Plan%20for%20councils%20June%202020.pdf)

Here are some examples of what other Parish Councils are doing in response to the Climate Emergency.

- **Wage war on litter**

Arrange community litter picks and promote individual 'wombling' and 'plogging'. Purchase litter picking kits for residents to use.

<http://www.ruytonxitownparishcouncil.org.uk/litter-picking-kit-for-the-community/>

<https://planetpatrol.co/>

<https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/great-british-spring-clean>

- **Recruit a dedicated Recycling Parish Warden**

Provide support for individuals who are uncertain about how and what to recycle; raise awareness of changes to recycling services; engage with local residents to encourage more recycling,

<https://www.helmdonparishcouncil.gov.uk/recycling.html>

- **Start up a solar power Co-op**

Enable the community to invest in renewable energy projects that reduce carbon emissions and energy costs.

<https://freco.org/about-us/>

<https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/resilience/solar-streets/>

- **Install electric car charging points**

Help enable a shift to electric cars by installing charging points that can be added to the national network.

https://www.harborough.gov.uk/news/article/1175/electric_vehicle_charge_point_installed_in_kibworth

<https://www.islandecho.co.uk/bembridge-welcomes-islands-first-electric-vehicle-charging-point-on-the-public-highway/>

<https://www.zap-map.com/live/>

- **Assess and improve Parish Council green spaces**

Transform land by managing it for wildlife. Features can include mini wildflower meadows or borders; wildlife pond creation; native hedge planting; planting schemes for pollinators.

<https://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/wildlandscapes>

<https://stanleyandstanleycommon-pc.gov.uk/news/wildflower-planting-2020/>

<http://www.elkesleyvillage.org.uk/community/elkesley-parish-council-13416/greenwood-trees/>

<https://www.camparishcouncil.gov.uk/nature-reserves-and-open-spaces.html>

https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/media/8491/The-Holton-le-Clay-Green-Plan-2017-2029/pdf/The_Holton_le_Clay_Green_Plan_2017-2029.pdf

- **Plant a community orchard or woodland**

Identify a derelict piece of land or purchase farmland that can be transformed into a fruit orchard for the benefit of future generations.

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/tree-charter/3213-east-ilsey-parish-council/file>

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/deal/news/councils-woodland-counter-plan-to-stop-new-homes-development-238343/>

- **Trees for Tomorrow: plant native trees and hedges**

The Woodland Trust gives free trees and hedge packs to community groups including Parish Councils. Volunteers are needed to take on the planning, planting and care of the saplings.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/>

<http://www.rudbyparishcouncil.org.uk/trees-for-tomorrow.php>

<https://saddind.co.uk/saddleworth-parish-council-commits-to-charter-for-trees-woods-and-people/>

- **Manage verges to benefit wild flowers**

Change the cutting regime. One late summer cut and removal of grass clippings will keep a verge open, safe and thriving with interesting wildlife. (Some verges must be cut regularly to maintain safe clear sight lines).

<https://plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk/roadvergecampaign>

<http://wsbrc.org.uk/wildlife-recording/survey-schemes/protected-road-verge-scheme/>

Projects from other community areas in Wiltshire (ongoing work to complete)

- Zero Chippenham – Chair: Nick Murry drnickmurry@yahoo.co.uk
- XR Chippenham – Lead: Myla Watts pysmad@bath.ac.uk
- North Wilts Friends of the Earth – Chair: Stephen Eades stephen.marinet@btinternet.com
- Mad About Waste – Chair Sue Cassell cassellsue@hotmail.com
- Off the Ground – Lead: Elaine Massung hello@off-the-ground.org
- Sheldon School Eco Council: Contact: Mr Spiers, Head of 6th Form
- Avon Needs Trees – Chair: Nikki Jones; Chippenham based trustees: Pete Williams/ Nick Murry
- Chippenham Cycle Network Development Group: Chair Nick Murry drnickmurry@yahoo.co.uk
- Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan: Steering Group and Climate Change Topic Group
AConroy@chippenham.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council's Climate Change Web Pages

[What you can do as an individual - Wiltshire Council](#)

[What you can do as an organisation - Wiltshire Council](#)