

The Climate Emergency: Things we can do

We can make small changes in our lives which really can make the survival of life on Earth more likely. We can reduce our reliance on things we dig out of the planet, we can create conditions in which plant and animal life can flourish and we can slow down the rise in temperature of the Earth's atmosphere. In the process of doing those things we can actually have some fun! Here are 3 questions to ask ourselves in our everyday lives :

1. Do I need this or do I just want it?
2. Can I do anything with this before I throw it away?
3. Will what I am doing make someone smile?

Here are 27 actions we could take to help the planet. The actions themselves are in **bold** and the potential impact of each action is in *italics*.

1. Cook more meals from scratch and pass on your cooking skills to a younger person.

A lot of energy is used in the production of processed food and it is often packaged with single use plastic.

2. Use the local library.

Even if you can afford to buy books, borrowing a library book helps to keep the library service going for those who can't and reduces the need for energy-expensive book production.

3. Avoid buying food which has been flown into the UK.

Air freight results in a lot of pollutants being pushed out into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming. If you have the choice of tomatoes from Spain or Italy, the Spanish ones usually reach the UK by sea.

4. Teach a younger person to knit/crochet/sew on a button.

These skills enable people to make their own clothes or repair them. The production of mass produced clothes uses a lot of energy. Artificial fabrics are often made from oil based fibres and natural fibres, like cotton, often need oil based fertilisers to grow.

5. Knit fingerless gloves and give them away.

Making them is fun and giving them away will enable the recipient to reduce the need to have a home heated to a high temperature.

6. Have water available in the garden for birds.

Lots of species of birds are in decline in the UK. Having water available to drink or to preen feathers helps birds to flourish.

7. Avoid wasting food.

Decaying food sends gases into the atmosphere which contribute to global warming. Producing enough food to feed the world's population is difficult and what is produced mustn't be wasted.

8. Do a nature walk in the city with a friend.

Being more aware of the natural world around us makes us keener to look after it.

9. Swap things!

Don't hang on to 'stuff' you don't need or use. It might be useful to someone else and save them from buying something new which takes a lot of energy to produce.

10. Save and make use of rainwater

Global warming is leading to excessive bursts of rainfall and extended droughts. Saving water for time of drought is useful.

11. Make your clothes last by looking after them and repairing them

Textile production uses up a lot of oil based energy and materials.

12. Share meals with friends

This saves on energy costs and usage and is a good way to get to know friends better.

13. Make draught excluders out of old fabric and give them away.

This makes use of textiles which might otherwise end up in landfill and will help someone else to keep their home warm.

14. Avoid artificial fertilisers and pesticides in gardens

These are oil based. Oil is a finite resource which will run out. Some artificial fertilisers and pesticides harm wildlife.

15. Avoid single use plastics.

In many cases, these are derived from oil. They are indestructible and do terrible damage to life in our rivers and oceans.

16. Use public transport

Per person, it takes far less energy to transport people by bus, coach or train than by car.

17. Avoid letting light out through windows at night

A lot of insects are being harmed by the increased use of artificial lights at night.

18. Use non-peat based compost in the garden

Peat bogs are a valuable habitat for many rare forms of life. They should not be destroyed to feed our gardens.

19. When using an oven try to cook more than one thing.

The amount of energy used per item is reduced.

20. Put pots of plants on outdoor hard surfaces

City drains cannot cope with excessive rainfall resulting from global warming. Anything you can do to delay rainwater reaching the drains, is helpful.

21. Pick up litter

As well as looking awful, litter can be harmful to children birds and animals.

22. Eat less meat and dairy products

A lot of energy is used in processing meat and dairy products. Farm animals eat products which could be eaten by humans without waiting for them to be transformed into meat. Gases given off by farm animals contribute to global warming.

23. Take your own bags when you shop

This cuts down on single use plastic.

24. Buy organic food sometimes

It is useful to encourage farmers and growers who are experimenting with growing food without artificial fertilisers and pesticides.

25. Let some weeds grow in the garden

Wild flowers are important for insect life.

26. Learn the names of flowers birds and trees and perhaps teach them to a younger person

The more we know about the natural world, the more we value it.

27. Walk more!! (if you can...)

It is important to exercise our muscles and by walking, we give ourselves time to be aware of our environment and to reflect on our lives.