



The Greener Together - *the co-operative way* Toolkit



Welcome to the Greener Together - *the co-operative way* Toolkit

The Greener Together toolkit has been designed to support people taking practical actions that create change and to guide working with others through collective action.

It provides ideas and links to useful resources for individuals to make changes around the Greener Together themes of: energy, waste and personal travel. It also offers a challenge to others that are already green to live greener, by acting as a beacon. This toolkit offers encouragement, support and useful exercises to live greener as an individual or by forming a group, linked by location or member organisation.

The Toolkit is divided into three main areas:

- Sharing Ideas gives some background on Greener Together and the roles eco-operators can take.
- Working Together is about forming groups and useful skills for taking collective action.
- Sharing Practice offers ideas and resources for practical actions based around the Greener Together pledges

Throughout this Toolkit you'll find case studies provided by Greener Together eco-operators and pioneers to inspire you, as well as plenty of ideas for practical action that you can use in your home, workplace and communities. Click on the web links to find out more about anything that interests you.

Within this Toolkit eco-operators are the individuals who co-ordinate their own project as part of Greener Together (for example, through their co-operative), and pioneers are the members of each co-operative who join up to their eco-operator's project and take individual pledges.

Table of contents



Sharing Ideas

- Greener Together background
- Learning from your experiences
- Networking and support
- Communicating climate issues

4

6

7

9



Working Together

- Individual or collective?
- Why start a community action group?
- Becoming a Group
- How to involve people
- Working out what your aims are
- First steps as a community action group
- Choosing the right group structure if your project expands
- Turning your ideas into project outlines
- Planning your actions
- What problems you might face as a group

11

12

14

14

17

20

21

22

23

25



Sharing Practice

- “When resources permit...”
making your project work on a shoestring
- Personal Travel
- Waste
- Energy

28

30

33

37

Appendix

- Practical pledge actions and external links listing

39

Greener Together - *the co-operative way* background

Climate change is no longer just a theory, it's a reality. Just how extreme climate change will be in the future is going to be determined by our behaviour now. While organisations and governments all have their part to play in reducing carbon emissions, we need to think about our own impacts too.

As individuals, we're behind a proportion of the UK's environmental pressures. Greener Together- *the co-operative way* is all about the collective impact that individual changes can make. By working together to change our behaviour and reduce our impact on the environment, we can make a real difference.

Greener Together – *the co-operative way* helps people to live greener – starting from the small changes we can make in our daily lives through individual pledges, through to the bigger changes in the world that we can do together. This Co-operatives UK initiative supports member organisations in further engaging their members and users to live more sustainably, and encourages them to organise collective events and campaigns.

Co-operatives and community-owned enterprises bring people together to meet common needs, an active community of thousands of individual member organisations.

People working together, sharing ideas and good practice brings about a greater impact than people working individually or in isolation. Through working with their members and networks, co-operatives can collectively really make a difference.

That's where we all come in – as pioneers, Greener Together enables us to connect with like-minded people in a way that inspires, is fun and easy to do. By joining with others and going online, invaluable tips, ideas, knowledge and experience can be picked up.

The website has case studies, resources, a blog and more. Greener Together focuses on our environmental impact in **three key areas; energy, waste and personal travel**.



CASE STUDY: Total Eco-coverage



Linda Bratcher is the eco-operator for **Total Coverage**, a worker co-operative based in Southampton.

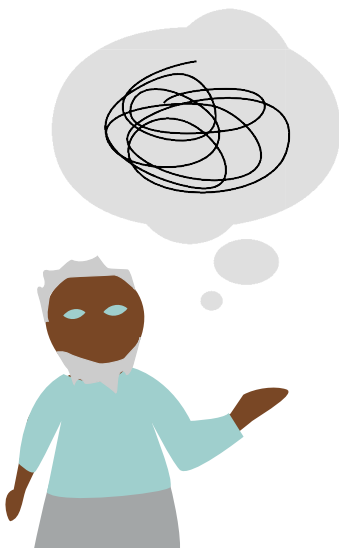
Total Coverage is a graphic design workers' co-operative.

“We’ve been promoting recycled paper and vegetable inks long before it became mainstream”, says Linda Bratcher. “Greener Together is something to chat about and I can ask the customers how they’re getting on with it.” Of the changes that people have been making, Linda reported that quite a few were refilling bottles instead of buying more bottles of water.

Linda has signed up to 15 pledges altogether. One recent purchase that was inspired by the initiative was replacing her broken kettle with an Eco-kettle. Linda also used to be a big tumble dryer person, but hasn’t actually used hers since signing up in April. Her key achievement has been using an electricity meter to monitor her electricity.

“I’m trying to work on using less than £1 a day. There are a few things that I haven’t yet got round to. For example, changing the waste water from the shower into a water butt, but it takes time and organisation. We’re also going to be filling the floorboards before the winter and we’ll put draft excluders round the door.”

As individuals, we can often feel overwhelmed and disempowered when it comes to changing our behaviour, especially when it comes to something as huge as climate change. Even when we get together with others, we might not have enough support or know the best ways that we can make those changes.



However, it’s these collective actions, and the community approach that they foster, that make this project unique. Collective actions can be easier, and more fun, than working alone.

Greener Together is part of a bigger programme sponsored by the government, called the **Greener Living Fund** which supports organisations that are able to influence behavioural change of individuals and communities at a grass roots level. They want to discover what makes people change their behaviour, as well as what prevents them from acting.

Sharing Ideas

Learning from your experiences

Being involved in group and community work can be an excellent way of gaining experience and skills that you may never have even considered before.

Looking back and reflecting not only helps you identify what you have achieved, but can help boost your confidence to desire more. Your work in a community may not be your paid work and your actions may seem to go unrewarded at times, but a realisation of what you *can* do will help enormously with motivating others, and with increasing your confidence.

A few dozen eco-operators from Greener Together met up in 2010 to reflect on their experiences, and find out about each others' projects. Moments of fresh clarity, new concepts and ideas were inspired by each others' experiences. People were able to help each other, and some found focus and direction on their next steps, and the sense of not being alone that will keep them going – in fact, of being greener together!

Looking back on the project so far, some had found that their support was needed to help their individual members much more than they had expected. That support depended greatly on the pioneers – from confidence and finding expert information sources, to technical support and how to take things “to the next level”.

The right level of information, and the form it comes in, has to be appropriate to avoid disengaging people. However, that will vary a great deal and has to be tailored to suit the audience. Given the right support, people will often go further than you could expect.

When there's already a group with a sense of identity, it could support itself more fully. If there was an opportunity created for people to interact with each other, discussions arose easily. A co-operative and group-work approach was a real driver for further activities (both collective and individual) and group events. Working on something together is galvanising. Informal settings are surprising in how much people can learn from each other.

The role of eco-operator – co-ordinating and helping support others – is useful in helping people reflect on their own skills, relevant to Greener Together and their organisation itself



Networking and support

You can't do everything on your own. There is support out there – it's a matter of finding it.

You don't need to reinvent the wheel if someone can share their experience with you instead.

These are some thoughts from people who have recently set up community action groups as to what support they needed, and where they got it from:

- Advice from other action groups on what works and what doesn't
- Support of other established groups willing to work in partnership with us
- Financial support and advice on how to write funding applications
- Training for volunteers, in a variety of skills such as how to run meetings
- Support in producing publicity
- Emotional support and encouragement
- Support of a community development worker

At a local level it can be useful to get involved in neighbourhood forums, or other local planning meetings. They can sometimes be frustrating when personal circumstances reduce the energy or time you have to take part in yet another meeting, or only the same people come, instead of the people causing problems. However, it can be helpful to go to such meetings to:

- Meet other people in your neighbourhood and feel less isolated
- Realise that there are others with similar experiences and concerns as yourself
- Get in touch with the networks and organisations that might help you put forward your views
- Increase your confidence to speak up
- Make sure your views are not excluded or rejected because they haven't been heard
- Make sure your views are taken seriously

When spider webs
unite they can tie
up a lion
Ethiopian saying



CASE STUDY: Banna go bananas for Greener Together!



Dori Kirchmair lives in the Banna Housing Co-operative in Nottingham with three other tenants.

For their collective action, the Banna tenants decided to hold a Greener Together Party and invite people far and wide from their networks to share information about environmental issues and sustainable living and to have a good time while they were doing it. The event was so successful, that Dori is still buzzing from it one month later.

The wide variety of documents and items that people brought included information on washing balls and electricity meters, cycle maps, allotment newsletters, power-down sockets and even information about how to make your own 'humanure' composting toilet!

"We had one lady from Leicester (she lives in a terraced house) who made her own composting toilet" explained Dori.

"She brought some A4 photographs and laminated them and we put them up. It's very simple to make and just sits right next to her toilet and she uses it."

She says that Greener Together, the party especially, has been a good opportunity to link up with other like-minded people.

"There was a real sense of togetherness and community" she says.

Have a look at this [Working with Allies report](#).

Communicating climate issues

The language we use to describe the impacts on communities of what is happening on the planet will affect people's responses, and we need to consider this when talking with people.

Weather is the events that happen over a few days or hours, a rainstorm or a period of fine weather. Climate is weather averaged out over several years.

Climate Chaos is the term people have been using to describe the changes in our climate and weather as an alternative to "climate change" because climate change can be a natural process, whereas we are talking about the results of human activities. Also "change" can sound like something gradual and predictable.

Similarly, "climate" can imply something higher up in the atmosphere, as opposed to the "weather" we experience in their daily lives. It may, therefore, be more helpful to think not in terms of "climate change", but to describe the chain of extreme weather events as "weather chaos".

One of the main points to remember is that all scientists now say that greenhouse gas concentrations are going up extremely rapidly. The debate is about whether these changes will cause global warming – and whether they are the cause of the global temperature increases.

The strongest argument is the simple weight of expert opinion. Out of 2,000 scientists involved in the United Nations debates, fewer than ten, sometimes called "climate sceptics" or "climate change deniers", argue that there is no climate change or argue that burning fossil fuels is not a problem (some even argue both!) and they tend to be paid by the oil industry.

There has been a 20-year long public relations campaign by the oil and coal industries against any international attempts to control greenhouse gas emissions which they saw as threatening their profits. It is worth remembering that companies and governments have always "created" experts to justify their arguments. Remember – tobacco companies had "scientists" to claim that nicotine was not addictive! You will find some responses for answering the sceptics, and lots more to help you, in this **Climate Change Communications Pack**.



If you want to take collective action in the face of climate chaos then you have an interest in social justice, working to secure changes that will make the world a fairer place. Climate chaos is going to make life very difficult for those communities that will bear the brunt of the impact – flooding will increasingly affect poor people in Bangladesh and Preston, and drought will increasingly affect poor people in southern Africa and East Anglia.

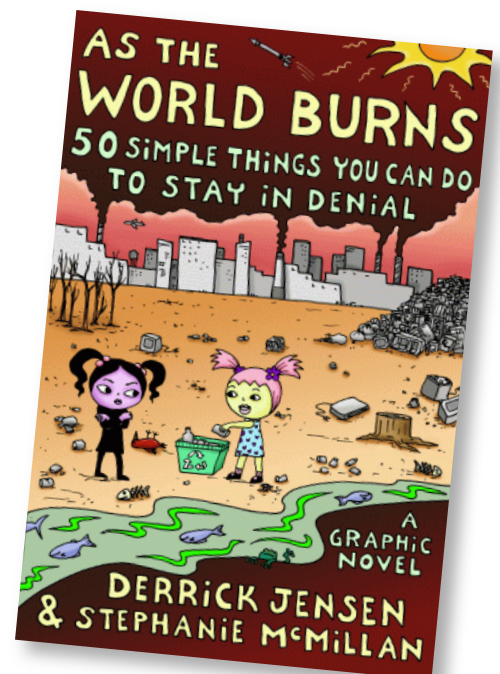
The Federation for Community Development Learning has a whole range of **sustainable development taster sessions** that are free to download. Although designed for workshops and more formal learning, the materials are useful for informal learning and providing materials to support your project.



"Funny weather we're having at the moment isn't it dear" is an excellent comic book by Kate Evans, subtitled "everything you didn't want to know about climate change but probably should find out". It's a comic book... it's a crash course in climate science, fully referenced and researched... it's an eye-opening critique of modern society... it's an amusing take on a deadly serious issue, with a clear agenda for social change.

It presents the facts about climate change in an amusing and accessible way. Suitable for adults and adolescents, there's plenty for everyone to learn about.

Another comic book approach is **"As the World Burns: 50 Things You Can Do to Stay in Denial"** by Derrick Jensen and Stephanie McMillan. It's a satire of modern environmental policy in the form of a graphic novel, inspiring you to do whatever it takes to stop ecocide before it is too late.



Working Together

Individual or collective?

You will have great ideas of your own on how to get others to take action, but there's nothing like joining with others and working together on an issue to increase the amount of change you can make happen.

The more you learn about the scale of the problem we face, the more important it feels to get together to take collective action. There are things that need doing on our path to **One Planet Living** that can not be achieved alone – anything from clothes' swaps and toy libraries' to challenging the impacts of local planning decisions and polluting industries.

Greener Together eco-operators' experiences so far have illustrated that the stronger the sense of group, the more gets done – collective action fed and bred more group activity, but also in some cases inspired more individual actions.

How to help create that collective voice and collective actions? It may be easier when organisations or groups are based somewhere physically, but a sense of community – of interest or identity – can be created virtually too. Many collective action ideas can be readily adapted by you.

If you think you're too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito

Betty Reese



This Working Together section is to help support your move from individual to more collective actions.

The next time a group of you are coming up with project and action ideas try considering where they are on a line with 'collective' at one end and 'individual' at the other.

Ask each other why you think the ideas you are proposing are placed where they have been on the line and check that you are happy with the balance of collective and individual actions that you are proposing.

Why start a community action group?

What makes you want to do something? Sometimes people get involved in a community group for personal reasons, such as wanting to socialise, as well as to do with ideals or beliefs. Self interest has drawn many people into community activities.

