

Eco Chat

Elizabeth Otty

Lets talk toilets or more specifically loo rolls!

Loo rolls are important to us – you'll remember the panic buying of last year – but did you know that the average adult in the UK gets though 127 rolls of loo paper every year which adds up to 1.3 million tonnes of tissue.

And did you also know that most of this comes from wood pulp – trees are cut down to make it. Some of this wood will come from areas of sustainable forest management where a new tree is planted for each one that is felled. But not all producers do this, so the first thing you should do when you buy your toilet paper is to look for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo on the pack.

But could you do better by buying loo rolls made from recycled paper? So much better than using virgin wood but sadly some processes use chemicals to bleach the paper and, like the ordinary loo paper, they are often packed in plastic bags. Look for them online or in your supermarket.

Then, there is bamboo toilet paper. Sounds strange doesn't it but bamboo is an extremely renewable resource that grows 20 times faster than trees and it is also soft and strong which makes it the ideal material for toilet paper. However it must be shipped thousands of miles across the ocean before it reaches our homes and unlike FSC wood, bamboo

supply chains can lack rigorous monitoring and plantations are sometimes grown in recently defrosted land. It is also more expensive than other types of paper.

So, you must decide what you use, but remember every time we flush we make an impact on our environment.

The Earth is the Lord's and everything that is in it.

All Hallows and Saint Mary Magdalene are Eco Churches working towards the Church of England pledge to be Zero Carbon by 2030.

The Bible tells us that the 'Earth is the Lord's and everything that is in it' (Psalm 24, verse 1). So, as Christians we remember this as we aim to play our part in the safeguarding and sustaining of the life of our world.

See our website for more;

www.bardseyekparish.com



Eco Chat

Elizabeth Otty

One for kids (and grown-ups as well!)

Our world is full of insects, or you may call them bugs, but their numbers are falling due to many things but mostly loss of places for them to live and the use of chemicals in our gardens or fields. Does this matter? Yes it does and here's why.

See all of those lovely bright coloured flowers out there? Do you enjoy eating fruits and veggies? Well, bugs have a lot to do with all of that. Bees and other insects do amazing work spreading pollen. Without them, many plants wouldn't reproduce and bear fruit.

With all of the work that goes into producing food, it's hard to believe that about a third of it ends up as waste. Bugs, especially worms, eat piles of rotting organic waste and leave behind compost that is full of nutrients and will help other plants grow so we can have gardens full of healthy veggies and beautiful flowers.

Yes there are bad bugs but the good bugs



kill them. Ladybirds, for instance, are fantastic garden helpers. They eat the green fly that would hurt your plants.

And perhaps most importantly, bugs are the main food source of many small birds and animals. Without them many would die.

Bugs are so helpful that you might want to make your own bug hotel to give them a place to live – we have one in the churchyard at All Hallows. You can get lots of ideas for your own from the Internet. Also, during the summer holiday why not celebrate bugs life by doing some bug crafts? Then take a photo of what you have made and send it into us. See the ladybird painted on stone I found in the garden and a hungry caterpillar that I made from recycled cardboard.

Hope you have fun with this and remember don't forget how important bugs are!

All Hallows and Saint Mary Magdalene are Eco Churches, working to become carbon net zero by 2030

Visit our website to learn more
www.bardseyekparish.com

Eco Chat

Elizabeth Otty

Making your money count!

We all know that it's important we manage our money well and, in this time of climate crisis, it's important that when we spend our money we do it as sustainably and ethically as possible, for example:

Has that new tee shirt you are buying been made in a Far East sweatshop?

Has your new washing machine got an 'A' rating for performance economy?

Have the vegetables you are eating tonight been grown locally?

We make these choices every day but, when it comes to your bank do you know how your money is managed and especially is it invested in oil, coal and gas industries? Finding out could seem quite a daunting subject, but there are a number of helpful on line links.

First you could check your current bank on <https://bank.green> and then you could look to see how it compares with those banks, which promote their 'green' credentials such as the Cooperative Bank or Tridos Bank – you may be surprised!

But could you change your bank? Most of us will have been using the same bank for many years so it may be difficult to change and many of us still prefer a high street presence to carry out transactions but others may be happy to move to an online 'green' bank.

