

# Sustainability Newsletter

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## 5 Ways to Make Christmas Greener



1. Avoid sparkly, shiny or metallic wrapping paper as it cannot be recycled. Stick to plain matt paper and cards to reduce waste and materials. You could go one step further by decorating old newspaper for wrapping, or make or use reusable gift bags.

2. Use a natural tree that can be replanted after use and stay with the family year after year.

3. Send ecards with messages of love to reduce the use of trees, paper, transport emissions, dyes, time and money.

4. Be creative and use old fabrics, newspaper and card to make Christmas decorations, bags, gift tags and tree decorations.

5. Give gifts which will be useful, support the local economy and have a long life. We've a few ideas for you on the next page.





# GREENER GIFT IDEAS

Being more sustainable sometimes involves extra cost but often it just requires a little extra thought. We've come up with some low cost, practical Christmas gift ideas to help your loved ones lead a greener lifestyle. Giving greener gifts also provides an ideal opportunity to lead by example and demonstrate how they can reduce their impacts on the world. We learn most from our peers and loved ones.

1. Support local businesses and make your loved ones feel good by giving a voucher for a massage, a facial, a course or a personal training session. (£15+)

2. An energy saving timer plug socket allows electrical items to be switched on only when they are needed, saving energy and money. (£8-20)

3. Wooden or bamboo portable cutlery so they can always say no to plastic disposables when away from home. (£5-15)

4. Portable water bottle with inbuilt filter. This will help them reduce plastic and enjoy chlorine free tap water on the go.

5. Beeswax wrap. This reusable natural product can be used to cover all sorts of products so there is less need to use foil or clingfilm. (£8-20)

6. An eco laundry egg is a detergent-free way to keep clothes clean. Help your loved ones save money and reduce their exposure to chemicals. (£10-20)

7. Get kids making things out of old materials. We like this bead-making kit that makes use of old paper. (£6)

8. Extension lead with individual switches so that no appliances need to get left on standby. (£8-£40)

9. Reduce exposure to chemicals in normal cosmetics by buying organic, plant-based toiletries and cosmetics. There are lots of beautiful gift sets available. (>£10)

10. For a more luxurious gift why not invest in some designer kitchen recycling bins. (£60+)

If you need to deliver your gifts, consider wrapping up warm and walking, rather than going by car, where possible.

**Already have a gift in mind for someone? Choose a recycled version, like this bag made from recycled bottles.**



# UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE

We have been hearing about climate change in the media for decades now. It's easy to feel confused by all the different terms being used such as greenhouse effect, greenhouse gases, carbon, carbon dioxide and global warming. Here is a simple summary of what climate change is and what these terms actually mean.

## Greenhouse Gases

Certain gases are referred to as greenhouse gases because they trap heat in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases include water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone and fluorinated gases.

These gases accumulate in the atmosphere as a result of natural processes such as respiration, fires, volcanoes and decomposition. But by far the largest contribution to the atmosphere is from the burning of fossil fuels (like oil, coal, petrol, diesel and wood), cattle farming and deforestation.



## Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)

CO<sub>2</sub> is the main greenhouse gas we hear about because it is the most abundant greenhouse gas in the atmosphere (except water vapour). Carbon Dioxide is also referred to as **carbon** or **carbon emissions** for short.

## Greenhouse Effect

The greenhouse effect is a natural process whereby the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere trap the sun's energy and keep the Earth warm. Because humans have been releasing far higher concentrations of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere since the industrial revolution, additional heat is being absorbed and the Earth's average surface temperature is rising.

## Global Warming

The term global warming refers to the increased warming effect on the Earth as a result of human activities.

## Climate Change

Climate change is the long term, large scale shift in the Earth's climate systems and average temperatures. When we talk about current climate changes we are referring to the changes that are occurring to the Earth's weather and systems (e.g. temperature and rainfall patterns) but also changes in systems such as sea ice, glaciers and sea levels.



# News Bites

## St Albans New Museum and Gallery wins Building Futures award

St Albans City and District Council were delighted to win the Building Futures Retrofit for the Future Award.

Retrofitting the 19th century building with modern sustainable and energy saving elements was recognised to be a challenging task. The new building now benefits from environmentally-controlled basement gallery, glazed first floor links, underfloor heating, LED lighting throughout and the sensitive addition of secondary glazing.

## St Albans new cycling and walking Green Ring is now OPEN!

The Green ring, a continuous 6.5 mile cycling and walking route around the City, is officially open.

The ring extends from Townsend in the north to Fleetville in the east, Sopwell in the south and the Verulam Estate to the west. The ring connects green spaces, beauty spots and heritage sites as well as schools, workplaces, leisure facilities and residential areas.

The District cycle map is currently being updated and will be circulated in spring 2019.



## First Refill St Albans water fountain is installed

A new water bottle refill point has been installed outside the District Council Offices in St Albans. The fountain provides free filtered drinking water thereby reducing the need for people to buy bottled water.

# Visit our food waste composting plant

You are invited to come along to the Agrivert Anaerobic Digestion Facility in London Colney to see how your food waste is processed once it's collected from your home.

We are holding a number of tours in 2019 and this provides a great opportunity to ask questions about recycling in general and see for yourself how your food is turned into compost.

## 2019 Agrivert Tour Dates

- Wed 20th March - 10.30am
- Wed 22nd May - 10.30am and 1.30pm
- Tues 4th June - 10.30am and 1.30pm
- Wed 17th July - 10.30am
- Wed 25th September - 10.30am

Places are free but must be booked in advance. For more information go to <https://agrivert-tour.eventbrite.co.uk>