Groups start because of things people want to see change, as well as because of outside factors threatening people, like immigration policies. Look at the list below of what has motivated others to start groups:

- Feeling frustrated
- Being active, maintaining physical and mental health through involvement
- Practical self interest – such as sorting your own immigration status
- Common interest – geographic, by language group or by country of origin
- Personal event – relationship break-up, a disability or birth of a child
- Getting neighbours together
- Feeling bored
- Giving something back once you have got refugee status
- Overcoming fears
- Experiencing an injustice or something in your area not being done right
- Not getting a service you expect from an existing organisation. For example, the council or health service.

What is a community?

The word community can be used to describe many things:

- Communities based on location – a town or city
- Communities of common interests – health, young people
- Communities of shared identity – county of origin, women

These areas can also overlap. So even if your members are spread across a city, but you have common interests or a shared identity you are a community.

CASE STUDY: The challenge of being green



Argyle Street Housing Co-operative (ASH) is a purpose-built, government-funded housing co-operative in Cambridge, set up in 1981.

The co-op offers shared accommodation and consists of houses and flats, surrounding three communal gardens. There are currently 86 co-op members. Bryony Vickers is 31, a member of ASH and the Development Co-ordinator.

Bryony was particularly interested in signing up to Greener Together because of its focus on behavioural change. “At ASH, we have been measuring the gas and electricity use of our four-person houses.

All houses are identical in terms of structure; it’s the tenants and their lifestyles that differ. We found that the highest figure of carbon emissions was 100% larger than the lowest. This shows that within the home, purely through behaviour, it’s possible to cut carbon emissions by at least half”.

Bryony’s advice to eco-operators new to Greener Together is to get the practical/community project going quite early on. “I’d like to move ahead and create a practical project that people can actually do, rather than just talk about”.

Ideas so far include building a bike shed out of recycled materials, or building a pizza oven in the garden. “If people feel part of something, then they’re more likely to stay engaged”.

She also suggests using a buddy system to try and get people who have similar pledges to buddy up.

Becoming a Group



Whether the needs of a community are obvious to that community or not, the process of finding out those needs in a formal way can create interest in taking collective action – to meet the need as a group, or to challenge others to respond to those needs (such as service providers like the council or health service). However, before you even start to find out your communities needs you may have to think about the knowledge, skills and attitudes you already have within the group and that you need to learn, so that as a group you feel empowered to come together on issues that are affecting you as a community.

People can be reluctant to sing their own praises, so one way of doing this is to chat as a group (or interview each other in pairs) and remind each other of all the skills and knowledge that already exist within the group. List everything you can think of. Within your group you may have people who are: good with children, good at listening, can fix a bike, have delivered a baby, who work hard, are good at explaining things, communicate well with different generations, are good at breaking up fights... If you start with the basics you will fairly soon discover that every group of people has unique talents. You will start to discover that by sharing your talents you have a lot more power than working on your own. You may start to see yourselves as a group!



How to involve people

This is about who starts the group – is it just one person, or are there a number of you already? Think about whether only some people can be members – for example is the group for women only? It is also interesting to ask who else is involved, and who isn't?

Other people may get involved because they identify with what the group is about, or it might be to do with the effort existing group members put into finding out about them and getting them involved.

“There’s a huge number of people out there who have so much untapped potential... if people can realise... they can get much more out of life and much more returned. I would be pleased to see that maybe as the most important thing that the local group achieves”

Quote from Survey of Community Development Workers, 2003

Meeting the differing access needs of potential group members is key to increasing involvement.

CASE STUDY: Putting green issues at the top of the agenda



Susan Thomas is the eco-operator for Slaithwaite Co-operative Ltd, which owns the community shop, The Green Valley Grocer in Slaithwaite, West Yorkshire.

Susan didn't hesitate to put green issues on the shop's agenda, and did her own survey of the community shop.

"I put an energy monitor in and did a test of all the lights, fridges and other electrical items. I also did a waste assessment, and looked at how many miles we were travelling. Basically, I looked at the three pledge areas and applied them to the shop".

Slaithwaite got 55 people signed up to Greener Together, and altogether 34 have completed the survey and are making pledges. So far, 19 of those have already completed their pledges.

Susan has been emailing her pioneers but believes that overall, it's the personal contact that really helps people feel involved.

She talks to people about their own circumstances, about everything from fridges to draughty windows. "I listened to their concerns. Everyone's got their own pet subjects. Some people wanted to take away the bus timetables or talk about their driving style or explain how they had tackled insulating their loft."

Looking at the figures from her pioneers so far, Susan reports that 18 tonnes of CO₂ has been reduced, all from those who've completed their pledges. "It's fantastic" she says.



Checklist of things to consider when involving people in your project

- Each member could bring a friend or neighbour to the group. Word of mouth and encouragement are the most effective ways of involving new people
- If you haven't heard from someone in a while, get in touch with them or visit them
- You could act as a mentor, or buddy, for a new member, explaining references to previous work done by the group, and generally checking they're alright
- If you see someone new arrive, welcome them, talk to them... don't ignore them
- Share out tasks among members. If you are working on something, try and include at least one person who has never done that particular sort of work before
- Thank people where it's due. When things are going well, say so
- Publicise your achievements. Make your own posters or newsletters
- Plan activities that encourage wider involvement sometimes, and make sure that all the usual members DO get involved, and talk with new people. What might seem like a "simple" piece of work to you is what might really get someone into things
- Recognise the value of people's different life experiences
- Take account of people's different abilities to commit time and energy
- Practical considerations – how accessible, or easy to find, are your meeting spaces?
- When do you hold your meetings? Consider which meeting times and days work best for people. Think of young people, parents, carers and shift workers
- Allow small working groups to get on with particular work, reporting back to the main meeting for support, questions and the OK to continue with that work. These smaller groups should try and have someone new involved, not made up exclusively of regulars or the most experienced
- Let people add to the agenda which can be passed around before a meeting starts
- Where do you publicise the group and its meetings, if at all? If you want to do something about less women or men being involved, or you want to work with a wider range of people does your publicity (a) go to where these people will see or hear about it? (b) welcome them explicitly to your group? (c) encourage them to get involved?
- During meetings, do you challenge put-downs or discriminatory remarks? Do you as a group have an understanding of equality of opportunity and what practically this involves doing? Do you set aside time in any meeting to consider these issues and how they affect your group?

What new people can bring to a group

Contacts and information

Extend your knowledge of who's who and who's up to what.

Social skills

Conflict resolution experiences and knowledge of different cultures.

Practical skills

From minute taking to bicycle maintenance, who knows what you might learn.

Organising skills

Someone who wants to and can facilitate meetings, or plan events well.

Ideas and humour

Opens up new perspectives, and is fun.

There may even be a mythical human being endowed with all these qualities!



Working out what your aims are

This is about having clear goals (your aims) and the practical steps that need to be taken for you to achieve them (your objectives). It is helpful to be realistic, even if your overall aims are world-changing.

There are basically two approaches to starting to agree the aims of the group:

- You can start with agreeing what the problems are and then explore different solutions.
- Or you can think ahead to what people want to see things like in 'x' years time and then look at the steps needed to make this happen

Practical Exercises

These are some exercises that you can do as a group to help you agree a shared vision and aims for your group:



Agree/Disagree game

Ask everyone in the group to write down on some scrap paper what they think the aims of the group are, or should be – one aim for each piece of paper. Pass a hat round to put the paper in, and then group together similar aims. This can be done on a table, or blu-tacking the paper to a wall.

Invite everyone to have a look at all the writing. After everyone has had a chance to do this, any aims that anyone disagrees with must be turned over and “I disagree” written on the back. All the untouched pieces of paper are the aims that everyone agrees with! Discussion time can now be spent going through all the “I disagree” pieces of paper. They might only need clarification, or prompt a big debate, but the group time can be spent in a more focused way.

All the aims agreed on need to be written up for a final view by the whole group. It can be helpful to date the aims, and also decide when you are going to review them.

Mapping your community

Start with a large scale map of your area – you can draw a rough map on flipchart with landmarks so people can recognise where things are. Ask everyone to draw on the current problems they would like to see resolved. Using another copy of the same map ask people to draw what they would like to see in ‘x’ years time.

Interview each other

People interview each other and note down the other person’s concerns. They then feed these back to the whole group. Common concerns can be grouped together and a direction for the group may start to emerge. Make sure all concerns are addressed, even if it isn’t possible for this particular group to take on right now.

Prioritising charts

There are many variations on this basic exercise, which provides a visual representation of how people see the priorities of the group. As above, ask everyone to write down their aims, group them together, and then as a group decide whether each aim is something the group should be doing now, soon or later.



You could draw a grid on flipchart (or back of cheap wallpaper) with spaces for now, soon, later. Or you could draw three concentric circles, with now in the centre, followed by soon, and later on the outside. Approaching the group's aims in this way allows everyone's ideas and desires to come out, while keeping grounded with what is achievable, by when. "Creating a regional network" may be an aim that is too much to consider in the early days of a group, but placing it under "soon" or "later" means it won't be lost and people can see the bigger picture they are working towards.

The group might want to define "soon" and "later" as actual periods of time or specific dates.

Checking out the vision and need

Once the group has agreed on what it wants to achieve and has set out its aim(s), you will have to decide the best ways to achieve this aim. Before you rush into planning lots of activities the group needs to check out with the wider community:

- If the need is really there
- Is anyone else trying to tackle the same need?
- Is the strategy they have chosen likely to be the best one to achieve their aim?

It may be that the perceived need is actually not as great as they initially thought, or that the actual need is different than they first thought. It could be that the problem has already been recognised by other organisations or agencies. Maybe another group has already started and not told anyone about their plans and so joining them would make sense.

First steps as a community action group

This is about your style of organising. Your work may still be very informal, with meetings in your living room or online, but beware of how some people can speak more and dominate meetings. Consideration of how you make decisions and communicate can make the group more equal for everyone. So think about:

- Where you meet. Does this put off or exclude anyone?
- When you meet. Timings have a big impact on who can come and who can't.
- Consistency. Changing agreed group times will lose you people.
- Communication. Are decisions and news from meetings passed onto all members?
- Access. Have you taken access needs into consideration
- Resources. What are needed and how do you get them? Don't take things for granted, such as the use of a room.

Group Decisions

In the early stages of the life of a group certain decisions need to be made. These include:

- How decisions will be made!
- Is the group open or closed – for example, only open to women
- If it is to be open then: how are new people to be introduced and welcomed into the group, and how will the group publicise itself?
- Is there to be a set life span to the group, or will it be ongoing?
- Have you considered a basic “group agreement”, outlining how the group will work and how members will treat each other?
- How will the group organise itself?

Adapted from **Community Work Skills Manual**

It is important to develop your own group working style. Your group may be quite chaotic, with a changing membership, and not follow one particular model of how groups work. You will not be alone! Take advice from outside, but do not feel pressured to go down one route of how groups work if this doesn't feel right.

Have a look at the practical resources offered by **Seeds for Change** on tools for meetings, working without leaders, making meetings accessible and more.

Choosing the right group structure if your project expands

Depending on the needs of your group, there's a variety of recognised and legally-based organisational structures. Cooperatives UK have an **excellent resource to help you choose a legal structure**. There is no 'one size fits all', there are advantages and disadvantages of each. Have a look at these **case studies** to help you decide. Your group or organisation has to choose the one that fits best to your current aims and plans. Review this in the future as things change.

There is a difference between informal groups of people who get together, and organisations that, by their very nature, have more formal structures. Both can work for you whether you mostly do things together face-to-face, or if your community is more virtual. Sometimes small groups decide to become organisations to attract funding or be able to deliver services.

There is lots of information about legal structures and it is quite a specialised area – seek **specialist advice and support**.

Some organisations have to register as charities under **charity law** because of the level of their income. New groups should not be persuaded (by themselves or others) to immediately apply for charitable status or indeed legal structure. Apart from the amount of paperwork involved in being a charity, it may limit the scope of your future activities. It is true that some funders will only give money to registered charities or incorporated organisations, but they may well give it to another charity or organisation on a group's behalf. The National Lottery, for example, accepts groups with charitable aims and objectives without them being actual charities.

You could get together as a group or committee to discuss these questions, to help you choose the right organisational structure:

- What options are there that meet your needs?
- What implications do each of these have (e.g. set-up costs, access to funding, your capacity, demands and limits, your liability, how you make decisions)?
- What else do you need to know before you make a decision about the right structure for your group?
- Can you think of any problems with the structure you have decided upon?

Turning your ideas into project outlines

Work through these questions to help turn your ideas into more of a project outline. These questions are very similar to ones you will come across in funding applications, so thinking about them now will help you filling out the forms later.

- Why is the project needed – what is the problem you want to solve?
- How do you propose to solve it?
- What is the scale of the problem?
- How do you know your solution will work?
- Who is going to do the work?
- Are you the best group to take on this work?



Planning your actions

Sometimes a group comes to the end of its life, whether its members agree or not. The end of a group need not always lead to mourning; it could be a time of celebration, allowing group members to go on to do different things.

