

Issue 11: February 2022

In this issue:

- Our Residents are the best recyclers in England
- Prepare Your Home To Reduce the impact of Energy Price Hikes
- The Not So Cosy Truth About Domestic Fuel Burning
- Looking For Volunteers to Inspire Carbon Reduction Across the Community
- Workshops to Help Local Organisations Reduce Carbon Emissions
- Other News
- Enterprise Car Club now available

Our residents are the best recyclers in England!



St Albans City and District now recycles more waste than any other Local Authority area in England. The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' most recent figures show that our residents recycled 63% of their waste, in contrast to 42% which is the national average.

We are delighted with this news and would like to thank you all for caring for your environment, using the local recycling services and taking steps to reduce your overall waste.

We will continue to make improvements to our service over the coming years. We plan to explore how we can collect a wider range of materials, bring in low carbon waste and recycling vehicles and continue looking for ways to reduce waste from our services, buildings and events.

PREPARE YOUR HOME TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF ENERGY PRICE HIKES

With energy prices set to soar over the coming year, now is a good time to prepare your home to ensure there is no energy wastage. We outline some of the easy things you can do to make a difference.

Loft, Roof or Attic Insulation

25% of the heat in an uninsulated home is lost through the roof. By insulating your loft, attic or flat roof you can reduce heat loss so much that the savings pay for the measures many times over. For a typical semi-detached home, the energy savings of 27cm loft insulation amount to around £235 per year.

Cavity Wall Insulation

Over 1/3 of heat is lost through the walls. If your home was built 1920-1990 it is likely to have cavity walls which can be easily filled with insulation to keep your home warmer. For a typical semi-detached home, savings are £185 per year.

Solar Power

Solar panels capture light and turn it into electricity for you to use straight away (in the daytime) or store and use when you need it (with batteries). You can even send electricity you don't need back to the grid and receive payment for it. If you are at home all day you could save around £385 per year. Payback can be achieved within around 16 years at current electricity prices. Since a panel will continue working for around 25 years, they will generate income for you over their lifetime.

Draught-Proofing

- Chimney: Insert a chimney balloon or old cushions to keep the heat in.
- Windows: Use foam strips or metal or plastic brushes.
- External Doors: Fit key-hole and letter-box covers and strips around the edges to keep the cold air out.
- Internal Doors: Insulate doors leading to rooms you don't often use with brush strips or make a draught-excluder using old tights/textiles.
- Pipework: Gaps around old pipework can be filled with silicone filler or expanding polyurethane foam.

On average, draught-proofing windows, doors and chimney saves £60 per year.

There may be grants to help you. See:
www.stalbans.gov.uk/energy-efficiency

For advice and to find registered installers, see:

- [Energy Saving Trust](#)
- [National Insulation Association \(NIA\)](#)
- [Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency \(CIGA\)](#)

Ref: Cost savings taken from Energy Saving Trust and Which?



THE NOT SO COSY TRUTH ABOUT DOMESTIC FUEL BURNING

Open fires and wood burning stoves have risen in popularity in recent years. They provide an atmosphere of warmth and coziness to a home as well as an attractive focal feature. But it might surprise you to learn that domestic fires (indoor and outdoor) are also the number one source of particulate pollution and that this can be harmful to health.

When burning wood, pellets, briquettes or coal, very fine particles are produced into the air which are invisible to the naked eye. These very fine particles can get very deep into the lungs and are able to cross into the bloodstream, causing health problems over time. Fine particulate matter pollution is associated with decreased lung development and function, exacerbation of asthma, allergies, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, pulmonary fibrosis and an increased risk of lung cancer. It is also linked with increased morbidity and mortality.

[Studies](#) suggest that particulate matter pollution from open fires, wood burning stoves and domestic bonfires is actually higher than that produced from diesel vehicles.

From January 2022, only Ecodesign wood burning stoves will be sold in the UK. The [Stove Industry Alliance](#) states

that these stoves produce just 2.7% of the particulate matter produced from open fires, and 80% less than older more inefficient stoves.

What can you do?

- Avoid bonfires and instead take waste to the local Household Waste and Recycling Centre, have it collected, or compost biodegradable waste at home.
- If you have a wood burning stove, use kiln dry wood because this produces the least smoke and pollution compared to other fuels.
- Consider why you are lighting a fire and if it is really necessary.
- Never burn treated wood, rubbish pallets or fence panels as these will contain chemicals which will be released into the air and then your lungs.
- Sweep your chimney so that smoke can escape easily.



LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO INSPIRE CARBON REDUCTION ACROSS THE DISTRICT

Sustainable St Albans, a local environmental charity, is recruiting Climate Champion volunteers who are passionate about inspiring the community to take action on Climate Change in their community and reducing their carbon footprints.

A team of Climate Champions are being recruited from across the community, and from all walks of life, to go out and talk to residents and help the District reach net zero by 2030.

They will be on stalls and at markets and other events throughout the year. They will be visiting groups as speakers

Would your organisation or business like a Climate Champion to come and speak at a staff meeting or group meeting?

If you are a community group, a local business, a staff team or an individual and would like to talk to someone about taking action locally on Climate Change and being active in the drive for St Albans to reach net zero by 2030, Sustainable St Albans would be happy to send someone to come and talk to you and your group or business.

helping to raise awareness about the climate emergency, practical action that can make a big difference and how local people can join a network of groups working to reduce the District's greenhouse gas emissions.

