



The Environmental Challenge



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The purpose of this leaflet is to raise awareness of the responsibility of Christians to God for the care of the earth that He created and to suggest practical ways in which we can express our love for God in caring for His creation.

In particular this leaflet gives guidance to the steps we can take in our local community.

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

- God created heaven and earth, all that is seen and unseen. Just as God is good His creation was good (Genesis 1-2 vs 2).
- God created man and woman to have a special role in His creation (Genesis 1 vs 26-31).
- God told us to be fruitful, increase in number, fill the earth, subdue [not exploit] it and rule over it (Genesis 1 vs 28).
- When we sinned this sin affected the relationship between us and God and it also affected God's creation (Genesis 3 vs 15-19).
- When God created us he put everything in our control but because of sin we no longer have that control (Hebrews 2 vs 8).
- But Jesus does (Hebrews 2 vs 9, Ephesians 1 vs 22-23).
- We are the people through whom Jesus works on earth and we have a special role to play in creation (Romans 8 vs 19-21)

GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

Our effect on the earth is of special concern for Christians. God is creator and we are His creation, the earth is also His creation. Concern for creation flows from the heart of our relationship with God, the earth is His, not ours and He calls us to love our neighbour. There is a link between our impact on the earth and poverty, because the effects of our negative impact on creation is felt most keenly by those who are poor, who often live their lives in parts of the globe where sustainability is marginal.

GLOBAL WARMING

Global warming is caused by the "greenhouse effect". Some gases, particularly Carbon Dioxide (CO²), form a layer around the earth that lets warmth from the sun in but also traps the heat that would otherwise be lost from the earth into space. CO² is formed particularly through the burning of fossil fuels (coal, gas, oil, petrol, wood). In addition, trees and plants act as a store of CO², when they are cut down or burnt this reduces the ability of the earth to act as that store. Our impact may be direct - every time we drive a car we burn fuel, or indirect - every time we buy food it has used energy to grow, pack, distribute and display. In the same way, through our actions, we can make a direct or indirect change.

CARBON FOOTPRINT

A way of measuring our impact is called the "Carbon footprint". The way we live our lives leaves a mark on the earth. This "footprint" can be measured in terms of the amount of CO² we create. It has been suggested by some that if we are to stop the effects of Global Warming every person on the earth needs to have a footprint of no more than 2.5 to 3 tonnes per annum by the year 2020. The UK average is around 10 tonnes. Driving an average 12,000 miles a year in an average car produces almost 4 tonnes of CO². To find out your carbon footprint go to Google, or another search engine on the web, and type in CARBON FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR, this will produce a choice of calculators to use. An easy one can be found at www.clevel.co.uk. If you don't have access to the web then ask a friend to do it for you on their PC or buy/borrow the Collins Gem Carbon Calculator (£4.99) ISBN:9780 00 724812.

WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

There are many small changes to the way we live our lives that can reduce our carbon footprint. It is recognised that some will be more appropriate than others, depending on our circumstances, for example the elderly should take care when seeking to apply advice to reduce temperatures:

In the home:

- Monitor your consumption of gas, electricity and water so you know what you are using and how change affects that.
- Carry out an energy audit of your house, many utility companies will do this for free.
- Insulate your home, heating counts for 70% of domestic energy use.
- Draw curtains at night.
- Turn heating thermostats down by 1°C, this could save 300kg of CO² a year.
- Fit thermostats to radiators.
- Turn lights off when you leave a room, this can save 25kg of CO² for each room a year.
- Keep windows shut when the heating is on.
- Turn off electrical equipment like TV's, computers, CD players, chargers etc when not in use rather than leave on standby.
- Buy 'A' rated electrical appliances where possible.
- Remember to close fridge and freezer doors.
- Use the 'half load' and 'economy' settings on washing machines.
- Use dishwashers only when they are full.
- Showers generally use less water and energy than baths.
- Use low energy light bulbs, these can cost as little as £2 but save as much as £35 in their lifetime. An 11 watt low energy bulb is equivalent to a 60 watt ordinary bulb
- Turn off taps and fix leaks as soon as they occur.
- If your cistern is old ask your water company for water saving devices.
- Use rain water to water the garden.
- Use a bucket of water to wash the car rather than a hosepipe.
- Use renewable energy sources such as solar power.
- Switch electricity supply to one from renewable sources, ask your supplier or try www.uswitch.org

Travel:

- Walk, cycle or catch a bus or a train rather than drive the car.
- Car share and combine trips.
- If you can then work from home on some days rather than travel into work.
- Keep the car well maintained and properly tuned.
- Turn off the engine when stationary for long periods rather than idle.
- Drive carefully, change gears at the right time and travel at optimum speeds.
- When you buy your next car downsize to a smaller model or buy a hybrid car.