And when it comes to your pension fund, once more do you know where your money is invested? Many pension funds do now actively advertise their commitment to moving to carbon net-zero investments such as Aviva, Legal & General, Scottish Widows and Standard Life, but according to the Pensions and Savings Association only 22% of pension holders know the types of companies their pension is invested in.

You can learn more about pension investments at:

www.which.co.uk/news/2021/03/how-your-pension-can-save-the-planet

Whatever you do it is important for the future of our climate that you know how your money is managed and, if possible, take some steps to move to more greener, cleaner and ethical investments?

All Hallows and Saint Mary Magdalene are Eco churches, working to become Carbon Net Zero by 2030. Visit our website to learn more.



Eco Chat

Sara Redmayne

Our wildlife needs you!

For many of us at home during lockdown, escaping into nature never felt more needed. Our connection to nature is irreplaceable. We must nurture and protect it - without our natural world, we are lost. Yet nature is in crisis and our Yorkshire wild places and wildlife need our local support.

Many of our farmers and the East Keswick Wildlife Trust work hard to welcome more wildlife moving between protected areas, and thankfully those protected areas continue to build a sustainable future for our nature. But there's a missing piece - **your** piece!

Make room for wildlife and feel the benefits! Most of us connect with nature, often close to home, and our gardens can do a vital job in protecting our nature. And wildlife-friendly gardening is about making a haven for you, as well as for wildlife! Essentials for success are based on four things - trees, deadwood, water and a variety of planting. Any of these features will encourage wildlife to your garden. And a small space is not a barrier to gardening for wildlife; small changes can have a real impact.

For example:

Many plants can grow on walls, roofs and in cracks and crevices. Spiders and solitary bees like nooks and crannies; rockeries, dead wood and stone walls will shelter many creatures.

Plant a window box or container with butterfly nectar plants such as lavender,

marjoram, buddleia, thyme - or night-scented stocks and tobacco plants for moths.

Make a small gravel garden planted with nectar-providing perennials such as scabious, primrose, aubretia, Michaelmas daisies; or plant in spaces in a paved area.



Nettles are the food plant of the caterpillars of some beautiful butterflies: red admiral, peacock, small tortoiseshell and comma. Butterflies prefer not to lay their eggs in the shade, so choose a sunny spot for your nettles to grow.

A pile of logs in a shady corner will feed beetle larvae and shelter animals such as frogs, toads and slow worms. Hedgehogs often hibernate in wood piles (check first for sleeping hedgehogs before having a bonfire).

Even the smallest of 'ponds' are valuable - old sinks and buckets can teem with wildlife. Water is vitally important to wildlife, so if you have a bird bath or pond, keep it topped up, refreshed and ice-free.

Keeping nature and people connected

Together our Bardsey and East Keswick gardens are a living landscape and the way we care for them and connect with our neighbours' gardens can make a big difference to our local wildlife as well as to us.

Imagine if every garden had a pond and a tree or shrub. Add a small highway between gardens - replacing a section of fencing with shrubs or hedge creates a safe highway that can be full of seeds, berries and used for nesting. With the right plants and getting together with your neighbours, our gardens become a vital, rich habitat that act as a miniature nature reserve.

Birds and wildlife can move through our residential habitats, to find sanctuary and sustenance; and onto the churchyards, local green areas, fields, woods, river, and Wildlife Trust Reserves beyond. Enjoy watching wildlife use their new routes in and out of your garden, knowing that many more creatures are doing the same

at night. Keep a nature diary and share your sightings with neighbours, friends and family and let us know how you get on!

There's a wealth of online information and guides to help you, including:

www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk

www.wildlifetrusts.org.uk

www.rspb.org.uk, www.rhs.org.uk

You can also discover and become actively involved in our East Keswick Wildlife Trust nature reserves to protect our wildlife, make new friends and find calm in our outdoor environment. Check ekwt.org.uk for further information.

Working together, people can change the natural world for the better. This is the future that both nature and we need.

Please know that you are a key player in restoring and improving the fragmentation of natural habitat and reversing the loss of biodiversity.

Thank you.



Christmas Eco Chat

Elizabeth Otty



What are your plans?