Think about what your group wants to go on to do. As you look further ahead to plan your group's work, following the seven steps outlined below can help you reach your goals:

Seven steps of planning

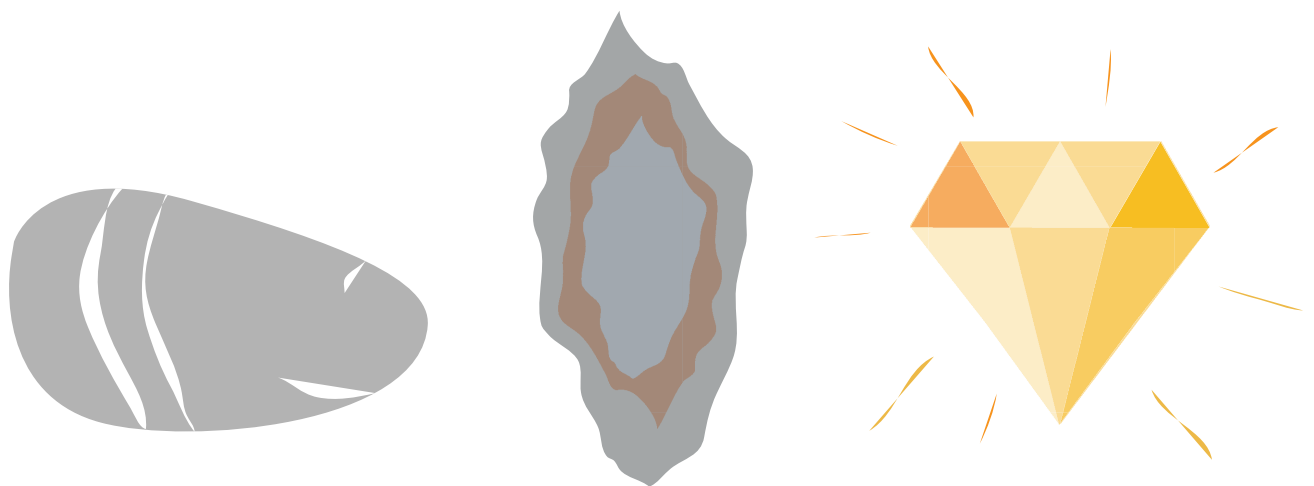
1. **Diagnosis.** What are the problems? What are the needs?
For example, people from your community don't know where they can get information
2. What do you want to achieve (objective) in a particular period? This week, this month, this year?
For example, find out about housing information, by next group meeting
3. What are the possible ways of achieving each objective? Think of different ideas that you could try out.
For example, set up an advice service, translate exiting information, organise talks
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each proposal? How much time, money and personal effort will be needed for each proposal?
For example, if you make leaflets how do you get them to the people who need the information they contain?
5. Which proposals do you accept? Do they fit together in a plan – are there any gaps or overlaps?
Think about what the easy first steps are and what jobs need more time
6. Who will do what, when, where and how? Identifying information and support needed to help with this.
Put names to tasks and give yourselves deadlines to aim for
7. At what point do you need to evaluate if the work has happened and how successful it has been? Who should be involved in the evaluation?

Never doubt that a small number of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has

Margaret Mead



Pebble, Flint or Gem?



It can be easy to get the balance wrong when choosing which actions to focus on to create effective change. If you pick all the easy actions that might get things moving, but how much will the changes add up to? On the other hand if every action you decide upon is a major, life-changing affair, how long will you maintain them for? It might be helpful to think of your actions as pebbles, flints or gems.

Pebbles are some of the easy first steps you can take within a project.

Flints are actions that are a bit harder, involving more effort, maybe some information gathering first.

Gems are the actions that really transform a situation, the real gem of an idea.

Do you feel you have the right balance of actions for your project to make an impact, to keep delivering and to sustain itself?

What problems you might face as a group

You might experience both external and internal threats to your aims, group identity and ways of working. If you are truly making positive change you may upset some more powerful people along the way, like politicians and larger organisations, so be ready for any challenges here.

Be careful you are not drawn from away from your aims by priorities that may not fit yours. Beware also of raising expectations beyond what your group can realize.

Some common problems you might come across include:

- Lack of funding
- Not having space for your office or activities
- Problems working with other groups
- Encouraging participation in a project
- People not doing what they say they will
- Financial mishaps
- People not coming to meetings
- Not having clear rules or group agreements
- Not being able to pay bills
- Interpersonal conflict



There are no easy answers to these problems, but there are various things you can try. Every situation is different so it may be best to try and address the problems yourself as a group, maybe with some outside help from a **Community Development** worker or relevant specialist, such as an accountant for money difficulties. Even an outside facilitator who can bring neutrality to the discussion your group needs to have can make a difference to entrenched problems.

Practical Exercise

‘SCOT’ analysis

It can be helpful in dealing with problems for the group to be clear about what all the elements of the problem are. One way to do this can be to divide a sheet into four boxes, labelled Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats. Write up comments from a group discussion into the relevant sections. Make sure everyone’s comments are written up and everyone can see them.

There are also more interesting ways to do this work, that can help people approach conflict and problems more creatively. You could draw an outline of a tree – don’t worry about being too artistic! – and invite the group members to write on the outline:

Strengths – on the tree trunk and roots

Challenges – slugs and bugs crawling over the tree

Opportunities – the leaves and buds

Threats – as rainclouds and lightning

Working in this way can help get the views and thoughts of quieter members of the group, and people who are less confident speaking. The imagery can also help see links and offer new ways of approaching problems and conflict. Make sure that ideas for dealing with the problem that come out of this exercise are noted and people take responsibility for tasks that arise. Then ask yourself what practical steps you can take. The questions that follow can help with this.

- What are the problems faced by your group and its members, internal or external?
- How do these problems show themselves?
- What is your long term solution, in an ideal world (that is, with all the skills and resources you need being there)
- What practical steps could you take to begin to resolve these problems?
 1. Tomorrow
 2. Within the next few months
- When will you look back at what you’ve written here?

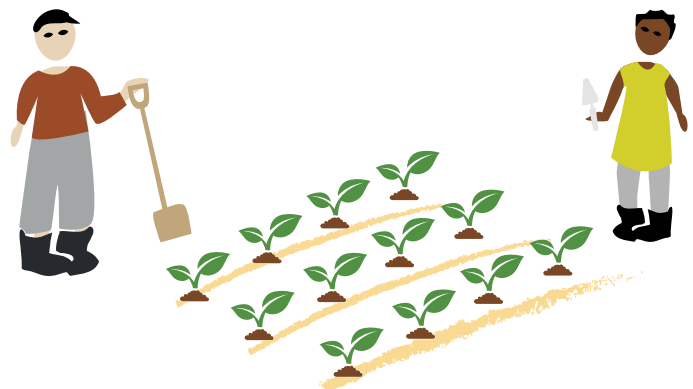
Handling conflicts between communities

Within your group, there can also be communities whose voices may not always be heard, such as the voices of older people, young people, people with learning or physical disabilities, people with mental health problems, people experiencing alcohol or drug problems, and asylum seekers and refugees.

There can be many tensions and conflicts within and between any of these communities, and there may be no 'easy fix' solutions. If you want to work to bring people together you will have to be realistic and recognise that fair and tolerant communities can not be created by magic. Bringing people together can sometimes take years of effort. One approach is to look for way of getting people talking and working together – look for common ground. Some good common ground approaches include:

- Food – bringing and sharing food, as part of an event or as an event in itself
- Local environmental projects – starting with the basics of clearing up a patch of local land and deciding on ways to improve it
- A social event for the group to enjoy itself and interact without the pressure of trying to achieve something

If a conflict is really bad and the situation is not showing signs of changing you should consider asking an impartial third party to mediate between the different sides and help you find common ground. Some community workers who specialise in conflict resolution believe that conflict, handled carefully, can be exciting and offer dynamic opportunities for personal and group change and growth.



Sharing Practice

This part of the Toolkit is a guide to ideas for practical actions for greener living that you might not have come across. You might want to work on actions within your member organisation, or as part of a new group you organise to take action, so this part of the Toolkit starts with things to help you take collective actions with limited resources.

Then there are more ideas focused around the Greener Together themes of energy, waste and personal travel - group actions as well as individual actions you can take in your home. We've tried to highlight some of the most relevant and interesting information out there. Click on any of the web links to find out more about anything that interests you.

“When resources permit...” making your project work on a shoestring

Many projects might need to make a small amount of resources go a long way. Remember that resources include people, not just money. Try and consider some of the following points to help resource the work of your project:

(1) Use the skills and experience in your group. There may be many aspects to members of the group that you don't know about each other, so spend some time together finding out what skills and experience exist within the group. (2) Find out what practical things people may be prepared to share, such as use of rooms for meetings.

From the skills you have, identify training needs to improve these skills and match people with training opportunities you find out about.

Find out about free or cheap resources in your area, from free internet access at your local library through to resources offered by a regeneration project.

Local Councils for Voluntary Services (CVS) support community action groups and are worth approaching for help.

Money - buy a petty cash/accounts book and learn about basic money management. Fallouts over money can be very difficult.

Decide what group funds can be spent on (this might change if more funding becomes available to the group), and then apply this equally across the group. For example, let everyone know if you decide that phone calls on behalf of the group can be paid back from group funds.

Share responsibility for and knowledge about information among the group.

Get hold of community newsletters to find out what resources your group can get hold of.

West Yorkshire
Community
Accounting Service
offer some good
practical guides on
good financial
management.

Don't let your work be
led by what money and
resources are
available, but rather
decide what you want
to do and then see
what resources are out
there to support this.

Funding - is it needed to run
the group? Where will you get
it from, and how will you
handle it?

Think about "in kind" support -
this means another
organisation giving you the
monetary equivalent in
worker time, room hire, or
photocopying.

Keep information safe
and accessible to
everyone who needs to
use it and have a
back up copy of all
your files - whether on
computer or paper.



Keep aware of data
protection issues - do not
keep unnecessary personal
information.

LawWorks provides free
legal assistance to
individuals and not-for-
profit organisations which
cannot get legal aid and
are unable to pay for
legal assistance

Think about things you can do to
support your community even when
there is no funding available.

People can contribute by paying a
subscription or membership fees, you
can ask for donations at events, you
can leave a spare change pot by
the phone.

If people are paying for their own
travel to an event you can arrange
to equalise travel costs so that
everyone pays the same amount
between themselves.

If you are facing cuts from
government funding that has
previously supported your project
you'll find these anti-cuts
resources helpful, as well as this
guidance for dealing with cuts.

The National Coalition for
Independent Action also offers
information and support on dealing
with funding cuts.

Take care - if you spend
all your time chasing
funding while the rest of
the group is waiting for
something to happen you
may suddenly find that
you don't have a group
any more. People are your
best asset.

Personal Travel

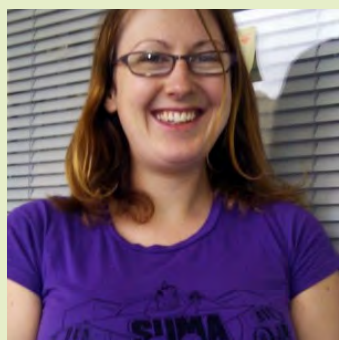


You may be able to set an example by the ways you choose to travel. Can you go by bike, walk or use public transport in your work or personally?

Getting to work/college – Can you persuade your employer to change their practices – to offer a bike mileage? To provide a safe space for bikes? When designing new projects get people to think about building in sustainable travel.

Act Travel Wise provides support to organisations that need to reduce the number of employees and visitors driving their cars onto site.

CASE STUDY: The Only Way is Green!



Amy Beeton, 28, works on the websites for the Leeds-based workers' wholefood co-operative, **Suma**,

“I think I try to lead a green lifestyle” says Amy, but says that signing up has made her more committed. “I live 25 miles away from my work and there’s no direct route on public transport. The main thing I’ve been trying to do is liftshare once or twice a week.” She was also inspired to find a bicycle for free on **freecycle** for short journeys. Amy has also pledged to fly less. “I’m going to Portugal to work on an organic farm for a month and I’m going to go **by train and the ferry**. I’ll go away more in England and choose places that you don’t have to fly to.”

Amy’s also been trying to get others involved in a community allotment instead of using supermarkets. Her biggest achievement has been talking to her friends about green issues. “Three of my friends have recently gone vegetarian because of what I’d been telling them. They’ve told me that I’ve been an inspiration to them. Amy advises, “Just think of a small thing that you can do, and build on things one by one.”

Getting to shops – Organise local food schemes so fresh food is brought to where you live rather than everyone driving to out of town supermarkets. **tescopoly.org** – for campaigns against Tesco

Getting kids to school and after school clubs can be served by walking buses. See **Walk to School** and **Safe Routes to School**.

CASE STUDY: Small pledges, big difference



Kate Drake-Lee, works at **Brightkidz**, a workers' co-operative and social enterprise in Northants, which promotes Walk to School Schemes and children's high visibility clothing.

"Greener Together made me reevaluate everyday tasks to see where improvements could be made," she says.

As Kate lives in rented accommodation, some of the bigger home improvement pledges weren't appropriate.

"I said I'd use fewer bags for shopping, not overfill the kettle, switch the lights off, those types of pledges", she explained.

"The idea of only filling up the kettle with the water you are going to use has really stuck with me throughout, I've now become focussed on just boiling what I need.

The children are very switched on about recycling and waste. They've been quite keen to do it as it's reiterating what they've learned at school."

Keeping in touch with friends and family – Think about creating '**Home Zones**' where the streets have safe places for children to play. livingstreets.org.uk

You may want to **adopt your local station** in an effort to improve the ambience of the station, making it safer, more secure and more attractive and encouraging more people to use it.

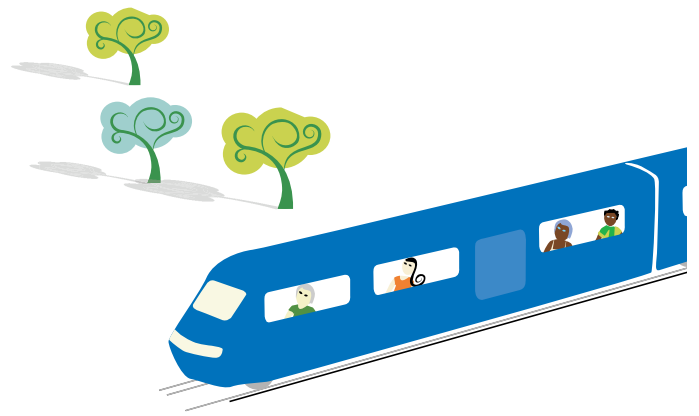
If you have a car, join the **Environmental Transport Association**, a road rescue that is not (unlike the AA and RAC) a member of the British Road Federation. **ETA cares for cyclists** as well.

See also **Sustrans** and **The Campaign for Better Transport**.

The so called 'staycation' is all about breaks and holidays within the UK, rather than flying abroad. There are plenty of **ideas for breaks and days** out closer to home.

