

**Sustainable Living Suggestions v.11 Part A**  
**Arising from Climate Conversation Group Discussions**  
**Holy Trinity, Headington Quarry, Oxford, Aug 2021-March 2022**

Many thanks to everyone who attended and contributed to the following list. Please note that some items appear more than once under different headings.

**Categories:**

1. Food, Diet, Catering
2. Health, Hygiene and Beauty
3. Utilities: Water, Electricity, Gas, Heating
4. Domestic –Other
5. Clothing/ Fashion
6. Transport
7. Technology
8. Refuse/ Repair/Re-use/ Re-purpose/ Recycle/ Upcycle
9. Gardening/ Greening
10. Natural World/ Wildlife
11. Finance
12. Dilemmas
13. Awareness-raising

## 1. Food, Diet, and Catering

NB 75% of the food thrown away is good to eat. Cheap food comes at a heavy cost

If you pick a whole lettuce, or have a bought lettuce, don't throw away the outer leaves - cook them. Likewise, if a lettuce wilts, cook it

Cook the leaves surrounding a cauliflower

Wash, dry and re-use cling film and foil

If some products have arrived in a plastic bag, wash it and re-use it

Use the tiny plastic bags from Lateral Flow Tests to freeze left-over herbs (and herbs' stalks for soup and pesto-making)

Avoid at all costs products that come in individual sealed packets (biscuits, cheese etc.)

Next time you feel like a take-away, think of the waste they generate, or ask for cardboard containers

If you have a supply of (recycled) plastic cups, use them, rather than throwing them away /re-use items that are intended as single use e.g. plastic cups

Online grocery orders, started by some during lockdown, have encouraged menu planning, which has meant an amazing reduction in food waste

Use fruit and vegetable delivery companies (e.g. Riverford for organic; Oddbox for wonky items and items in excess supply; Abel and Cole)

Growing your own vegetables means that you tailor your meals to what you have in the garden

Bulk-buy local at the market

Buy at a re-fill station (aka Zero Waste Shop) re-using your own containers, e.g. biscuit tins/ the original cereal packet/ bottles

Plan meals, bulk cook and freeze, labelled, dated, and stating number of portions.

Think in new ways

Freeze left-overs in labelled packages stating date and number of portions

When your clip-fastening plastic food containers wear out, replace with glass-based ones (with a clip lid). The base can go in the microwave, oven and freezer; hence reduction in washing-up time, and consumption of hot water and detergent

Use a loofah for washing up

Spent fruit marmalade: when making marmalade, use the peel of recently-eaten citrus fruit instead of the whole fruit

Left-over vegetables are ideal for tortilla wraps, lasagne bakes, fried rice or frittatas

Left-over roasted vegetables are great for home-made soup

Use your freezer as your larder

Freeze cheese outsides, herbs and herb stems, eggs (whole egg beaten, or white and yolk separately), tomatoes (for use in casseroles), sauces (homemade or bought - when an amount remains and you'll not use it for a while); left-over milk (when going away); left-over wine - for use in sauces; crumbs from flapjack/ cake/ biscuits to sprinkle on ice cream/ fruit/ desserts

Use dried bread to make croutons

Blitz left-over bread or the heels of loaves to make bread crumbs (fry for a pasta topping/mix with Parmesan as a topping for macaroni cheese)

Consume less beef and dairy. Have a vegetarian day or a vegan day each week, or turn that on its head and have one meat day a week

Use plant milk and cream

Group home deliveries (e.g. Ocado's 'green deliveries' = deliveries to other homes in the same area)

Food waste: separate from landfill and from compost

After cracking open an egg, immediately peel off the shell's white membrane, wash the shell, and when dry add to your egg shell collection. Periodically grind/ bash the egg shells and add to your compost bin. Egg shell keeps slugs away and adds calcium to the soil

Take your own re-useable cup when having coffee out (in most cafés it is cheaper too)

Imported food travelling by ship and requiring no refrigeration (banana and citrus) has a much lower carbon footprint than air-freighted food needing careful packing (mangoes and avocados)

Avoid processed food that has required refrigeration in display cabinets

Check ingredients lists to avoid products with palm oil

Use aquafaba (the liquid that comes in tinned chickpeas etc) to make non-egg meringue-Ideal for vegan recipes

Make potato peel crisps/cavolo nero crisps

Think LOAF in your catering: Locally grown, Organic, Animal-friendly, Fair Trade

Boil only the amount of water you need, or boil more and fill a flask for use later in the day