Shopping:

- Buy only what you need.
- Buy items with minimum packaging.
- Buy products with bio-degradable or recyclable packaging.
- Use long life bags.
- Buy locally produced products.
- Buy products, such as paper, made from renewable resources.

The natural environment:

- Keep trees and plants rather than turning gardens into hard surfaces.

- Plant a tree.
- Buy wooden products made from sustainable sources.
- Buy items made from reclaimed timber.
- Buy paper with a high recycled content or made from sustainable sources.
- Check draft documents on screen.
- Print double-sided.

Re-cycle and re-use:

- Recycle as much as possible (give items to, and buy from, local charity shops). Use the recycling facilities provided by the local council. Respond to the appeals made by various organisations for unwanted clothes etc.
- Re-use as much as possible (re-use plastic bags, use any blank side of paper as scrap pads).

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

As well as global warming there are other concerns for the environment. The loss of whole species of animals and plants as a result of human action and the pollution of habitat are two other areas in which we can take small steps to improve matters:

- Dispose of toxic materials, such as batteries, oils, and chemicals in a safe way rather than down the drain or into landfill.
- Use water based paints rather than oil and solvent based paints.
- Use natural preservatives on wooden fences and furniture.
- Use organic wastes such as compost, manure, leaf mould, bark chippings and coir for improving the soil rather than peat or peat based products.
- Use natural pest control rather than chemical.
- Have a wild patch in the garden.
- Create a small pond or water feature.
- Plant trees, bushes and plants that encourage wildlife such as bees, ladybirds and butterflies.
- Have a bird feeder.

USEFUL INFORMATION

There are many sources of information and guidance available on the web (e.g www.mythornbury.co.uk) and in print. In this leaflet we draw your attention to some local facilities and local sources of help.

Local authority provided services - waste disposal and recycling.

South Gloucestershire Council offer extensive waste disposal and recycling schemes which are detailed here. For up to date information contact: www.southglos.gov.uk, 01454 868000

• Kerbside recycling.

- **Green bins:** Garden waste, garden and house plants, non waxed cardboard.
- **Green box:** Glass bottles and jars, food tins and cans, aluminium foil, clothes, shoes, car batteries, engine oil (in sealed containers).
- **Green bag:** Newspaper, junk mail, pamphlets and magazines.

• Sort-IT centre - Short Way Industrial Estate, Thornbury

Car batteries, engine oil, scrap metal, cardboard, green garden waste, rubble and soil, wood, glass bottles and jars. Textiles and shoes, paper, food and drink cans, tyres, freezers and fridges, TVs and computer monitors.

- **Rock Street Car Park, Thornbury** . Glass bottles, paper, plastic bottles, clothes

- **Tesco, Thornbury** . Plastic bags, glass bottles, paper and clothes.

- There are also limited facilities in Alveston (Cross Hands), Falfield (Park Hotel), Tytherington (Village shop), Old Down (Fox Inn) and Oldbury-on-Severn (sports ground) as well as the Castle Street car park in Thornbury.

Community compost centre. Garden waste taken and quality compost available. Rear of Thornbury leisure centre car park.

Spectacles . Most local opticians take old spectacles for re-use overseas through Vision Aid.

Clothes, books, used stamps and other items. There are many charity shops in Thornbury that will take a variety of good quality used items.

Computer recycling. Byteback computer recycling, Hartcliffe, Bristol 0117 3706456 or www.byteback.org.uk , or Avon Youth Association 01454 868371.

Furniture. Emmaus. 0117 954 0886. SOFA.0117 954 3567.

Energy efficiency. Bristol and Somerset Energy Advice Centre.0800 512012 or www.cse.org.uk

Locally produced food:

Farmers market. St Mary's Centre, Thornbury on 1st and 3rd Thursdays 9am to 1.30pm. 01454 888822 **and** High Street, Chipping Sodbury on last Thursdays and 2nd Saturdays 9am to 1.30pm. 01454 321010.

Farm shops. Tortworth Estate Farm Shop. 01454 261633 **and** Frome Valley. 01454 773964

Organic box scheme. Better for Organics, Breadstone, Berkeley. 01454 511711 or www.betterfororganics.co.uk

Thornbury organic co-operative. For non-perishable food and household goods. 01454 415345.

Grey's organics. Shepperdine. 01454 413470.

Grey's farm. 01454 413200. **Tytherington shop.** 01454 417618.

S J Yates. Butchers , Oldbury. 01454 417937.

These are just some of the sources of information current at the time this document was compiled. The information is liable to change and there may be other information available.