If you are planning a holiday further afield **The Man In Seat 61** is a comprehensive guide to train travel in the UK, Europe and the World. Why take a cheap flight again when with the help of this site you can turn your journey into an adventure in itself!

It details Europe's sleeper trains, how to get the cheapest fares and the best connections so you arrive at your destination relaxed and with a reduced carbon footprint.



CASE STUDY: Mini driving tips for a fuel-efficient future!



Neil Williams, from The Community Project, offers feedback about his experience of trying to cut down on driving emissions.

“My car (mini diesel) is already fuel-efficient and I usually get 56 mpg (measured by its computer). However, I had read that by adopting a fuel-efficient driving style it was possible to get much better figures and decided to try this out last week on a trip.

All I did was to drive more gently:-

- When going uphill don't use more gas to maintain speed. Instead let the car slow down a bit from say 70mph to 60. This is not so bad, but means you have to use the slow lane a bit.
- On the other side of hills use the accelerator gently to help speed build up slowly. This can rise as high as 75/80 mph and still be very efficient, so long as the engine isn't being worked hard.
- Avoid braking hard by maintaining distance.

I achieved 68 mpg overall! This is about 20% less fuel for the same journey time! Even if you can't afford a more efficient car it's worth experimenting to try and reduce emissions in other ways – try it.”

Waste

A first step in acting to reduce waste is to consume less. Everything we buy has an impact on the environment.

Buy Nothing Day highlights the environmental and ethical consequences of consumerism. As consumers we need to question the products we buy and challenge the companies who produce them. We all know recycling is OK for the the environment, but consuming less is better and Buy Nothing Day is a great way to start.

Send e-cards not paper or card ones. The thought is what's important, not the material. If you add up the cost over a year's celebrations it really does make a difference.

Hire videos and DVDs rather than buying them and use your local library rather than buying books

Reducing consumption is an opportunity to think about ethical buying. Wherever possible, buy fair-trade and local goods. To buy ethically look out for **Fairtrade Foundation** marked products which guarantee workers have been fairly rewarded for their labour. Also check out the

Ethical Consumer site. Buy your fruit and vegetables from a local market or grocers. Support your local **Farmer's Market** if you have one near you.

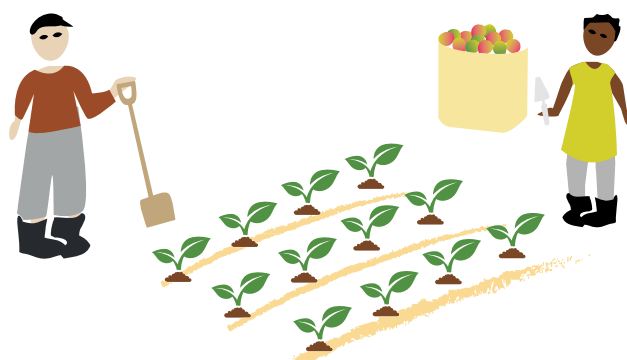
Within any organisation or group you are involved in you can ensure that there is an effective environment policy which covers the 'reduce, reuse, repair, recycle' cycle. The policy needs to be implemented and reviewed. This will involve developing systems, such as for collecting and reusing or recycling of goods. **Greening the Office** has an online audit tool to help assess the impact of your office on the environment and help with ideas to reduce waste and recycle.

Reduce the waste of resource and time presented by junk mail by contacting the **Mailing Preference Service.**

Reduce

A great way to reduce waste is to grow your own food or buy food from local producers.

Making Local Food Work offers advice and support to community food enterprises, from a group of people who come together to order food at cost price right up to larger community-supported agriculture projects.





Sustain run various food campaigns and their site has lots of resources and ideas. They also host **Food Coops** where you can find the nearest food coop to you or follow their guide to setting up your own.

Keep Britain Tidy has lots of information about waste and practical ideas for dealing with it.

CASE STUDY: Stibbard Litter Pick Generates Media Coverage!



The Ryburgh Community Shop and Post Office serves a number of small Norfolk villages and has drawn its pioneers from that wider community as well as the villages of Great and Little Ryburgh.

All Saints Primary School currently holds the Eco-schools Bronze and Silver awards and is working towards the Green Flag Award.

The shop acts as a collection point for the various computer, gardening, and sports vouchers for schools programmes, and has tried to think about community actions that forge new relationships and strengthen existing ones.

When we asked the school if they would like to take part in improving our local environment with a litter pick, they quickly agreed – all we needed was a date, some volunteers and North Norfolk County Council to loan grabbers and waste bags.

The waste had to be separated as we went along. Any glass bottles were collected and taken to the village bottle bank, the proceeds of which go to the upkeep of the Village Hall.

It was great to see the children doing something for their community in their own time and we are sure their neighbours will appreciate their efforts.

Teacher and Eco-schools co-ordinator Dawn Burden said “My group had a fantastic time picking up the litter and enjoyed throwing the leaves up in the air (and at each other!)”.

CASE STUDY: Community Recycling Day



The **Brockweir and Hewelsfield Village Shop Association (BHVSA)** is a non-profit making community enterprise based in South Gloucestershire on the border with Wales. The shop and cafe are staffed by volunteers.

BHVSA joined Greener Together with a stated interest in low energy building and in promoting local produce amongst the local community.

Almost sixty pioneers were recruited altogether, largely through the village shop. Its collective action was to hold a Community Recycling Day. Around 50 people took part altogether, and only 60% were already Greener Together pioneers.

Activities include a compost demonstration, a talk on waste and energy saving in the home, fabric recycling workshops making rag rugs and knitting with fabric, children's activities, such as making bird feeders from juice cartons and watering cans, and a clothes swap.

Free pizzas made in the shop were offered to satiate the hunger of those taking part. Chrissy had also used some creative thinking and persuaded Seven Trent to donate fifty water saving devices which were all distributed to participants.

“Lots of people learnt new skills to do with recycling. Many people learnt about how to make compost, which they didn't know before. People also enjoyed the energy talks and said that they felt it was quite enlightening.”

Repair & Reuse

Freecycle is a fantastic way of helping keep things out of landfill, this site offers the opportunity to give away your unwanted items rather than throw them away.

When you want to find a new home for something, whether it's a chair, a fax machine, piano, or an old door, you simply send an e-mail offering it to members of the local Freecycle group.

You can also find things that others have to give away. Community groups and charities are welcome to join freecycling.



Recycle



Wastepoint has lots of downloadable factsheets on recycling, from aluminium foil to cork!

recycle-more.co.uk bank locator allows you to type in your postcode and see where the nearest recycling points are.

WasteOnline has lots of information on dealing with waste in your home.

You can find more ideas for actions on waste here www.wearewhatwedo.org/actions

CASE STUDY: Walking the distance for climate change



Helen Ramsay de Castres is 63 and lives in a small village near Okehampton in Devon.

She signed up to Greener Together through the **Phone Co-op**.

“One of the pledges suggested that you lobby your landlord to replace the boiler for an A grade model” she says. “My whole house runs on electricity because we don’t have any gas in our area. My house has storage heaters and it turns out that they were probably put in when the house was built back in 1964. What Helen discovered both excited and horrified her.

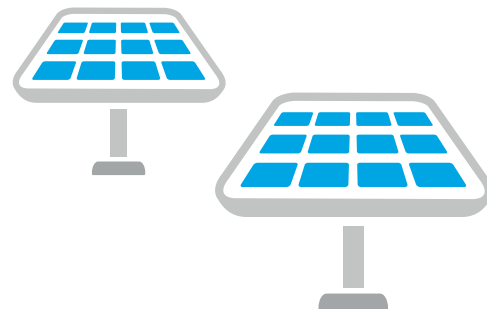
“My day time consumption for the whole year was 600 units, whereas my night time use was 8,900 units. I rang Ecotricity and asked them to look into it. I also did my own research on electricity usage and on alternative methods of heating”. Helen then contacted her housing association and told them the whole story.

As a direct result of Helen’s research and lobbying, the association is now going to install air source heat pumps and replace Helen’s boiler (which wasn’t as inefficient as the heating system). “It looks like I’ll have a hugely lessened carbon footprint as a result of this. And it all started from my pledge to look at changing the boiler”.



Energy

As well as working to reduce energy use in your home, collection action within communities or co-operative enterprises can make a big contribution to saving energy. You can reduce the energy being used in your home or premises through an energy audit and then implement practical measures to save energy and money. You can switch to a sustainable energy supplier such as Good Energy or a green energy tariff with another supplier.



Taking a lead in your community on saving energy will have a positive effect on other individuals. A study undertaken on behalf of the **Energy Savings Trust** showed that community-based energy projects not only deliver important energy and carbon savings that truly help households, but also bring economic and social benefits to the community as a whole. Have a look at their **Green Communities How to Guides** and their carbon footprint tool that allows groups of individuals to measure their carbon emissions and workout their community carbon footprint and monitor your **communities carbon footprint** as your project takes effect.

CASE STUDY: Seven pledges completed, four to go!



David Farrar lives in Northumberland, is 39 and a civil servant. He signed up to Greener Together through Abundant Earth.

David signed up to 11 pledges altogether. “I’ve completely done 7 and partially done the other four” he assessed. “I realised that we were using vast amounts of energy on different things. For example, there’s a separate stereo system and even when it was off but turned on at the plug, it was still using 100watts. That’s the equivalent of having a light bulb on all day every day, about £60 – £70 over the year!” David’s pledges also included loft insulation and solar panels.

David has a long commute to work which now includes cycling to the station. “I feel fitter as a result, and it’s saving me money too”. When it comes to carbon savings, David worked out that the cycle rides saved 0.6kilos each way.

David admits that not all the pledges have gone as well, but realises that it’s probably good to bank the things he’s succeeded on, then tackle the less successful areas. “If we are trying to reduce our emissions by 80% by 2050 then these are steps that we ultimately need to take.”

Low Carbon Communities Network provides mentoring and shares information online to encourage the adoption of low and zero carbon lifestyles at a community level.

The Centre for Alternative Technology offer a **free information service**, as well as on site courses.

'Your Community Building Counts' is a guide to helping you make your community building even more of an asset by minimising its impact on the environment and maximising its role as a place to inspire, inform and strengthen your community.

When refurbishment or building work is planned you could encourage discussion about the use of recycled materials, the use of eco-paint, furniture from local stores and where possible using furniture from sustainable materials.

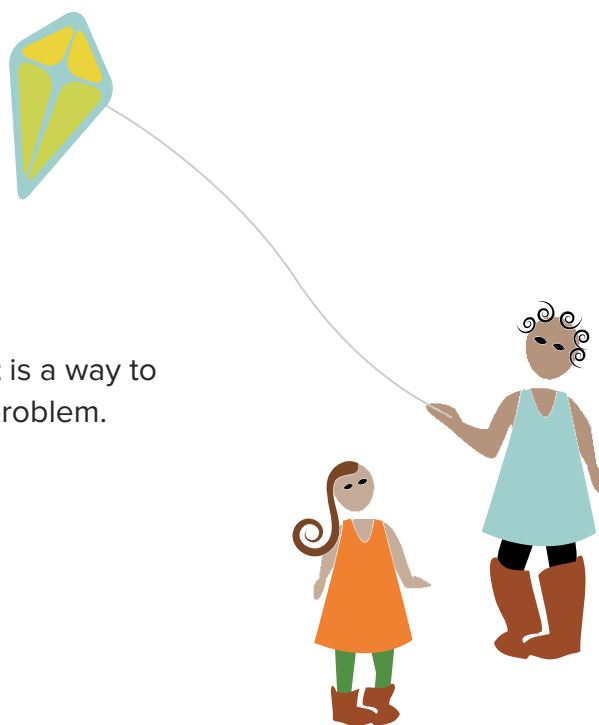
WeSave is a web based tool for helping you to work out your carbon footprint, and to find ways of reducing it.

Energy suppliers – what about before the energy even gets into your home or workplace? The **Green Electricity Marketplace** helps you find and switch to green tariffs in your area.

Once inside your building you can monitor your energy usage – there are various devices available from energy suppliers to help with this, but don't underestimate small building modifications that you can do yourself. Have a look at the **Centre for Alternative Technology simple tips for energy conservation**. There are also loads of interesting courses run at the Centre that help you learn skills you can apply in your own home.

The Energy Savings Trust have a useful **Project support tool** that helps you find web content based on your project's type.

Doing your bit? If you are doing all or some of the above ideas mentioned in this Toolkit, but you can't help but feel that, considering how massive the problem is, it would be nice to get a bit more help from government **Doing your bit** is a way to show those in power that we really care about this problem.



Appendix

Information about practical pledge actions

The Greener Together - *the co-operative way* pledges are suggestions for actions you can carry out at home. The full list of Greener Together pledges is listed below, with a description of what each pledge is about and some ideas for action. Click on any of the web links to get more information and resources for action.

Don't just choose all the easy pledges though! If you're already doing some of the things mentioned, that's great, but use the pledges to challenge yourself a bit by choosing and committing to actions that take you further on your journey to greener living. And of course don't let the actions listed in each pledge stop you from doing more. If you want to go even further you can see the pledges as a springboard to doing more, and encouraging others too. Have a look back at **Pebble, Flint or Gem?** on page 24 to think about the balance of easy and hard actions so you can keep things moving forward while keeping on challenging yourself too.

Good luck!

The pledges are grouped under the Greener Together themes of Personal Travel, Energy and Waste and are all designed to reduce your household's waste and CO2 emissions.

If you would like to chart your progress in reducing your CO2 emissions, the carbon calculator below provides a way to work out your (or your household's) own carbon footprint. To get the best out of the ACT ON CO2 Calculator it helps if you have copies of recent household bills and that you have an idea of your annual car mileage, if applicable.

ACT ON CO2 Calculator

Please note that the ACT ON CO2 Calculator does not include a footprint for the amount of rubbish produced.