- * When it comes to a tree real ones have a much lower carbon footprint than artificial ones, especially if disposed of by wood-chipping. An artificial tree would need to be reused for ten years to be comparable. And things would be even better if your real tree could be grown in a pot and used again next year.
- * When shopping for Christmas dinner take care what you put in your trolley. In the UK our food spend increases by 16% in December, so make sure you don't over cater and that all those extras are not going to end up in the bin. Try to buy as much locally produced and in season food as you can and always think about air miles – those Californian strawberries may look nice but do you really need them
- * Be creative in the gifts you buy; make sure your desire to bring joy is not damaging the environment. Has that beautiful shawl been made in a sweatshop in the Far East or does your favourite little one really need yet another plastic toy? And when it comes to wrapping, remember recycled paper can be just as attractive as expensive foils.
- * If you send cards make sure they are printed on environmentally sourced paper and can be recycled – so no glitter.

- * And if you receive cards don't forget to cut off the stamps (leave a 1 cm boarder if possible) and bring them to our recycle hub in All Hallows Church.

And after Christmas is over...

Please recycle as much as you can and don't waste unwanted presents. Find new homes for them through a charity shop or on eBay.

And finally as we approach 2022 think about how you can plan for a greener and more sustainable lifestyle when you make your New Year's Resolutions. A great first step is to calculate your carbon footprint for 2021, at www.climatestewards.org and then see if you can reduce it in 2022.

Let us know how you get on!

Happy eco Christmas
to all our readers from the
eco team at All Hallows
and Saint Mary
Magdalene

Eco Chat

Elizabeth Otty

Fast Fashion

Did you see the recent pictures on social media of at least 39,000 tonnes of discarded 'fast fashion' garments dumped in Chile's Atacama Desert, the driest desert in the world? What made this even worse was that some of the clothes were obviously new, still with their price tags on and showing that they came from one of our well-known UK high street chains.

It used to be that we had fewer clothes, paid more for them, valued them, looked after them and they lasted longer. Now cheaper fast fashion means that we might wear our clothes for a very short time then throw them away, or in the case of shops with unsold stock, sent to landfill. This not good for God's planet and certainly not good for the Atacama Desert!

The manufacture of most of our fast fashions today use an extraordinary amount of raw materials, such as power, water, pesticides and plastic and the

demand for fast fashion puts pressure on manufacturers to make more goods as cheaply as possible, often in factories in third world countries where women workers are exploited.

So what can we do about it?

- Take care of your clothes and keep them longer.
- When buying new look for clothes made from organic cotton or natural wool.
- Try to avoid 'synthetic' products.
- Try to buy from ethical clothing companies – look for the Fairtrade label.
- When you have finished with your clothes recycle at your local charity shop and maybe buy something in return!

With thanks to *Planet Protectors* written by Paul Kerensa and Ruth Valerio.

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Eco Chat: What's the Buzz About Bees

Elizabeth Otty

Did you know that World Bee Day is on 20 May? And did you know that a third of the world's food production depends on bees?

Bees are important in our ecosystem as they are vital to the process of crop growing with 75% of the things we like to eat, such as apples and tomatoes and strawberries, being pollinated by bees. To put it simply, bees are essential for maintaining the environmental balance between humans, plants, and animals. If it wasn't for bees the whole balance of nature would be in peril however climate change is now putting their numbers in jeopardy.



There are many types of bees. All of them like flowers but whilst some bees are particular about the flowers they visit, others don't mind, and while some are active only in the warmer months, others, especially now we are experiencing milder winters, stay active for much longer periods. Sadly almost all our flower-rich meadows have been lost but Britain has around 16 million gardens, all of

which could provide a haven for bees all year round.

So here's how you can be kind to bees and make your garden bee friendly.

- ♥ Plant bee-friendly plants like daisies and red clover and when buying seeds look for packets that are marked 'bee friendly'.
- ♥ Leave sections of your garden wild - letting the grass grow long gives the bees a place to shelter.
- ♥ Leave a small dish with a few pebbles and water to help out thirsty bees.
- ♥ Try to reduce or completely cut out the usage of pesticides as they're harmful to bees.
- ♥ Get to know more about beekeeping and support local beekeepers by buying their honey and other hive products.

Inspire and educate your children about the importance of bees. That's the best way to help protect these wonderful creatures.

Together let's make Bardsey and East Keswick bee friendly villages.