Would you like to volunteer to help teach others about climate change and sustainable lifestyle?

Sustainable St Albans would love to hear from you! Feel free to spread the word and promote this opportunity in your community. It is a great way to gain experience and can even add value to your CV!



To become a Climate Champion or request a talk, please contact

info@sustainablestalbans.org

WORKSHOPS AVAILABLE TO HELP LOCAL ORGANISATIONS REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS

Do you run a local business or community organisation and have been wondering what reaching net zero might mean for you?

In order for us to reduce our emissions and prevent the worst impacts of climate change, we need everyone in the community to play their part.

Sustainable St Albans, a local environmental charity, will be running workshops during 2022 which will increase your understanding of how your organisation can take action on climate change and help you work through the steps to create a plan to reduce your

organisation or company carbon footprint.

Workshops will be delivered in 3 bite-sized 1.5 hour sessions via Zoom. All sessions will need to be attended.

Not sure if this workshop is for you? To attend a 30 minute information session on 16th of March register [here](#), email info@sustainablestalbans.org

Workshop dates for 2022 will be set after the information sessions and are currently free to businesses and groups based in the district.

WANT TO KNOW HOW YOUR GROUP CAN TAKE CLIMATE ACTION?

CARBON REDUCTION WORKSHOPS

Create an
action plan



Cut your carbon
footprint

Help St Albans
reach Net Zero?



SIGN UP TODAY



Charity number 1173118

OTHER NEWS

Herts Sustainability Fund

Do you have ideas for projects to create positive change in your community? There is help available!

Herts County Council will make available up to £5,000 to match-fund community projects to become carbon neutral and tackle climate change.

If you are a voluntary or not-for profit organisation that meets the criteria, we encourage you to apply. Further information is available [here](#).

St Albans Solar Streets: Generate clean energy at home

St Albans City & District Council has supported the Solar Streets scheme since August 2020, as a way of helping the City get to its net zero target.

The scheme offers residents the opportunity to save on the purchase costs of Solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels through bulk purchase agreements. Each purchase also generates income for the Community Renewable Fund.

So far there have been 24 solar panel systems installed generating 75 MWh of clean, carbon neutral energy and saving around £25,000 vs.

the cost of panels obtained by individual quotation.

While solar photovoltaic panel prices have risen recently, the price of electricity has also risen. This means that the return on investment in Solar PV systems is actually higher in 2022 than any time in the last 3 years.

To find out more about St Albans Solar Streets, see www.solarstreets.co.uk/stalbans or join the online Q&A event during Sustainability Festival on 17th May 2022 at 19:30. Visit www.sustfest.org for further details in April.



Hertfordshire Energy Saving App

The Hertfordshire Councils have partnered with the Energy Saving Trust to provide an energy efficiency app to help residents make energy savings.

The Hertfordshire Energy Advice Tool (HEAT) gives a virtual tour around a typical home and gives advice on quick, easy and low or no

cost actions to help you save money and energy.

Once the tour is complete, a tailored advice report can be emailed to you providing a summary of the potential energy savings. The average savings are estimated to be around £70 a year.

43% of the District's

emissions come from domestic energy use. If we all take small steps to be more efficient at home we can all help to do our part to tackle the climate emergency.

The HEAT app is free to download and is available on [Google Play](#) or [Apple App Store](#).

Warmworks Green Homes Grant

The Green Homes Grant scheme is a new UK Government funded initiative to make energy-saving improvements to people's homes. The scheme aims to reduce household bills, make homes warmer and lower carbon emissions.

In St Albans, Warmworks manages the grant and delivers a scheme on behalf of the District Council.

Eligible households will be surveyed and offered a package of improvements that might include any of the following measures:

- Wall insulation
- Loft insulation
- Air source, ground source or hybrid heat pumps
- Biomass boiler
- Double/triple glazing to replace single glazing
- Energy efficient doors
- Thermostats and heating controls
- Hot water tank insulation

To find out if you qualify, and apply for a survey, call 0808 196 8255, or visit: www.warmworks.co.uk/greenhomesgrant

St Albans Warmer Homes

St Albans Warmer Homes scheme also provides support for energy efficiency.

This scheme, which is managed by YES Energy, offers support for measures such as insulation and boiler repair or replacement.

We recommend that households apply to both this and the Warmworks scheme as eligibility criteria differ. For more information, visit:

www.yesenergysolutions.co.uk/schemes/st-albans-warmer-homes

Enterprise car club now available!

Enterprise Car Club now provides two Toyota Yaris hybrid cars which are available for registered users to borrow on a pay-per-hour basis.

These cars provide a handy alternative to car ownership allowing people to book them in advance, or on-the-go, either online or via the app.

Within a few weeks these cars will be replaced with 100% electric vehicles.

This is a one year trial and our hope is that the service will be well utilised so we can introduce more car club vehicles across the District. Please do make use of the vehicles!

St Albans residents can benefit from discounted membership to the car club.

Sign up using this link www.enterpriseclub.co.uk/STALBANS and enter promo code 'STALBANS' to get membership for £10 (usually £60/yr) and receive £10 FREE driving credit credit valid for 90 days*. Offer valid until 31/12/2022.



This newsletter contains information about living more sustainably and is brought to you by the Sustainability Projects Officer at St Albans City and District Council. The information provided is not an endorsement of any of the products, sources of information or organisations mentioned.

For inquiries or comments, please contact sustainability@stalbans.gov.uk.