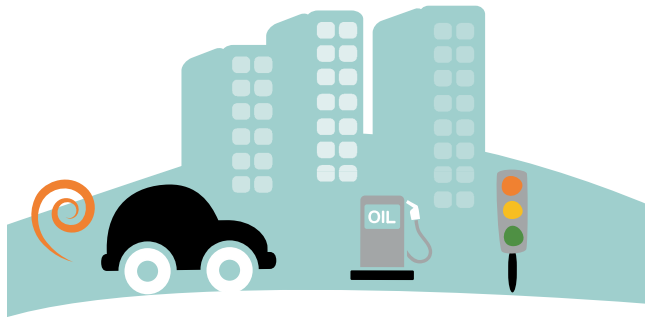
I pledge to keep a diary of my household journeys and mileage by car

This will help you identify opportunities to use your car less. Write down as much detail as you can; where you went, when you went, what the mileage was, and how long your journey took.

For each journey you log, if there were any, you could also make a note of any particular negative experiences, such as the time taken to find a parking space, the cost of parking your car, or a delay due to a traffic jam.

After you've kept your transport diary – in whatever form you choose – try and look at all the journeys and try and identify which of those journeys could have made without a car.

You also start by rating each journey in terms of how easy it would be to make the same journey without a car.



I pledge to share my car journey

The majority of cars on the roads in the UK aren't full. If every person who drove regularly gave one other driver a lift, even just once a week, the number of commuting cars on the road would fall by 15% according to the National Office of Statistics. The Environment Agency say that by sharing your car you could save up to 700kg of CO2 a year as well as saving on petrol costs. To read up on car sharing, visit the Carplus website:

<http://www.carplus.org.uk/car-sharing/> or the Energy Saving Trust website: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Travel/Alternative-transport/Car-sharing>

There are a few ways of going about finding someone to share your car with. At your place of work, you could ask around and find out if there are other car drivers willing to car share with you. There are also good online car sharing networks which you can use to find others to share with.

Try:

<http://www.liftshare.com/uk/>

<http://www.villagecarshare.com/>

<http://www.freewheelers.com/>

<http://www.nationalcarshare.co.uk/>

<http://www.carplus.org.uk/> has links to car sharing networks in your area.

I pledge to use more public transport

Instead of driving, choose two journeys a week to take by public transport instead. Public transport can be quicker than the car, and you don't have to spend time hunting for a parking space. You could use the time to relax on your way to or from work, or to read a book or newspaper that you might otherwise not have had the time to read. If you're not familiar with your local public transport services then the following websites will help you plan your journey:

<http://directgov.transportdirect.info/Web2/JourneyPlanning/JourneyPlannerInput.aspx>

or <http://www.traveline.org.uk/index.htm>

National rail enquiries: <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>



I pledge to cycle more

Cycling to work for at least two journeys a week can make substantial carbon savings over the course of six months. It's not only energy efficient, but will also save you money on petrol or/and parking.

Depending on the length of your trip, in just two journeys you could clock up the recommended 2 ½ hours cardio vascular activity recommended by the NHS, potentially saving you money on your gym membership too.

According to the Department of Transport,

“even a small amount of cycling can lead to significant gains in fitness”.

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



I pledge to walk more

Pledge to get to your destination on foot instead of the car for at least one of your journeys. According to the Act on CO2 website, almost a quarter of all car journeys are for less than two miles.

This makes walking a practical (and free!) alternative. A one mile car journey could take you just twenty minutes to walk. Walking at a brisk pace regularly is a great form of exercise.

It's therefore good for your heart and lungs, can increase your general energy levels and will burn more calories than sitting in your car would.

As well cutting down on your CO2 emissions, using your car less for short journeys will decrease the wear and tear on your engine.

To find out more about walking in general, visit the Ramblers website: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/info/info.htm>



I pledge to use more local shops

Challenge yourself to only shop from places where you can get to by public transport, on foot or on your bike. This means becoming better at planning your shopping.

Although you might not be able to buy as much in one go as you would if you had the car, it's worth remembering that the average households spends £50 a month on food that is wasted and thrown out.

The best way of ensuring you only buy the food you need is by planning your meals in advance, and just buying the ingredients required for those meals. If you stick with the list, you won't end up buying food items that won't get eaten – and you'll cut down on your load.

Carry a reusable shopping bag with you whenever you're out, making it easier to buy food from your local shops as you walk or cycle home from work. Local shops boost the local economy in a number of different ways too by supporting jobs and by keeping money circulating in the local community.

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>



I pledge to get together with others and bulk buy

Many of the items that we tend to buy from supermarkets can also be bought in bulk from co-ops or box delivery services.

A minimum order is often too much for one person, but getting together with others to put the order together or joining an existing food co-op makes doing this possible.

By buying three or four staples, you'll have less to pick up when you do go shopping, making it easier to shop without the car. Buying in bulk will save on overall waste and packaging and can often be cheaper too.

To find out more about food co-ops including information on how to set up your own:

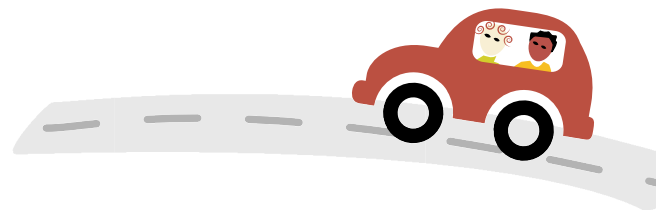
<http://www.sustainweb.org/foodcoops/>



I pledge to share the school run

Get together with other parents to share the school run between you. This will mean that each of you will make fewer journeys overall.

You'll also gain some time on the mornings when you're not doing the driving. If you're not sure which parents live close to you, why not ask the school to organise a special meeting to help parents link up with others who are interested in this.





I pledge to sign up for the walking school bus

It may not be necessary to do the school run at all if your child's school is walking distance from your house. A walking bus is where a supervised group of children walk to and from school on foot. Walking buses arrange to meet children at pre-arranged points – or to pick them up en route – and the children are walked to school under the supervision of the appropriate number of adults. Walking buses can be casual informal arrangements between parents or it could be a more formal initiative set up by the school or community.

Instructions to setting up a walking bus scheme in your area along with a downloadable step-by-step guide can be found here: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/schooltravel/howtsetupawalkingbus>

The Co-op Group can provide walking bus packages which include high visibility vests for adults and children, posters for promoting the bus and banners.

Visit <http://www.co-operative.coop/ethicsinaction/climatechange/climate-change-projects/walking-buses/> to find out more.

Walking buses not only make walking to school safe, but they also ensure that your children get into the healthy habits early in life.

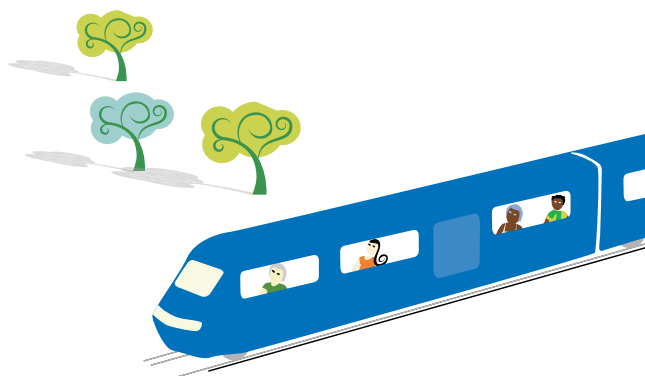
I pledge to use the train to see friends and family

Instead of driving, use the train for longer journeys. Train journeys can often be quicker than driving, and if you plan carefully, they don't always need to be an expensive option.

Have a look at the trainline website for prices and journey details: <http://www.thetrainline.com>

This BBC article has some good tips for reducing your train fares: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/6442947.stm>

There are no traffic jams on trains, and you can use the time to read, work or just to fit in a sneaky afternoon nap.



I pledge to cycle to school with my children

Get your children into the cycling habit by cycling with them to school, if the route is safe. The Direct Gov transport website has a cycle route planner which enables you to specify quiet roads. <http://directgov.transportdirect.info/web2/journeyplanning/findcycleinput.aspx>

Cycle training is the best way of improving confidence in cycling. Bikeability is a Cycling Proficiency Test designed to give young people the skills and confidence to ride their bikes on the roads.

Visit the website to find out more: <http://www.bikeability.org.uk/>

Search online to find out what's available in your local area. There website has some areas aimed at children and others for adults. Some top tips on cycling with your children can be found here: <http://www.bump.org.uk/children.asp>

You could also do a bike maintenance course with your children so that you can all maintain your bikes together.



I pledge to visit my friends using public transport

If you tend to drive when you visit your friends and family, then swap your car for the bus and use public transport instead.

Although you might not be delivered door to door, you can see the walk to and from the stops as additional exercise. To find out about bus routes in your area visit the following websites.

Timetables can be found online.

<http://directgov.transportdirect.info/Web2/JourneyPlanning/JourneyPlannerInput.aspx>

<http://www.traveline.org.uk/index.htm>





I pledge to visit my friends by cycling

One way of ensuring that you never have to worry about finding a parking space close to your friends or family is by cycling instead. Set off a bit earlier than you would if you were driving so that you can take your time. You'll be getting more exercise than you would if you drove and you'll probably feel healthier for it straight away. Plan your route carefully using the following sites:

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/roadusers/cycling/cycle-guides-request.aspx>

Find out more: <http://www.lcc.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=37>

Sustrans (sustainable transport charity) has an interactive map which can be used to find National Cycle Network routes where you live. This is a comprehensive network of safe cycling routes. You can also look for cycling routes in your area. <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/map>

There's an online UK directory of official council cycle maps at: <http://www.cyclemaps.org.uk/index.html> with links to sites to order or download maps.

And a cycle route planner here: <http://directgov.transportdirect.info/web2/journeyplanning/findcycleinput.aspx>



I pledge to take more UK based holidays instead of jetting to Europe

As a nation we take over 40 million holidays abroad. Air travel is a growing contributor to CO2 emissions and according to the Direct Gov website, accounts for 6% of the UK's total. In fact, flying is one of the world's fastest growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions

If you usually fly overseas, save on emissions and take your holiday in the UK instead. You'll also be supporting the UK's all-important tourism industry. Of course, you can't guarantee sunshine, but many attractions are worth visiting whatever the weather. For inspiration visit the following British tourist websites:

<http://www.visitengland.com/>

<http://www.visitwales.com/>

<http://www.visitscotland.com/>

<http://www.visitireland.com/>

<http://www.visitbritain.co.uk/>

You can search for UK-based holidays on the Responsible Travel website:

<http://www.responsibletravel.com/TripSearch/UK/Region100009.htm>

I pledge to take more UK based holidays instead of jetting to the other side of the world

As a nation we take over 40 million holidays abroad. Air travel is a growing contributor to CO2 emissions and according to the Direct Gov website, accounts for 6% of the UK's total. In fact, flying is one of the world's fastest growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions

If you usually fly overseas, save on emissions and take your holiday in the UK instead. You'll also be supporting the UK's all-important tourism industry. Of course, you can't guarantee sunshine, but many attractions are worth visiting whatever the weather. For inspiration visit the following British tourist websites:

<http://www.visitengland.com/>

<http://www.visitwales.com/>

<http://www.visitscotland.com/>

<http://www.visitireland.com/>

<http://www.visitbritain.co.uk/>

You can search for UK-based holidays on the Responsible Travel website:

<http://www.responsibletravel.com/TripSearch/UK/Region100009.htm>

I pledge to swap the plane for new ways of travelling

If you usually fly to Europe for your holidays, swap the plane for new ways of travelling. According to the BBC, "one short-haul flight has the same potential to warm the climate as three months worth of driving a 1.4 litre car".

If everyone in the UK took just one holiday by train instead of flying, the total amount of CO2 saved would amount to about 3.8 million tonnes of CO2 each year. According to the government, travelling by train will result in around a third of the CO2 emissions of the same journey by plane according to the government.

The Man at Seat 61 knows practically everything you need to know about travelling by rail (and by boat). www.seat61.com/ Or plan your route on the following site:

<http://plannerint.b-rail.be/bin/query.exe/en?L=prof&>

Getting the train can enhance your holiday experience, and in some cases, can be just as convenient as flying. A Daily Telegraph race found that a London to Paris trip was even quicker by train! The Guardian has a top 100 flight free (worldwide) holidays guide online:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/top100flightfreeholidays>





I pledge to buy a greener car

If you're buying a new car, then by choosing a car because of your new car's energy rating, you could cut fuel use by between ten and twenty per cent. The ETA has a green car buying guide: http://www.eta.co.uk/car_buyers_guide or search for a specific model at : <http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk/actonco2/home/what-you-can-do/Compare-car-CO2-emissions/new-car-co2-emissions-model-search.html> or look at the top ten best cars at: http://www.eta.co.uk/car_buyers_guide/ten_best

More information on buying cars can be found here: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Travel/Buying-a-car/Buying-a-new-car>

Low emission wheels

If you're buying a new car, consider buying a more efficient LPG, hybrid or electric car. These could cut your emissions by up to 40%. Hybrids are cars with two engines – one petrol and one electric. Read more here: <http://www.thegreencarwebsite.co.uk/blog/index.php/hybrid-cars/>

LPG stands for Liquid Petroleum Gas. It costs less than unleaded petrol and produces less CO2 (about 15%). Read up on LPG here: <http://www.drivelpg.co.uk/>

Electric cars are those which don't use petrol at all and are powered by a rechargeable electric battery. Read more:

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Travel/Buying-a-car/Buying-a-new-car>
<http://www.thegreencarwebsite.co.uk>

I pledge to plan my cycle journeys

Once you've decided to cycle somewhere, spend some time planning your journey. Some roads are better than others to cycle on, and in some instances, there could be dedicated off-road cycle routes, which could be even more direct than by following roads. In London, there are printed cycle route maps which can be ordered here:

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/roadusers/cycling/cycle-guides-request.aspx>

Find out more: <http://www.lcc.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=37>

Sustrans (sustainable transport charity) has an interactive map which can be used to find National Cycle Network routes where you live. This is a comprehensive network of safe cycling routes. You can also look for cycling routes in your area. <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/map>

There's an online UK directory of official council cycle maps at: <http://www.cyclemaps.org.uk/index.html> with links to sites to order or download maps.