Climate Sunday

This year, we're celebrating Climate Sunday on Sunday 21 May. As part of our worship, we'll be thinking about our response to the environment, and listening to our guest speaker, Rev Dr Jan Goodair, who is the Area Environment Champion for the Leeds Episcopal Area.

We take environmental matters very seriously. Having achieved A Rocha Eco bronze and silver status in both churches, we are currently working towards gold. For more information about Climate Sunday, please contact the Parish Office.

Eco Chat: The Cost of Litter

Elizabeth Otty

Litter seems to be everywhere, in our towns and countryside, on our beaches and in our rivers, in fact more than two million pieces of litter are dropped in the UK every day. Other amazing facts are that almost 48% of people admit to dropping litter, whilst a third of motorists have thrown litter out of their cars while they have been driving.

The amount of litter dropped each year in the UK has risen by 500% since the 1960s as we have become a more throwaway society. Some research shows that the commonest type of litter has been smoking related, though now, from local experience, this has been overtaken by items of food packaging and drinks containers as we increasingly eat on the move.

Cleaning up litter from our streets costs taxpayers around £500 million a year and this does not include the amount it

costs to clean parks, water ways and other public spaces. We all have to pay for this through our taxes!

And there are many indirect costs to littering and these 'invisible' costs of litter can affect us all. Research shows that people who live on littered streets can expect to see their house price take a hit and there are links between litter, increased crime rates and even mental illness. Discarded cigarettes or disposable barbecues have also caused extensive wildfires destroying, homes, acres of peat lands and forests and the birds, animals and insects that live there. A tremendous cost to the environment and biodiversity.

In a street already strewn with litter many people don't see the harm in adding a little bit more so if an area's clean already it helps if residents stay vigilant and keep it that way. Just one piece of litter is the thin edge of the wedge – which is why prevention is key.

So please take your litter home with you and a big thank you to all our local committed litter pickers who do their best to keep Bardsey and East Keswick litter free.



Harvest Mice Hunt at Keswick Fitts

East Keswick Wildlife Trust will be laying humane traps in the Fitts Fields to survey small mammals that are living there.

Saturday 29 October

We will be meeting at the Fitts Lane

footpath entrance on the A659 Harewood Road, opposite the end of Cleavesty Lane at 4.30pm, to put down 50 humane large Longworth traps.

Sunday 30 October

Meet at the same place at 9.30am to open the traps and record the weight and sex of the small mammals. This will hopefully include harvest mice.

Everyone is welcome to join us on either or both days. For more information ring **01937 574140** or **www.ekwt.org.uk**

Eco Chat: Recycling

Elizabeth Otty

We probably think we all know what types of things we can recycle, and where we can recycle them, but did you know that you can recycle old jewellery and, in the process, help to raise funds for the Alzheimer's Society – the UK's leading support and research charity for people with dementia, their families and carers.

The society welcomes **jewellery of any kind** - whether it's an **odd cufflink or earring**, or a broken **bracelet or necklace** that you no longer wear. They will also take **watches**, working or not! So look in all your old jewellery boxes and drawers and see what you can find.

Donating couldn't be simpler, just request a free jiffy bag via:

www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/make-donation/recycling

Then put your jewellery in the bag along with your name and contact details and then post the bag using the freepost

address. Your support will help the Society with their vital caring services and their research to help people live well with dementia today, and to provide a cure for tomorrow.

And don't forget you can also still recycle the following via our recycle hub in All Hallows church:

- Used batteries – domestic style only
- Empty crisp packets
- Used inkjet cartridges – sorry no laser toners
- Stamps
- Empty toothpaste tubes

All Hallows and St Mary Magdalene are 'A Rocha Silver Eco' churches, playing our part in addressing the climate change crisis. Thank you for helping us!



Eco Chat: Have a Sustainable Christmas

Elizabeth Otty



Make this year your most eco-friendly sustainable Christmas yet. We are all aware of just how important it is to make every effort to have a sustainable lifestyle and for many of us that starts at home. Small changes can make all the difference in reducing our environmental footprint, especially over Christmas when the potential for waste, over consumption and mass shopping is high. With this in mind, here are three simple ways to have an eco-friendly Christmas.