When travelling take a flask of hot water, and your tea/coffee/ milk/ whitener in separate small containers. (You won't end up with unused made-up drinks at the end of the day)

Buy refillable environmentally-friendly washing-up liquid and dishwasher soap

## **2. Health, Hygiene and Beauty**

Buy or make block soap, shampoo and conditioner to reduce plastic consumption

Buy refillables, e.g. Refillable shampoo, conditioner and shower gel (take empties back to the store to be re-filled at e.g: Headington Fair Trade; Body Shop, Westgate)

Other sustainable suppliers include: Waitrose, Botley Rd; St Nicholas, Old Marston; Eco Benovo stall at the Saturday Market

Use reusable cotton pads that can be machine-washed, avoiding the need for single-use cotton pads (e.g. Body Shop)

Use In-store recycling of cosmetic packaging that can't be recycled at home. Some suppliers award points to incentivise this, e.g: John Lewis; Boots

Use the least possible loo roll. Some cultures use a tap.... Some prefer a flannel

Try tooth powder instead of tooth paste, in block form or tablets instead of in a tube (you can mix coconut oil into the powder form to make it go further - and taste better!)

Send away for eco refillable pouches for detergent, hand wash, shampoo etc.

Always cut open tubes of, e.g. tooth paste/ make-up/ hand cream to use what clings to the sides of the tube

Say 'No' to wipes for babies/ plant leaves/ cleansing/ fly repellent etc.: use liquid or cream insect repellent, sanitiser etc. Instead of baby wipes, use terry squares (make your own from former towels)

When plastic-nailbrushes and tooth brushes wear out, replace with wood or bamboo handled ones

Avoid cotton buds with plastic stems

Instead of a disposable plastic razor use a metal safety razor

Lockdown made make-up no longer seem necessary; so why bother now?

Check the contents label to avoid creams and lotions containing palm oil

Get equipped with washable nappies

When plastic shower curtains need replacing, install a glass screen

### **3. Utilities: Water, Electricity, Gas, Heating**

#### **a) Water**

Reduce water consumption: have a dual-system toilet, and tap and shower head aerators

Use a bucket to collect water from the shower while waiting for it to heat up. Use the water that you catch to flush the loo/ water the plants

When running the cold tap to get really cold drinking water, catch the initial flow of water for use on plants

Grey water: syphon bath water to water the garden, provided you've used no soap

Consider how often you really need to shower or bath. Instead of showers or baths, some people reduce water consumption by dry-brushing to exfoliate

Turn down water temperature (hot water =6% of all UK emissions)

Say 'no' to bottled water. Use re-usable water bottles instead. Fill them at home, or at a water-filling point

Wash clothes only when they need it, when you have a sizeable load, and at the lowest possible temperature

#### **b) Electricity**

Monitor consumption with a smart meter

Check that all your light bulbs are LED. If they aren't, invest in LED bulbs which use far less electricity - you soon re-coup the cost

Say 'No' to incandescent security lights. Investigate and install solar and LED ones

Minimise electricity use; turn off unnecessary lights and other appliances

Avoid Vampire Power (i. e. don't leave appliances on stand-by, e. g. TV)

Don't leave your phone or tooth brush on charge. It's bad for the battery to over-charge, and bad for your electricity consumption (even when the phone/ tooth brush has stopped charging)

If you don't have solar panels, think about installing them, plus a battery

If you have solar panels, try to use your appliances when generating, and put appliances on in sequence so as to use your own electricity to maximum effect

On a sunny/windy day cut electricity consumption by not using the spin before hanging clothes on the washing line

If you have a fan oven, work out the economics/ best relationship between the different modes and shelf positions

Don't pre-heat the oven longer than necessary; most ovens now don't need pre-heating - except for pastry

### **c) Gas**

NB Review boiler settings to heat the house according to your needs. Unless you have super-efficient insulation, it is a myth that having the boiler on all day reduces consumption

If you have a gas oven, use the microwave whenever you can

Monitor consumption with a smart meter

If you have a gas boiler, turn down water temperature (hot water = 6% of all UK emissions)

### **d) Heating**

Monitor consumption with a smart meter

Put on a sweater instead of turning up the temperature

Go for a walk to get the circulation going, and use less energy on heating

Lag the hot tank and exposed pipes

Have thick curtains to reduce heat loss; including over doors

Make sausage draft excluders

Hang foil sheets (even cooking foil) behind radiators on external walls

Check the mortar around waste pipes to see if gaps allow for heat loss

Heat the house where heat is most needed and keep doors shut

Consider double glazing/ under-floor insulation/ cavity wall insulation/ internal insulation/ external cladding. Over time the outlay is recouped