And a cycle route planner here: <http://directgov.transportdirect.info/web2/journeyplanning/findcycleinput.aspx>



I pledge to complete my cycling training

Cycling on the roads, alongside cars, is very different to the type of cycling you might have done as a child. It requires knowledge of the rules of the road and a good level of confidence in your cycling ability. Cycling and road safety organisations have joined together with the Department for Transport and Cycling England to create one National Standard for Cycle Training. Training with qualified and accredited instructors will ensure that you'll be a competent and confident cyclist with the skills and ability to safely manage all road and traffic conditions.

The training has three levels starting away from traffic and progressing on level 3 to training for a range of traffic conditions and hazards. Training can cost around £15 per session, though your local authority might be subsidising some training. To find out more visit the CTC (National Cyclists' Organisation) website :

<http://www.ctc.org.uk/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabID=4150> or Cycling England: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/>

To find an accredited trainer in your locality do a search on CTC's website:

<http://www.ctc.org.uk/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabID=4747>
<http://www.cycleoxford.coop/>

Cycle proficiency training
<http://www.cycletraining.co.uk>

I pledge to make sure my bike is safe to ride

If you haven't cycled for a while and plan on getting back on your bike, you could be compromising your safety if your bike needs some basic repairs.

Knowing how to fix your own bike will save you money in the long-run and ensure that you can keep your bike on the road for longer.

The CTC runs bicycle repair classes at two locations: <http://www.ctc.org.uk/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabID=4806> However, these are only run a few times a year.

Your local bicycle shop might run courses, or have a look at your local adult education centre.



I pledge to use an energy monitor

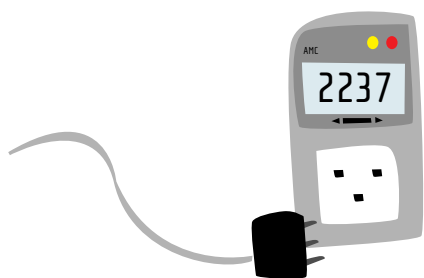
Using an energy monitor will give you information about how much electricity you're actually using at home. The monitor is a simple device which attaches to your electricity meter and transmits information to a display elsewhere in the house.

This will help you monitor your use and discover which of your electrical appliances use more (or less) energy. Surveys show that people who fit home energy monitors reduce the amount of energy they use by between 5 and 15% in the first year of using them, saving money as well as electricity.

Some energy suppliers provide free monitors. Otherwise you can purchase one online from between £19 & £100.

<http://www.goodenergystore.co.uk/Lounge/Energy%20monitors>

<http://www.ethicalsuperstore.com/category/electronics-and-appliances/home-energy-meters/>

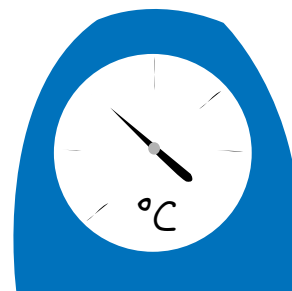


I pledge to reach for my fleece

Use thermal underwear, sweaters and fleeces to keep warm instead of relying on your central heating.

Turning your heating down by 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10% and could save you around £55 per year.

If your boiler has a programmer, you could also make sure that your heat and hot water only comes on when it's needed instead of having it on all of the time.



I pledge to give my clothes a longer life

Whatever fabric your clothes are made from, up to 80% of the carbon footprint of an item of clothing can come from the way it's washed and cared for.

Wherever possible, reduce the temperature that you wash your clothes to 30 or colder, and always wash full loads. The higher the temperature of your wash, the more energy is used. The machine will also use the same amount of electricity whether it's full or half empty.

As most washes are to freshen clothes, rather than to clean them, a cold wash will make little difference to the results. Modern washing powders also work better at lower temperatures than they used to.

Washing at lower temperatures will also preserve the quality of your clothes for longer.

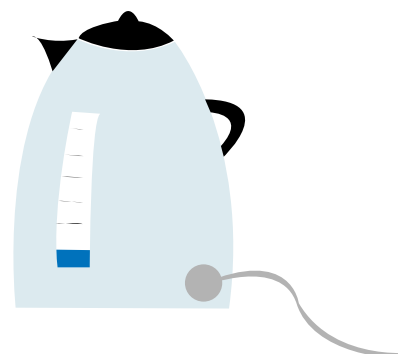
I pledge to measure the amount of water I use in my kettle

Measure the amount of water you're going to need when you boil the kettle – making sure the elements are still covered.

This easy action could save up to £25 a year (based on five kettles a day, boiling one litre more than necessary).

If your kettle dies during the course of the project, you could consider replacing it with an 'eco-kettle', which make it even easier to boil just the right amount.

www.ethicalsuperstore.com/products/product-creation/eco-kettle-2---white/



I pledge to flatline my electricity use by unplugging wherever possible

Leaving unused appliances on standby still uses electricity and costs around £800 million a year in the UK.

To do this, switch appliances off at the mains. It's also important not to leave laptops and mobile phones on charge unnecessarily.

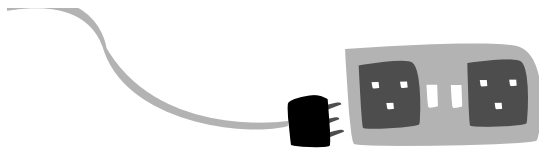
By doing this, you could save up to £33 per year off your electricity bill. To make this easier you can make sure that there's plenty of space to allow you to get to the sockets. If you're liable to forget, you could purchase a standby saving device.

The Energy Saving Trust recommends four standby solutions at Ethical Superstore

<http://www.ethicalsuperstore.com/category/electronics-and-appliances/standby-solutions/energy-saving-trust-recommended.htm>

and there are plenty of others available too.

Most of these will cost you less money than you'll save over the cost of a year.

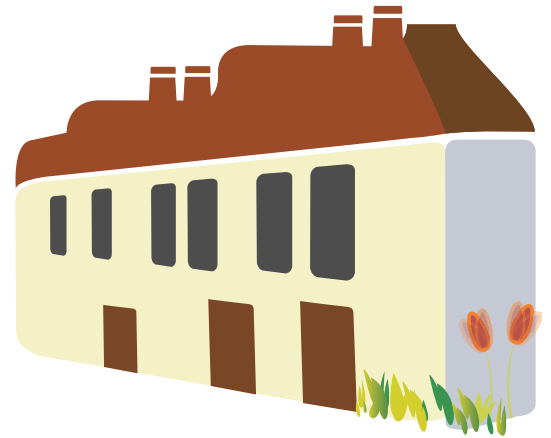


I pledge not to leave household lights on

According to the Energy Saving Trust, it's a myth that turning off and on a light uses more energy than leaving them running.

Collectively in the UK, we waste £170 million each year by leaving lights on unnecessarily.

If you're not very good at remembering to turn off the lights yourself, then why not nominate someone in the house to be the light monitor and to switch off lights whenever they're no longer needed.



I pledge to dry my clothes naturally

Tumble dryers are one of the most energy intensive household appliances, using almost two thirds more electricity than washing machines.

On the other hand, drying clothes outside on a washing line if the weather is favourable, or indoors if you have the space, doesn't require any additional energy and doesn't risk shortening the lifespan of your clothes.



I pledge to have an energy budget for entertainment in my household

If you're using an energy monitor you could try and give every member of the household an energy budget, and get them to monitor how much they use.

A lot of our home entertainment use energy; televisions, computers, dvd players and games consoles all require electricity to work.

When talking with your household about rationing electronic entertainment, try and find other ways of having fun at home – such as playing board games, cards or other activities together.

I pledge to eliminate all the draughts in my home

Lots of small DIY jobs can have a big impact. One of the easiest is trying to eliminate all the draughts in your house, stopping heat from escaping and saving you money on your fuel bills.

Install cheap, easy-to-fix brush or PVC seals (available from DIY stores) on exterior doors and make sure letterboxes and keyholes are covered too. Draughts can also get in through the gaps in your floorboards and skirting boards. You can block these gaps with beading or sealant, which you can buy at most DIY stores.

You can buy draught excluders to go against internal doors or even make your own quite easily.

There's a guide to making your own here:
http://www.craftycrafty.tv/2007/09/how_to_make_your_own_dog_or_sn_1.html



For more detailed information on draught proofing, visit:

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Home-improvements-and-products/Home-insulation-glazing/Draught-proofing>



I pledge to insulate my hot water tank and pipes

Tank and pipe insulation will keep your water hotter for longer because less heat is able to escape. If your hot water tank already has an insulating jacket, check that it's the recommended thickness – at least 3 inches or 75mm.

Fitting a jacket (available from any DIY store) is really easy to do yourself. Make sure you've measured your tank so that you buy a jacket to fit your tank.

The jacket should conform to British Safety Standards BS5615 (1985). Full instructions as to how to fit a jacket can be found at: <http://www.homeheatingguide.co.uk/hot-water-tank.html>

Insulating pipes is particularly important in colder areas of the home, such as the loft, and will help stop your pipes freezing during cold spells. This can be less straightforward, depending on how accessible your pipes are. Foam tubing, bought from DIY stores, is the easiest to fit. It just slips over piping and is taped securely.

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Home-improvements-and-products/Home-insulation-glazing/Tanks-and-pipes-insulation>

I pledge to insulate my loft to the maximum

Homes lose around a quarter of their heat through the roof. Most homes don't have the recommended amount of insulation of 270mm, while some don't have any insulation at all. Even if you already have insulation it's worth measuring to see if you need to top it up to further improve its efficiency. This will save you money and keep your home warmer. Loft insulation should last years, so it's not a job that you'll need to do again in a hurry if it's done

properly. You can even do the insulation yourself. There's some information on how to do so here:
<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Home-improvements-and-products/Home-insulation-glazing/Loft-insulation/All-about-installation>

If you'd rather someone do the installation for you, there's a national register of installers:
<http://www.nationalinsulationassociation.org.uk/houholder/installers-nia.html>

There are more and more grants available for loft insulation – so it needn't be cost you a lot.

Call the energy saving trust's helpline to find out if you're eligible **0800 512 012**

I pledge to fit thermostats and timers onto the radiators in my home

If your radiators don't have them, fitting thermostats and timers onto your radiators will enable you to vary the heat by room. This will ensure that you don't waste heat by having heating on too high in rooms that you're not using. For an average home, this could result in savings of around £10 and 90kg of CO2 a year.

You can do this yourself, for around £8 per valve, or get a plumber to do it for you.

Read more here:
<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Home-improvements-and-products/Heating-and-hot-water/Heating-controls>

And here:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bloom/actions/radiatorvalves.shtml>

I pledge to switch to a 'green' electricity supplier

Most of the electricity in the UK comes from burning fossil fuels (gas, coal and oil), which are all major contributors to climate change. Most energy suppliers offer 'green' electricity tariffs. These support renewable energy. However, switching over to a supplier that focuses on producing green energy is the best environmental option. Switching to a green electricity supplier is very straightforward. The electricity supplied to your home doesn't change, just the supplier. All you need to do is call a green supplier and you'll be switched over in an instant. Ethical Consumer magazine recommends:

Good Energy: <http://www.goodenergy.co.uk> / 0845 456 1640

Ecotricity: <http://www.ecotricity.co.uk> / 08000 302 302

Green Energy: <http://www.greenenergy.uk.com>

Utilita: <http://www.utilita.co.uk/index.htm>

Find Green suppliers in your area:

<http://greenelectricity.org/index.php> and

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

Read more about suppliers at:

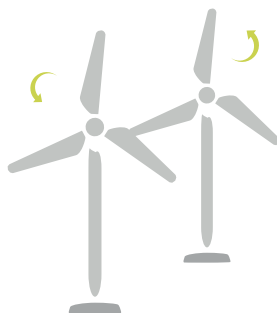
<http://www.ethicalconsumer.org>

[/FreeBuyersGuides](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/FreeBuyersGuides)

[/energyutilities/](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/energyutilities/greenelectricity)

[greenelectricity](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/energyutilities/greenelectricity)

[suppliers.aspx](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/energyutilities/greenelectricity)



I pledge to replace my old appliances with new A+ rated ones

If your appliances are 5 years or older, or less than a B rating, then you could reduce your electricity bill by 20 – 30% by replacing them with A+ rated appliances. According to the Energy Saving Trust, home appliances account for a big chunk of a household's emissions.

The BBC's Bloom website says that a ten year old fridge-freezer or washing machine could be costing you an extra £37 a year in bills.

When it comes to fridges and fridge/freezers look for A+ or A++ on the energy label as these are the most energy efficient. For washing machines and dishwashers, A is still the top rating. Find out more about ratings and have some questions answered at the following sites:

www.bbc.co.uk/bloom/actions/aratedappliances.shtml

www.which.co.uk/advice/how-to-use-less-electricity/energy-efficient-appliances/index.jsp

The Sust-It website (www.sust-it.net) is the best source of environmental information comparing the different models and ranking them all by efficiency. You can also compare appliances at: www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Compare-and-buy-products/Home-appliances



I pledge to have cavity wall insulation on my property

Homes lose a third of their heat through their walls. If you have cavity walls, then getting them insulated could cut your heating bills – and save energy – by about £115 each year. At a cost of around £250 to put in, this means that it'll pay for itself in around two years. It doesn't take that long to do, and you might be eligible for a grant to pay for it. Call the energy saving trust advice centre for free to find out on 0800 512 012. They can also point you in the right direction of local recommended installers. To read more about cavity wall insulation visit:

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Home-improvements-andproducts/Home-insulation-glazing/Cavity-wall-insulation>

Lobby your landlord

Persuading your landlord to fill in the wall cavities so that you can save on energy and bills may not be as hard as you might think. Cavity wall insulation will bump up the property's efficiency rating and therefore potentially add value to your landlord's property. Visit the following websites to find out more and pass this onto your landlord to read so that they can understand the benefits of cavity wall insulation.