YOUR TREE

Real Christmas trees are much more sustainable than artificial alternatives. In fact, one study concluded you'd have to reuse your fake fir for 20 years, for it to be greener. Therefore if you have a fake tree you should continue to use it but if you buy a real tree this year, ensure it's been grown as locally as possible: look out for the 'Grown in Britain' label or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) 'seal of approval', both of which guarantee your tree has been grown to a set of environmental standards.

After Christmas seven million real trees will be thrown away rather than recycled. Please don't dump yours afterwards, instead go to recyclenow.com to find out about drop-off points in your area, where your old tree will be recycled into chippings for local parks and woodland areas. Last year St Gemma's Hospice was offering a tree collection service – check

with them later in the year so see if they will be doing this again.

WRAPPING PRESENTS

It's great to hear from rubbish clearance specialist that more than half of us recycle last year's wrapping paper but if you do buy new you may not know that many rolls contain non-recyclable elements, like foil, glitter or plastic. If you want to know if your wrapping paper can be recycled use the scrunch test. Scrunch up the paper in your hand and then let it go. If the paper stays scrunched up then it can be recycled but, if it unfolds by its own accord, then it likely contains non-recyclable elements. If this is the case save it and use it again next year.

SENDING CARDS

Apparently a quarter of us no longer write Christmas cards but if you do there is a way to send your season's greetings without costing the planet. Always look for cards with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) mark. This guarantees the paper has been produced sustainably and ethically. Many of our local charity shops are a great place to pick up a sustainable pack, so you will be buying an eco-card and helping the charity as well. And after Christmas always put your cards in your recycle bin or use in other ways, for example for shopping lists or even turn them into decorations for next year.

Have a happy and sustainable Christmas.

Eco Chat: Going Net Zero

As 2023 comes to a close we can look back on a year which saw an ever increasing number of severe 'climate events', from vicious storms and floods to droughts and wildfires. On about a third of days in 2023, the average global temperature was at least 1.5°C higher than pre-industrial levels. Scientists believe staying below 1.5°C long-term is crucial, if we are to avoid the most damaging impacts of climate change. However 2023 is on track to be the hottest year on record, and 2024 could be even hotter.

These climatic changes are already having a devastating impact around the world, and there has never been a more urgent need for us all to live more sustainably and achieve 'net zero carbon' emissions. That means balancing or offsetting those emissions we can't avoid, with actions that absorb carbon from the atmosphere, such as tree planting and peatland restoration, or by providing financial support for schemes which help others to reduce their emissions.

Whilst some degree of offsetting will be required, minimising our emissions must be a priority. There are three primary contributors to carbon emissions in this country; the energy used in our homes and buildings, travel, and the goods and services that we buy (stuff!).

Whilst we as individuals must take ownership for our own emissions we also need action from corporate bodies, such as governments, businesses and institutions.

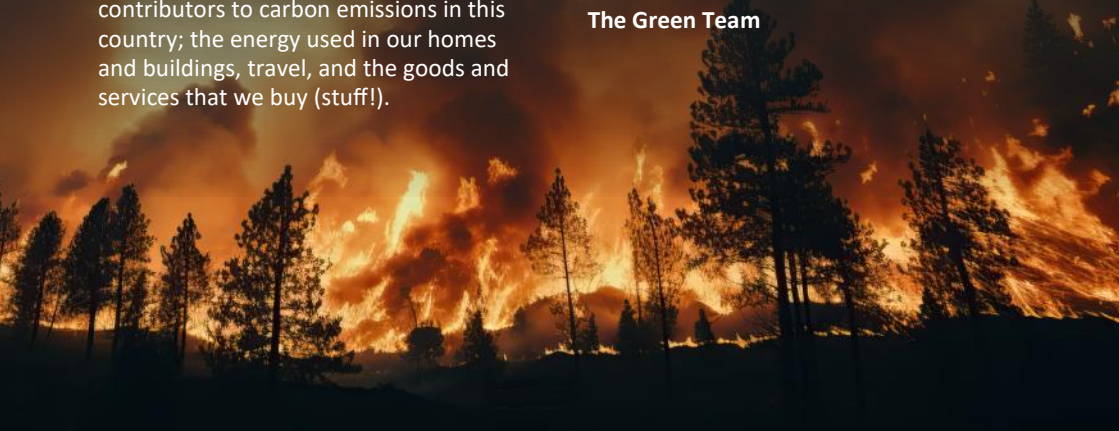
The Church of England is one of those bodies and it has committed to become 'net zero carbon' by 2030. To do that the 'minimise and offset' approach needs to be applied to the emissions created from church buildings and church activities.