Check to see if cold air is entering via the cat flap

Check to see if the recommendations for attic insulation have changed since you installed your insulation

TRVs (thermostatic radiator valves) would help you adjust the heat according to the requirement in different rooms

When you turn off the oven, make use of the residual heat to warm the kitchen

#### **4. Domestic – Other: Laundry, Cleaning etc.**

When shopping for clothes, avoid artificial fabric that sheds fibres in washing/drying

Use a Guppy bag/ micro-fibre collecting bag if washing synthetic clothes

Wait till you have a full load

Use the lowest washing temperature for the fabric load

Dry your washing outside whenever possible

When not possible outside, dry your washing in the shower, over the bath or banisters, or by a window, always keeping windows open to reduce condensation

Avoid using a tumble drier

Dry washing on a clothes horse in front of the open oven door once cooking is finished

Buy re-fillable, environmentally-friendly cleaning products

Better still, make your own cleaning products (lemon juice, white wine vinegar; bicarbonate of soda)

#### **5. Clothing and Fashion**

Be a responsible consumer. The most sustainable clothes are the clothes you already own! The global fashion industry accounts for more carbon than aviation and shipping together

Buy less or NO fast fashion, avoiding clothes with a low price tag and high environmental cost. Polyester and other plastics will stay in landfill for hundreds of years

Say 'no' to clothes with glitter

Wear clothes made from natural fibres (preferably wool, silk or bamboo) or recycled materials (e.g. fleece from recycled milk bottles). Natural fibres will decompose at the end of their life

Don't buy new. Re-fashion/ re-purpose. Mend and repair clothes

Don't use disposable face masks – buy (and preferably make) washable ones

Recycle cashmere (to e.g. Turtle Doves)

Buy clothes from charity shops and pass on to others or to a Clothing Bank or Swap Shop

Dress Retro! Some second-hand shops or shops specialising in theatre costumes sell/ welcome vintage clothes

Check where clothes are made

Hire clothes for that special occasion

How many clothes do you really need? We are advised only to buy clothes that we'll wear at least 30 times. Less stuff, more joy!

## **6. Transport:**

Walk if you only need to go a short distance, or get on your bike! In urban areas both are often faster than driving. Both can be quicker than catching the bus, both avoid long cold waits at the bus stop, and get you fit!

Walk to e.g. church instead of driving, and you'll probably find yourself automatically walking to other places too

Cycling to church as a family is the ideal opportunity to teach cycling safety (when the roads are least busy)

Try giving up the car/ join a car club (e.g. Co-wheels

Do you REALLY need two cars? Try keeping one, and joining a car club for when a second car is needed.

Car share

Have prescriptions sent to a nearby pharmacy, rather than the one adjacent to the doctors' surgery, thereby making it easier to go on foot

Rather than take the car to collect a heavy/bulky item from a shop nearby, take your wheely case

If using a petrol or diesel car, drive more slowly to save fuel; driving at 60 mph instead of 70 saves 10% of fuel

Buy an electric car – if there's no appropriate public transport to a workplace or to visit a friend or family member this may be a practical option

Apply to the Council to be selected to have a charging point in the street in front of your house

Work from home, or opt for hybrid working

Take the train, not the plane

If you have to fly (e.g. to see family) keep it to minimum

In other situations, some suggest flying no more than once in 3 years

## 7. Technology

Widespread use of Zoom has brought savings of time and the need to travel to meetings/conferences and see friends and family during the pandemic

Continue to Zoom for meetings and for conferences, aware of the pros and cons: it avoids the time and pollution related to travel, at the expense of in-person meeting and networking. Explore the possibility of a hybrid approach to get the best of both worlds

Be aware of the energy consumed by computers and other technology, while acknowledging their efficiency

Gifts to schools of refurbished computers are not always the boon this might seem. Bulk purchase of Chrome Books would cost less, and staff management of pupils and their devices is far less demanding if all are using the same devices and systems. It's also easier for pupils to help one another if all have the same model.

Avoid Vampire Power by not leaving appliances such as the TV on stand-by

Likewise, don't leave phone-chargers and toothbrush chargers plugged in

Buy good quality electronics with a longer working life

Keep electronic items such as mobile phones for the duration of their working lives, resisting the industry's promotion of the latest model

Don't bin old models, give them to a charity instead

Use recyclable batteries

## 8. Refuse/ Repair/Re-use/ Re-purpose/ Recycle/ Not just the original three Rs!

Think before buying new items: do I really need it? Refuse it!