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Home-improvements-andproducts/Home-insulation-glazing/Cavity-wall-insulation>

Or: http://www.bbc.co.uk/bloom/flash.shtml?cc_start_screen=browse#/actions/cavitywallinsulation.shtml

I pledge to insulate windows on my home

A fifth of the heat in your home could go straight through the window! Single glazed windows can lose vast amounts of heat compared to the same area of well insulated wall; 14 times worth. Double glazing is one way of ensuring that heat stays in the house and could half the amount of heat lost. This could result in a reduction in your heating bills by £135 and save about 720kg of CO2. Double glazing sandwiches a thin layer of air or inert gas between two panes of glass.

This layer is sealed in and helps to stop heat leaving the house - and cold air coming in. It's important to look for the Energy Saving Recommended logo when choosing your new windows. These are rated by the British Fenestration Ratings Council. If you can't afford to double glaze all windows, then you could focus on the rooms that are most used and cost the most to heat.

Lobby your landlord to double glaze

To try and persuade your landlord to consider installing double glazing, visit the following websites to get some background information: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Home-improvements-andproducts/Home-insulation-glazing/Glazing>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/bloom/flash.shtml?cc_start_screen=browse#/actions/doubleglazing.shtml

[cc_start_screen=browse#/actions/doubleglazing.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bloom/flash.shtml?cc_start_screen=browse#/actions/doubleglazing.shtml)

Secondary glazing, though less efficient, is a cheaper option. Visit the Fenestration Self-Assessment Scheme website to find a contractor. FENSA approved fitters will also ensure that you have the necessary certificates for building regulations.

http://www.fensa.co.uk/asp/member_search.asp

I pledge to upgrade to an A rated boiler

If your boiler is already on its last legs, or is over five years old, then it's worth upgrading to an A rated boiler. The single biggest energy cost for households comes from heating our homes and water. An A rated boiler, would produce the same amount of heat for a fifth less fuel – and that's a fifth less CO₂. The best modern condensing boilers convert more than 90% fuel to heat compared to just 72% or less for the average UK boiler. Over a year, you could save over a tonne of CO₂.

You could get £400 off a new A rated boiler if your old boiler is rated G (or worse) and installed before 1998 through the government's new boiler scrappage scheme. If it's gas fired and over 15 years old, it's highly likely to be eligible.

<http://www.governmentboiler-scrappagescheme.info/EligibilityCheck.php>

If you're in receipt of benefits, you could be eligible for more of a grant under a different scheme known as the Warm Front Scheme. Visit: <http://www.warmfront.co.uk/>

Check out boiler efficiency at: <http://www.sedbuk.com/cgi-local/searchpg.cgi>

To read more about boilers visit: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Home-improvements-and-products/Heating-and-hot-water>



I pledge to have a biomass boiler in my home

A wood stove is a stove that burns wood to heat your room, water and even to cook on.

Unlike open fires, where the heat disappears up the chimney, with wood stoves, the casing heats up and radiates the heat out into the room.

A simple stove like this will heat the room, but with the addition of a back boiler, it can provide hot water too, and even central heating. According to the BBC, a wood burning stove could save 1,000 kg of CO₂ a year, or even more if the whole heating system is switched over.

The reason that these are a good environmental option is that, unlike gas or electricity generated from coal-fired power stations, wood itself is a carbon-neutral fuel. This means that burning wood releases the same amount of CO₂ as if the trees had died and rotted. New trees will absorb the CO₂ and growing trees absorb more CO₂ than mature ones.

As long as the harvested trees that we're burning are from a sustainable source and replaced with new trees, then wood burning stoves are a good environmental option. A basic stove could cost as little as £400, though they can cost up to £1500. They also cost quite a bit to install, as you need to ensure that your chimney can cope. They must also be swept each year.

http://www.lowimpact.org/factsheet_wood_stoves.htm
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bloom/actions/biomassstove.shtml>
<http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk> to find out more.
<http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/Information-for-Installers/Find-an-installer>
<http://www.nef.org.uk/logpile/fuelsuppliers/woodstoves.asp>
http://store.cat.org.uk/product_info.php?products_id=897



I pledge to install solar thermal collectors

If you install solar thermal collectors on the roof of your house, you could heat a third of your annual hot water usage from the sun's energy. It could reduce CO₂ emissions by about 330kg per year in a gas heated home (more if you're using other heating fuels).

Solar water heaters use energy from the sun to pre-heat the water in your tank. This means that when your boiler kicks in, some of the work has already been done, meaning it has less to do – saving you energy (and money). Solar thermal collectors aren't a cheap option, costing from £3000 to install. However, there are some grants available to help. Visit <http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk> to find out more.

You need to have at least 3-4 square metres of un-shaded, south-facing roof (south-east or south-west will also be okay) and to make sure that your existing hot water system is compatible – you'll need a hot water tank for starters and your house needs to have good insulation to be eligible for a grant.

To read more visit: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Generate-your-own-energy/Solar-water-heating>

For more information on home energy generation technologies, contact your local Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre on **0800 512 012**.

I pledge to install solar photovoltaics

Installing solar electric panels on your roof could supply at least a quarter of your electricity from the sun. Solar photovoltaic (PV) converts energy from the sun to electricity – and is therefore an excellent environmental option as they don't generate any greenhouse gases. In a typical domestic system, you could save around 1.2 tonnes of CO₂ a year, and reduce your electricity bill. PV cells don't even need direct sunlight to work as they can still generate some electricity on cloudy days. You can even use PV systems on walls that face within 90 degrees of south, as long as no other buildings or large trees overshadow them. Prices for systems vary, but start at around £5000, going up to £15000. If your system is connected to the national grid, any energy that's generated that you don't use, goes into the national grid and you could make a bit of money. You'll need a strong roof or wall that faces within 90 degrees of south that isn't overshadowed. To read more visit: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Generate-your-own-energy/Solar-electricity>

To find out about how you can make money by selling energy back to the grid visit: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Generate-your-own-energy/Sell-your-own-energy/Clean-Energy-Cashback-Feed-in-Tariffs>

A national database of installers can be found here: <http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/Information-for-Installers/Find-an-installer>

Read more about selling back to the grid: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2010/feb/06/solar-power-bright-investment>

I pledge to keep track of my waste

Everyone produces waste of some kind – from empty packets of crisps to apple cores and shampoo bottles. Wasteonline www.wasteonline.org.uk/ estimates that in 2003/4, 30 million tonnes of household waste was collected in the UK. That's over 500kg per person for a whole year! Almost three quarters of that waste is buried in landfill, with just under 10% burnt. Yet we're running out of suitable land to bury our waste, and incineration can be harmful to the environment. Throwing out so much stuff also means that we're wasting resources which could be recycled, composted or reused.

For one week, keep a track of everything you throw out (and recycle). There are several ways of doing this. You could keep a diary, logging everything before it gets thrown out. Love Food Hate Waste website has a diary you can download specifically for recording all the food that you throw out in a week. www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

You could also weigh every bag of rubbish for a week. A combination of a diary and weighing your waste will give you an idea of the volume of waste *and* an idea of what exactly you're throwing out and how much of it could be reduced. Separating out your waste into paper & card, cans, bottles, plastic packaging and food waste will also give you an idea of the volume of waste that could be recycled or composted.



I pledge to get my news fix online or at my local library

How many newspapers and magazines do you read each week? Around 10% of our household waste comes from newspapers and magazines.

These days a large proportion of the paper in today's newspapers comes from recycled sources, but they still require energy and resources.

Even if you recycle your papers when you're done, you could reduce your impact even further by getting your news fix online or at your local library if you prefer to read a physical paper or magazine.

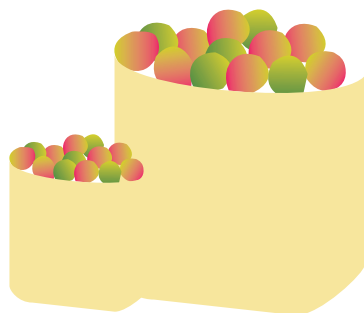


I pledge to buy my fresh fruit and veg without plastic packaging

Plastic packaging is a huge waste problem, requiring masses of resources to produce and causing environmental problems when it's disposed of.

In the UK, we generate around 3 million tonnes of plastic waste. But much of that plastic waste is completely unnecessary – especially when it comes to fresh fruit and vegetables.

Buy your fresh food without any packaging if you can, or choose paper bags instead of plastic. You can also save existing plastic containers to reuse and refill where you can.



I pledge to stop wasting food

We throw out 8.3 million tonnes of food every year. This costs the average family £680 and also has serious environmental implications. When food goes into landfill, it rots, producing methane, a gas which contributes to climate change. There's also the waste of all the resources that went into producing our food.

Love Food Hate Waste say that if we stop wasting food that could have been eaten, it would have the same environmental benefit as taking one in four cars off the roads. There are lots of different ways to make sure that your food doesn't go to waste. Planning meals and shopping specifically for them is one way to ensure that you only buy what you will use and eat.

The Love Food Hate Waste website www.lovefoodhatewaste.com has plenty more tips to help you reduce your food waste from helping you plan portion sizes to recipes for leftovers. <http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk/actonco2/home/what-you-can-do/Out-shopping/buying-food-and-drink.html> also has some simple tips for reducing your food waste.

The BBC website has a great search facility where you can enter three ingredients and it will find a recipe for you. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/>

I pledge to cut out the packaging and prepare my food from scratch

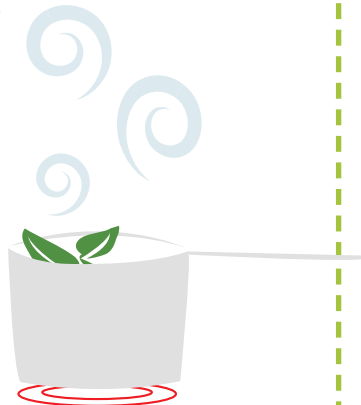
Ready meals can be convenient but they can also be costly to your pocket and to the environment. They can require masses of food miles in their production, and that's without all the card and plastic packaging that they're found in.

Shop bought sandwiches and salads also come in packaging and often contain unhealthy amounts of salt and additives. Planning and making lunches will not only reduce the amount of packaging waste, but could save you money too. It doesn't always have to take lots of your time; making a huge batch of soup and freezing it in individual portions will allow you to have your own healthy ready-meal whenever you want.

For main meals from scratch search online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/>

The vegetarian society has lots of appetising veggie meal recipes: <http://www.vegsoc.org/cordonvert/recipes/index.html>

If you're a fan of Delia Smith, her website has plenty of recipes to choose from: <http://www.deliaonline.com>



I pledge to bottle my own water

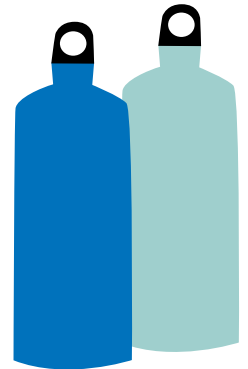
Bottled water not only contributes to the amount of plastic waste we produce, but also requires huge amounts of energy to extract, bottle and transport.

In the UK, we're lucky that our tap water is safe to drink. Save money and waste by buying a reusable bottle that you can refill when out and about.

To find out more about the resources that go into bottling water visit the wasteonline case study:

www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/InformationSheets/beyondrecycling.htm#_Case_study

A good water bottle, if taken care of, should last years, saving you money in bottled water, and reducing your waste.



I pledge to mend and repair my clothes

Every year we chuck away around 900,000 million items of clothing each year. By repairing and fixing your holes and broken zips on your clothes, you'll keep them out of landfill, making them wearable for longer.

If you've forgotten (or never knew) how to sew or darn, then why not look for a local class or workshop to refresh your skills? There are also plenty of good online resources to help you with the most common stitching tasks:

<http://www.allaboutyou.com/craft/Sewing-Advice-Mending-Clothes-Zip/gallery>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2009/mar/01/mending-clothes>

<http://www.startsewing.co.uk/how-repair-holes-clothing.html>

E-how.com has 19 different videos to help you mend and patch your clothes: http://www.ehow.com/videos-on_4127_mend-hem-clothes.html

You could also reinvent your old clothes, using embellishment and a bit of creativity to create new, exciting one-off garments.

If doing it yourself is too daunting, then look for a local seamstress or tailor to mend your clothes. Many high streets still have shoe repairers who will resole your worn shoes and repair your broken heels for you. Timpsons has shoe repairers in 635 of its shops around the country:

<http://www.timpson.co.uk/services/63/shoe-repairs>

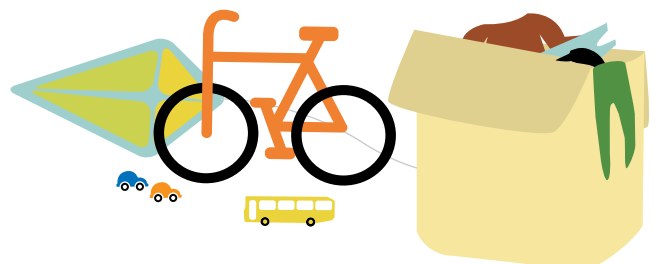
I pledge to swap my childrens unwanted clothes, toys and books with other parents

Children consume resources too, but not everything needs to be bought brand new. Get together with other parents to swap clothes, toys and books.

Ebay is a good place to hunt second hand clothes. New parents will always be grateful for hand-me downs as it will save them money, so make sure you pass yours on.

There are many toy libraries around the country where you can hire toys without having to buy them brand new.

Visit <http://www.natl1.org.uk/> for more information.



I pledge to purchase goods with high recycled content

Choosing to buy recycled products is just as important as recycling your own waste.

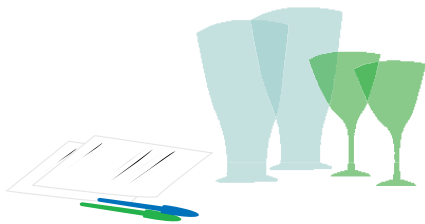
It supports the recycling industry, strengthens the market for recycled goods and increases the demand for all the reclaimed materials collected by recycled schemes.

Lots of products are available with recycled content from notebooks and printer paper to wine glasses, pencil cases and pens.

The higher the recycled content, the better for the environment.