Our parish must play its part and there are so some big challenges ahead, not least finding alternatives to the gas heating used in our two churches, vicarage and the Callister Hall.

This is alongside the work we are already doing to achieve the 'Gold A Rocha' environmental award for our two churches, which not only addresses emissions but also looks at ways to help safeguard the natural world, through things such as better waste management, water conservation and the development of green spaces to improve biodiversity.

To help us achieve both net zero and Gold A Rocha status we have put in place a dedicated church 'green' team, to plan and manage our activities and we will be sharing our plans with you in the coming months, because we need our village communities to be a part of our 'green' journey and to get involved as much as possible.

The Green Team



Eco Chat: Green Energy

This is a tricky one...

Green energy refers to energy produced from renewable sources, such as solar and wind, preferably without creating any carbon emissions at all.

The energy we use at home for heating, cooking and powering all those electrical goods, comes mainly from burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas (methane), which were laid down millions of years ago. They are the biggest source of carbon emissions and are clearly not renewable, at least not in the next million years or so.

Unless you produce your own electricity, less than 40% of your supply currently comes from renewable sources - even if you are on a 100% green tariff! The problem is our grid system can't distinguish between the different generation sources - they all get combined. Natural gas is still the main fuel source used for generating electricity but the good news is that wind power is now the second highest contributor. Nuclear power accounts for around 10%, but whilst producing no carbon emissions it is not a renewable source and has other environmental concerns.

Natural gas is widely used for heating our homes and whilst it is possible to produce renewable gas and oil supplies from waste organic materials and vegetable matter (known as biofuels), the quantities available are very small. Some suppliers are offering 100% green tariffs, but the same problem exists as with electricity, the grid can't distinguish between sources, which means you are unlikely to receiving more than 2%

from renewable sources. They also still create carbon emissions when burnt!

Biomass (solid organic material, primarily wood) is another fuel that falls into a similar category. Whether burnt in a boiler or the ubiquitous 'log burner', it creates carbon emissions and its renewable status relies on enough new trees/crops being grown to replace the quantity burnt.

Longer term new fuels like hydrogen may become available but today electricity, although not quite there yet, is the closest we can get to 100% renewable energy, without creating carbon emissions. When used in conjunction with heat pumps it can also provide a near zero emissions solution for heating. That said heat pumps are not ideal for all homes and currently electricity pieces are much higher than gas or oil.

So, what is the green energy solution?

That depends on individual circumstances, but undoubtedly it relies on us using less energy than we do today and is likely to involve a hybrid of fuels to suit those individual circumstances. Perhaps combining electricity with biofuel options or smaller volumes of natural gas. Generating your own electricity is worth considering but won't be suitable for all. Tricky indeed!

In our church buildings we now use low energy LED lighting with a 100% green tariff, and we are exploring alternatives to our gas heating system, which would allow us to heat people more effectively.

The energy we use for travel is another story!



Eco Chat: Green Transport

Back to our green energy conundrum...

Go back a few hundred years and our village lanes would have echoed to nothing more than the sound of horses hooves and the wheels they pulled, but the arrival of mechanical forms of transport soon changed that. Firstly came steam power, then the internal combustion engine and most recently jet propulsion.

Our modern world has been forged on our ability to transport people and goods, quickly and efficiently across large distances. Unfortunately all these modern forms of transport rely on burning fossil fuels to produce the energy they need, and as their use has increased so have the carbon emissions they produce.

Today transport is estimated to account for one quarter of all carbon emissions globally.

By far the biggest overall contribution comes from road transport, primarily cars, simply because of the number there are on the road. Air travel, particularly from short haul flights, also now makes a significant impact on global emission levels.

As you might expect walking or cycling are the lowest carbon way to travel but are not always practical or possible. If not then public transport is usually the best option. Trains are particularly low-carbon ways to travel. Taking a train instead of a car for medium-length distances would cut your emissions by around 80% and using a train instead of a domestic flight would reduce your emissions by around 86%.