Fewer than 1 person in 10 attempts to repair broken items

Learn how to repair items: watch The Repair Shop (BBC 1 Wednesday 8.00 p.m.)

Repair Cafés, e.g. Gladstone Road Community Centre (tel 07792 49 13 50, or Rosehill, where experts mend non-functioning small electrical and household items for free (Donations welcome)

One person's junk is another person's treasure. De-clutter and pass on unwanted items through charity shops/Freegle/ Gumtree/ swap shops/ e-bay/ Orinoco (now in Templars Square, Cowley)

'If you are tidying out a drawer, cupboard, garage or attic, consider the following possibilities:

Gift to a friend or a raffle

Recycle ---> ---> charity shop

Repurpose ----> people who can use it, Freecycle etc  
Re-use ----> ----> useful!  
Re-organise----> for easier access and use  
Refurbish -- ----> mend and reuse  
Reminisce ----> -keepsake box  
Rubbish ----> ----> bin'

Similarly, buy second-hand/ on e-bay, from charity shops/ Freegle/ Gumtree/ hire for an occasion/

Re-purpose fabric: make laundry bags/ gift bags from old blouses, tee shirts, etc.

Use remnants of fabric/ clothes no longer worn to make face masks etc.

When replacing single-glazed windows re-use them as a cold frame - or post on Freegle, Next Door etc.

Re-use wrapping paper rather than throwing it away even if it is foil

Look out for recycled goods such as recycled paper; anoraks made of plastic bottles; EarthKind duvets; Sandquist backpacks etc.

Headington's London Rd Co-op, and the Co-op at Brookes (colonnade shop) recycle many items that cannot be recycled elsewhere

The Body Shop, John Lewis, Boots etc recycle beauty items that can't be recycled in the standard collections. Some award points

Cover plastic tubs and cartons in pretty paper and use as pencil pots, outer pots for plants etc.

Re-use for future purchases the mesh bags that some fruit and vegetables come in

Promote sharing: e.g. via Library of Things, or Next Door and What's App, remembering (II Corinthians 8 v.14)

Old blankets are appreciated by cat and dog rescue centres

Compile a list of people with know-how/ who can offer advice on services. Put it on a shared drive

Be prepared to scavenge: 'While out walking, we came upon some discarded timber. We took it home and it has come in very handy for a project'.

Take your own re-useable cup when having coffee out (avoids single-use cups and in most cafés it is cheaper too).

Listen to children - who now benefit from eco classes at school in a way that previous generations did not. They can be a source of information!

Use a public library instead of buying books. If buying, take to a charity shop once read

Be sure to take old spectacles and bras to Oxfam for use in developing countries

Make use of book boxes in train stations etc.

Use fabric bags. Bags for life are being phased out as too wasteful

Inevitably some things you buy will come in plastic bags. Wash them, dry them, keep them, and always have one or two in your bag or pocket (small for oddments, large for shopping or litter. You can guarantee they will come in handy!

Don't throw away the small plastic bags that come in Lateral Flow Test boxes- ideal for seeds or keeping left-over herbs in the freezer

Recycle toner cartridges

## **9..Gardening/ Greening**

Gardening: makes one more aware of the seasons and differences between years

Garden your way to a more plant-rich diet

Go in for bee-friendly planting

Grow herbs – they have loads of pollen, and some birds like them for lining their nests

Go in for No-mow May, and mow less all season as it's better for insects and birds

Create a pond to encourage wildlife. Make sure frogs etc can get in/out- a ramp?

Put up bird feeders in the winter months

Make sure birds have a bird bath, or water from a pond

Buy or make (Google for instructions) a bird box. It should face between N and N/E and be out of direct sunlight

Instal a swift box

Build a bug house

Build a bee hotel; it should face S or S/E

Don't pick the whole lettuce. Use just some leaves and the plant will re-grow

Pot up cuttings from tomato plants to increase your number of plants

Grow your own greenery (variegated?) in garden/ churchyard for home/ church flower arrangements.

Ban oasis in flower arrangements: use wire mesh/ a glass device to separate/ support stems

Avoid buying imported flowers

Put garden apples to good use: Abingdon Carbon Cutters has an apple juicing machine

Reduce hard surfaces; go for porous surfaces (gravel, bark etc.)