Look for products online at the recycled products database <http://www.recycledproducts.org.uk/view/index.cfm>

Visit <http://www.remarkableshop.co.uk/> for a range of recycled stationery.



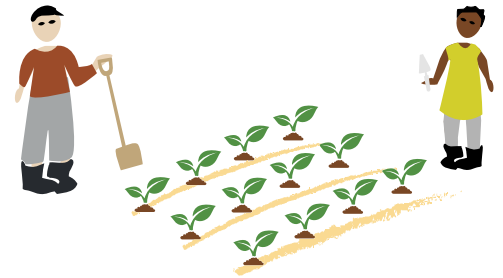
I pledge to share my gardening equipment with friends and neighbours

Lots of DIY and garden equipment spend more time in sheds and cupboards than they do being used.

Make better use of yours by sharing yours with your neighbours, friends or colleagues.

Start up an informal service by itemising who has what and share all the equipment instead of buying new. If you find a job that needs doing, but no equipment to do it with, then instead of buying new, try to hire it first.

HSS Hire is a UK-wide equipment hire company enabling you to rent DIY and garden equipment as and when you need to. <http://www.hss.com/>



I pledge to buy less from new and hire or rent instead

Instead of buying books, console games, films or CDs new, rent them instead.

Not only are there plenty of online DVD and game rental clubs, but many libraries have also expanded, stocking DVDs and CDs as well as books.

The latter option will save you money. You could also set up an informal lending service with your friends, colleagues and family.

Make sure you keep a written record as to who has what so that you can track your stuff down when you want it back.

I pledge to use a shopping bag for longer

According to Wasteonline, supermarkets give away an estimated 17 ½ billion plastic bags each year. That's more than 290 bags for every person! Most plastic bags end up in landfill, taking thousands of years to disintegrate.

They also require a lot of energy to make. It's therefore much better to use one bag over and over again than to use a bag once and throw it out afterwards.

You can re-use any old plastic bag, or pay extra from your supermarket for a 'bag for life' which tend to be made from more durable plastic.

Fairtrade cotton or jute bags are durable and easy to carry. Whatever option you choose, remember to carry it around with you at all times.

Some more helpful tips can be found here: <http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk/actonco2/home/what-you-can-do/get-a-bag-habit.html>



I pledge to clear the clutter and hand on unwanted things

If you've got a lot of things that you no longer use or want, then passing them onto someone else who will use them will make sure they don't end up in landfill and give someone else the opportunity to use or enjoy them.

Every year, 1.2 million tonnes of clothing ends up in UK landfills while according to phone recyclers, Fonebank, in the UK there are around 60 million unused mobile phones lying around people's homes.

Keeping products in use by making sure other people can have them second-hand also reduces demand on new products, saving energy and resources.

Join freecycle (<http://www.uk.freecycle.org/>), real cycle (<http://www.realcycle.co.uk/>) or freegle (<http://www.ilovefreegle.org/>) are all online groups which will enable you to find homes for your unwanted stuff.

Donating to charity shops is another way of keeping things in circulation for longer – and could end up earning money for your chosen charity. If you need to raise some money yourself, you could try selling them for a profit on e-bay or at a car-boot or garage sale.

Foneback recycle mobile phones – selling working ones at low cost overseas, or recycling parts of broken phones. <http://www.fonebak.com/>

I pledge to buy more second hand clothes

According to the Government, textiles have become the fastest-growing waste product in the UK.

Three quarters of the two million tonnes of clothes we buy every year end up in landfill. And yet for every item we throw out, huge amounts of energy will be consumed in order to produce new items for us to buy.

Most fabrics are hugely energy intensive to produce with more CO2 required to ship them from overseas factories to our stores in the UK.

Buying second-hand ensures that good-quality clothes stay in circulation instead of being shipped overseas or thrown into landfill.

There are plenty of ways of buying second-hand clothes – online through ebay or other sites, on your high street from the growing number of 'vintage' clothes shops or from your local charity shop. With a bit of patience, you could find yourself with a real gem.



I pledge to re-use or repair my furniture

Old furniture doesn't need to go to the dump. According to furniture re-use network, (www.frn.org.uk) we throw out 10 million items of furniture each year.

Around a third of these could be re-used and even more could be repaired.

Keep your old furniture in circulation for longer thus reducing CO2 and help someone out by donating to your local furniture charity shop or to a local community recycling company.

To find one near you visit: <http://www.frn.org.uk/donate.asp>

I pledge to buy second hand furniture instead of new

If you need to buy furniture, instead of buying new, buy second-hand instead.

Re-using furniture saves the energy associated with making a new one, reducing CO2 and also reducing pressure on our dwindling resources – especially wood.

Visit ebay to search for second-hand furniture or find your local community recycler to buy second-hand. By signing up to freecycle, freegle or recycle groups (www.uk.freecycle.org, www.ilovefreegle.org, www.realcycle.co.uk/) and you could find yourself with a brand new sofa without having to pay a penny.



I pledge to recycle everything I can

Most local Councils now provide recycling collections – making recycling easier than ever. Although recycling rates in the UK are rising, they're still relatively low at 37.6%.

Make sure you recycle everything that you can by keeping track of your recycling collection and getting into the habit of separating all your waste.

If necessarily, nominate someone in your house to be responsible for collecting the recycling around the home and putting it into the appropriate bin or box.

Recycling tips online can be found at:
http://www.recyclenow.com/what_can_i_do_today/top_tips_for.html



I pledge to search out all local recycling facilities

Most household recycling collections will only pick up certain types of recycling – but that doesn't mean that your Council won't have facilities to recycle other types of material.

A simple way to find out what your Council will pick up, and what other facilities it has is to put your postcode into the www.recyclenow.com website.

It'll also provide you with website links for your local council and telephone contacts.

The site also provides you with a map of recycling banks in your area for all sorts of hard to recycle items.

Items such as broken kettles, car batteries, food pots and tubs and aerosols can still be recycled rather than thrown out so it's worth having a look on the site to find a bank near you.



I pledge to compost my food waste

According to Love Food Hate Waste campaign (www.lovefoodhatewaste.com) we throw out 8.3 million tonnes of food each year. But food sent to landfill breaks down to create methane, which is a harmful greenhouse gas.

But if you compost your uneaten and waste food, you could save global warming gases equivalent to all the CO2 that your kettle produces every year. Some Councils will collect food waste to compost, but you can, quite easily compost yourself.

The Recycle Now campaign has a special composting campaign in 2010

http://www.recyclenow.com/home_composting/index.html

Your local council might provide you with a bin for free or at a low cost or you could buy one from your local garden centre.

Note that you can't compost cooked food, fish, meat or dairy products. Wormeries are also good ways of composting food waste by using earthworms to break down the waste, creating compost faster.

Find out more on: <http://www.wormcity.co.uk/> or <http://www.wigglywiggers.co.uk/>

Hyperlinks featured in the Toolkit

Sharing Ideas

Greener Together background

Greener Together – *the co-operative way*: <http://greener-together.coop/about-us>

The website : <http://greener-together.coop/>

The three key areas; energy, waste and personal travel: <http://greener-together.coop/resources>

Greener Living Fund: <http://www.greenerlivingfund.org.uk/about/>

Total Coverage: <http://www.totalcoverage.co.uk/>

Networking and support

Working with Allies: <http://www.cdx.org.uk/resources/working-allies>

Communicating climate issues

Climate Change Communications Pack:

http://www.fcdl.org.uk/projects/Every_Action_Counts/EAC_SD_taster_packs.htm

Federation for Community Development Learning: <http://www.fcdl.org.uk/>

Sustainable development taster sessions:

http://www.fcdl.org.uk/projects/Every_Action_Counts/EAC_SD_taster_packs.htm

"Funny weather we're having at the moment isn't it dear": <http://www.funnyweather.org/>

"As the World Burns: 50 Things You Can Do to Stay in Denial":

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/1583227776>

Working Together

Individual or collective?

One Planet Living: <http://www.oneplanetliving.org/>

How to involve people

Survey of Community Development Workers: <http://www.cdx.org.uk/resources/summary-survey-community-development-workers-uk>

First steps as a community action group

Community Work Skills Manual: <http://www.fcdl.org.uk/projects/CWSkillsManual09/index.htm>

Seeds for Change: <http://seedsforchange.org.uk/free/resources>

Excellent resource to help you choose a legal structure: [http://offline.cooperatives-](http://offline.cooperatives-uk.coop/Home/miniwebs/miniwebsA-z/newVentures/gp/resources/organisationalTypes)

[uk.coop/Home/miniwebs/miniwebsA-z/newVentures/gp/resources/organisationalTypes](http://offline.cooperatives-uk.coop/Home/miniwebs/miniwebsA-z/newVentures/gp/resources/organisationalTypes)

Case studies: [http://offline.cooperatives-uk.coop/Home/miniwebs/miniwebsA-](http://offline.cooperatives-uk.coop/Home/miniwebs/miniwebsA-z/newVentures/gp/resources/caseStudies)

[z/newVentures/gp/resources/caseStudies](http://offline.cooperatives-uk.coop/Home/miniwebs/miniwebsA-z/newVentures/gp/resources/caseStudies)

Specialist advice and support: <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/>

Charity law: <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/>

What problems you might face as a group

Community Development: [http://www.sostenga.org.uk/index.php](http://www.sostenga.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=54&Itemid=61)

[?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=54&Itemid=61](http://www.sostenga.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=54&Itemid=61)

Sharing Practice

West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service:

http://www.wycas.org.uk/good_practice_guides

LawWorks: <http://lawworks.org.uk/>

Anti-cuts resources: <http://www.cdx.org.uk/anticuts>

Guidance for dealing with cuts: http://www.wycas.org.uk/guidance_for_dealing_with_cuts

National Coalition for Independent Action: <http://www.independentaction.net/>

Personal travel

ActTravelWise: <http://www.acttravelwise.org>

Adopt your local station: http://www.acorp.uk.com/Station_Adoption_main.html

Environmental Transport Association: <http://www.eta.co.uk/>

ETA cares for cyclists : <http://www.eta.co.uk/breakdown/bicycle>

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

The Campaign for Better Transport: <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/>

Ideas for breaks and days: <http://www.touristinformationcentres.com/>

The Man In Seat 61: <http://www.seat61.com/>

CASE STUDY: The Only Way is Green!

Suma: <http://www.suma.coop/>

Freecycle: <http://www.uk.freecycle.org/>

By train and the ferry: <http://www.seat61.com/Portugal.htm>

Campaigns against Tesco: <http://tescopoly.org>

Walk to School: <http://www.walktoschool.org.uk/>

Safe Routes to School: <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-we-do/safe-routes-to-schools>

CASE STUDY: Small pledges, big difference

Brightkidz: <http://www.brightkidz.co.uk/>

Home Zone News: homezonenews.org.uk

Living Streets: livingstreets.org.uk

Waste

Buy Nothing Day: <http://www.buynothingday.co.uk/>

Fairtrade Foundation: <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

Ethical Consumer: <http://www.ethicalconsumer.org>

Farmer's Market: <http://www.farmersmarkets.net/>

Greening the Office: <http://www.green-office.org.uk/>

Mailing Preference Service: <http://www.mpsonline.org.uk/>

Reduce

Making Local Food Work: <http://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/>

Sustain: <http://www.sustainweb.org/>

Foodcoops: <http://www.sustainweb.org/foodcoops/>

Keep Britain Tidy: <http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/>

Repair & Reuse

Freecycle: <http://www.uk.freecycle.org/>

Recycle

Wastepoint: <http://www.wastepoint.co.uk/factsheets.asp>

recycle-more.co.uk bank locator: <http://www.recycle-more.co.uk/banklocator/banklocator.aspx>

WasteOnline: <http://www.wasteonline.org.uk/topic.aspx?id=21>

We are what we do: <http://www.wearewhatwedo.org/actions/>

CASE STUDY: Community Recycling Day

Brockweir and Hewelsfield Village Shop Association: <http://www.bandhvilageshop.co.uk/>

CASE STUDY: Walking the distance for climate change

Phone Co-op: <http://www.thephone.coop/>

Energy

Energy Savings Trust: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe>

Green Communities How to Guides: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Guidance-and-useful-tools/How-to-Guides>

Carbon footprint tool: [trust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Guidance-and-useful-tools/Community-Carbon-Footprint-Tool](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Guidance-and-useful-tools/Community-Carbon-Footprint-Tool)

Low Carbon Communities Network: <http://lowcarboncommunities.net/>

Centre for Alternative Technology free information service: <http://info.cat.org.uk/>

‘Your Community Building Counts’: http://www.pdfdownload.org/pdf2html/view_online.php?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fcdl.org.uk%2Fpublications%2Fdocuments%2Fyourcommunitybuildingv1.pdf

WeSave: <http://www.wesave.org.uk/enter.php>

Green Electricity Marketplace: <http://www.greenelectricity.org/>

Centre for Alternative Technology simple tips for energy conservation:

<http://info.cat.org.uk/energy-conservation>

Energy Savings Trust Project support tool: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Project-Support/Project-support-tool>

Doing your bit: <http://www.doingyourbit.org/>

Appendix – Information about practical pledge actions

ACT ON CO2 Calculator <http://carboncalculator.direct.gov.uk/index.html>

Acknowledgements and credits



Edited by Dhara Thompson, Sostenga LLP
www.sostenga.org.uk



Design and illustration by Sarah Macbeth
www.sarahmacbeth.com



You are free:

To copy, distribute, display and perform the work
To make derivative works

Under the following conditions:

Attribution. You must give the original author credit. Non-commercial. You may not use this work for commercial purposes. Share alike. If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under a licence identical to this one. For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the licence terms of this work. Any of these conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copyright holder. Nothing in this licence impairs or restricts the author's moral rights. www.creativecommons.org

Greener Together – *the co-operative way* enables member organisations of Co-operativesUK, the Confederation of Co-operative Housing (CCH) and the Plunkett Foundation to work with their members and customers in achieving greener behaviour.

Greener Together – *the co-operative way* is part of the Greener Living Fund sponsored by Defra.