Driving an electric vehicle (EV) is currently the best mode of private transport particularly where the electricity supply comes from a low-carbon source. There are however limitations currently imposed by their cost, access to charging points and 'range anxiety'.

As with the energy we use at home the solution is to reduce the amount of travelling we do and then be more thoughtful about the forms of transport we choose when we do travel.

We encourage those who come to church to walk or cycle where they can or share a car, and we can help with that.

The horses hooves may still be there but now drowned out by the noise of modern alternatives.



Eco Chat: Green Food

No, not sprouts and cabbage but food that is produced and supplied in sustainable ways, creating the minimum of carbon emissions, from 'farm to fork'.

Food plays an important part in our modern day lives and has become one of the most popular topics on our televisions and bookshelves. From buttery baking delights and stuffed crust pizza, to a growing range of ready-meal options, we are spoilt for choice, helping to make the food and drink industry the UK's largest manufacturing sector, contributing £28.2bn to the economy annually and employing 400,000 people.

Unfortunately, our eating habits and the way we shop also now mean that food is playing a major part in the global climate crisis that we face, being responsible for a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions globally.

Today a huge variety of food is made available to us from around the world, to cater for our modern tastes and lifestyle, regardless of the time of year, leading to increased emissions from the airmiles and intensive farming practices needed to meet demand. Whether its strawberries in February from hot houses in Kent, or

chocolate bars from the devastated rainforests of Brazil, our eating habits are supporting economies that are fuelling climate change.

It is becoming clear that there are certain foods that we need to eat less of, such as meat and dairy, and those we need to eat more of, like plant-based sources of protein, such as tofu, beans, peas, and nuts, which have a very low carbon footprint.

It doesn't mean we all have to become vegan but sometimes it's good to indulge ourselves in a little nostalgia and experience a taste of the past by buying seasonally grown, locally sourced food. A good rule of thumb is to avoid out of season, short shelf-life fresh fruits and vegetables like berries, green beans, and asparagus which have probably been airfreighted. If you're not ready to abandon meat completely, simply switching beef for pork reduces a meal's impact by six times!

Information on food miles and ways to calculate your food carbon footprint is now widely available, allowing you to look at the carbon impact of individual foods. So, take control of the thing you have the most influence over – what you eat - and help to focus your response to the climate crisis.

www.foodmiles.com



Eco Chat: Carbon Offsetting

If we are to successfully address climate change we must at least maintain the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at their present level and if possible reduce it to that of the 1970s. That means removing more carbon from the atmosphere than we add to it through emissions!

Reducing carbon emissions can be tough for individuals but even more so for businesses. So when an idea like carbon offsetting comes along it sounds too good to be true - and often it is!

Carbon offsetting refers to ways of 'compensating' for those emissions we can't eliminate ourselves, by investing in actions or projects that either help others to reduce their emissions, or that remove carbon directly from the atmosphere themselves. The idea being that you 'cancel out' the emissions you produce, leaving the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) - the main greenhouse gas - unchanged in the atmosphere.

Many companies are now using carbon offsetting in order to claim that they are 'carbon neutral', often without significantly (if at all), reducing their carbon emissions. This is known as 'greenwashing' and many companies are

guilty of it, particularly airlines and oil companies.

Greenwashing is the practice of making brands appear more sustainable than they really are, through false claims and deceptive marketing.

Common types of carbon offsetting schemes include reforestation (tree planting), peatland restoration, renewable energy development and investment in physical carbon capture technologies.

The real problem is that there is no way of knowing how much carbon can be offset by a particular scheme or whether they are even practical in the first place.

Take tree planting for example. One tree can absorb between 10-40kg of CO₂ each year, depending on the species and growing conditions, but it can take up to 20 years for tree saplings to reach maturity and become viable for carbon offsetting. But let's assume for this example that we can plant fast growing trees which immediately absorb on average 25kg of CO₂ per year. To offset just one tonne of carbon emissions per adult in the UK - which is only around 10% of an average carbon footprint - we would need to plant **1.6 billion trees each and every year!** That would mean covering the whole of the UK in trees within four years.

Offsetting is not bad, tree planting in particular, it's just not an alternative to reducing or eliminating carbon emissions. It needs to be a part of the solution, not the complete answer.

"In most cases, carbon offsetting doesn't work"

theecoexperts.com