Get involved with community green space

Don't use a sprinkler! Use a triggered hose or watering can instead

Install water butts at home and at work

Why not install a living roof over a bike store or garden shed?

Be kind to hedgehogs: they like to roam, so create hedgehog holes in your garden fence

Build a leaf pile in a corner of the garden and/or dig a hibernating hole and fill it with leaves

If you have a Guy Fawkes bonfire (or a bonfire at any other time) be sure to check that no hedgehogs or any other wildlife are sheltering there

Nurture the natural environment (Genesis 2, v.15)

Feel the joy of watching seeds grow into plants

Re-use loo rolls for planting seeds, but don't over-water the loo rolls or they will collapse

Re-use fruit/ vegetable trays for planting e.g. mustard and cress/an indoor herb garden

If you have a balcony, try growing herbs/ bulbs, plants. For height, buy a trellis and plant a climber, such as honeysuckle. Hydrangeas need no trellis as they will cling to a wall

NB Before filling lots of pots for your balcony garden, check if there is maximum weight that your balcony can take!

Make your own compost; give it to a friend if you can't use it all

Buy peat-free compost

## **10. Natural World, Wildlife Awareness**

Take time to appreciate the natural world

Develop humility in the face of nature, as recognized during the pandemic

The pandemic has helped us reconnect or re-set our relationship with the natural world

Adopt a contemplative world view, seeing the world as sacred, and to be viewed with awe

Sacrament of the present moment/ Live for the moment ('The Naked Now')

Simplicity; children can play happily with pebbles/ climbing trees/ watching insects

Forest Church: appealing contact with Creation and Nature

The impossibility of foreign holidays alerted people to the attractions of playing in the garden/ the UK countryside, the joys of camping in the UK, etc.

Rewilding is a big thing. We can do that in our own gardens with wildflower areas

Walk for invigoration and re-balancing + awareness of Nature and changing seasons

Make charitable donations (with Gift Aid) to e.g. RSPB, National Trust, BBOWT

## **11. Finance**

Think where you are putting your money (Matthew 6 v.19-21): bank account, building society, pension fund, the companies whose products you buy; how ethical are they?

Give money where you think it will be needed/ spent wisely

Make charitable donations to national and international charities, remembering Gift Aid

Support Fair Trade and small businesses to help improve the lives of others

Buying better quality is often cheaper in the long run

## **12. Dilemmas:**

Consider whether any actions we take have a negative as well as a positive, while recognising that new ways of living inevitably bring change

Downside of home-working = job losses/ change for cleaners, catering staff etc.

Zoom: pros and cons (avoids travel, at the expense of networking)

People moving out of large cities for better quality of life v. death of the inner city

Saving carbon v. saving money

Growth v sustainability (why the eternal desire to achieve growth/ greater prosperity?)

Knowing what is best environmental practice at any time (it changes!)

\*It's a challenge for the average person to know which sources of energy are least carbon-producing

\*Beware: some large-scale schemes (e.g. boilers switching to hydrogen) increase the disparity between rich and poor

Public transport, good environmentally, but not good in a pandemic

Glittery Christmas cards and clothes, tinsel on the Christmas tree, and coloured foil wrapping paper may seem like seasonal fun, but their impact on the environment is not fun at all.

### **13. Awareness-raising and Campaigning**

Value of awareness-raising and campaigning to highlight issues:

Promote the use of personal Carbon Footprint Audits

Inform the Church of the England of sound practices you have adopted

Go to i-player to catch up on '39 Ways to Save the Planet' - programmes were broadcast on R4 at 1.45, and repeated. See:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000qwt3>

Go to: [52climatesolutions.com](https://www.52climatesolutions.com)

Watch The Repair Shop, BBC1, 8.00 p.m. on Wednesdays

Re-visit the Eco Resources List on HTHQ website

Share ideas/ articles/ discoveries about environmentally-sound products and practices

Write individually to councillors/ MPs/ Prime Minister/ companies/ the press on environmental issues.

Campaign with environmental groups at local/ national level, via local councillors and MPs on a range of issues: e.g.

- Incorporating eco measures into new housing by law

- Banning use of pesticides, polystyrene and clothes made of synthetic fabric that sheds particles when washed

- Banning wipes of all kinds (babies' wipes/ houseplant wipes/ spectacles wipes/ anti-insect wipes/ sanitiser wipes etc)

- Banning/ reducing supermarket plastic/ take-away plastic containers

- Economising on space in official documentation that requires printing

- Built-in obsolescence

- Investing in green energy

HR and JMcL 20/03/2022