

The Basics

These are activities that everyone should be able to do with minimal change to their usual lifestyle.

Recycling - paper, cardboard, glass, metal, batteries, print cartridges, plastic.

This also includes buying goods which are part or wholly made up of recycled material. It is important to stimulate demand for these products so they make more of them.

Draught-proofing - if you do not have double glazed doors or windows this can be a quick way to save heating your house so much.

Insulate your roof and walls. Cavity wall insulation can save about £160 per year with payback over four years. Poorly insulated lofts can cost you 15% of your heating bills. There are many grants and schemes to help with costs on this at the moment. It is a relatively quick and cheap thing to do and you will feel the benefits of lower fuel bills immediately. You should be thinking about at least a 40cm thick layer of insulation in your loft. It is easy to get a tape measure and check what you have already. Check out Energy Saving Trust on the web or call 0800 512 012

Composting - this can be started very easily by buying a composting bin. It takes up a minimal space in the garden, it doesn't smell (if done right) and will give you a rich compost to put on your flowers and veggies. Approximately a third of household waste is organic (this includes paper and rough cardboard) - so this is also a great way to reduce how much you have to throw away.

The RSG has leaflets from Lewes District Council for cheap compost bins, only £10 for standard cone and £15 for Johanna style. Advice on composting available as well.

Grow Vegetables & herbs yourself - It is possible to grow enough veg for a family in a 3 metre square plot. This could be in your garden or an allotment. Saves money and reduces food miles. Contact a member of the RSG if you would like help with this.

Organic Veg Box scheme - if you don't want to grow your own, then this is a really good way to cut down on food miles. It is also good for your health! Abel & Cole, Riverford and Kingston village shop (uses Bill's organic veg) are all available in Rodmell. Each van delivering online food purchases can replace as many as 40 car journeys per day.

There are also food co-operatives that can deliver inbulk. The idea being that four or five households club together and buy top notch food at trade prices. see Infinity Foods - www.justtrade.org and Suma - www.suma.coop

Free Plastic bags - they are the scourge of the modern shopping experience. If you take your own re-usable bags you will be not only using less plastic, but also reducing the large amount of bags that end up in the sea, which are ruining marine life. Many European countries already have a country wide ban in place.

Public Transport - a tough one in Rodmell as the service is so infrequent. Apart from taking the bus try and let people know if you are going in to town and when.

Eat less meat - sounds strange but an enormous amount of fossil fuels are used to grow crops to feed animals as well as transporting them once they are slaughtered. Also the amount of methane they produce is much more polluting than CO2 for the environment.

Homemade Paint - it might sound a bit adventurous, but it is very easy, durable and doesn't smell like a chemical factory. Homemade paint is for painting walls and is made from milk, plaster, lime and whatever tint you want. It is easy to make (apply to RSG for the recipe) better for the environment and a lot cheaper too. Demonstrations available.

Low energy lightbulbs - there is no excuse not to use these now - they can reduce your bills and are even being given away free by electricity providers.

Switch to renewable electricity - there are an increasing amount of energy providers that make electricity by renewable means, e.g. wind, solar or tidal energy. By subscribing to these services you will cut the amount of electricity drawn from coal and oil. 'Good Energy' is the only company which guarantees that 100% of the energy it supplies is from wind, water and sun. By buying this we are promoting these industries, although it costs a little more. Go to www.goodenergy.co.uk for more.

Buying decisions - this is where we have the biggest chance to make a difference. By consciously thinking about where a product has come from, how it was made and who made it, and the where it will go when we have finished with it, we can make huge changes. One example is packaging on food. Supermarkets love to put things in plastic wrappings, but is there an alternative, or one with less packaging? Farmer's Markets are great for this - less plastic and locally sourced. When we buy consumer goods are they packed with polystyrene or cardboard? If you buy food in a supermarket how far has it had to travel - from Kenya or Kent? Who makes the product you are buying - a large multinational or a small company with sustainable ethics? Lewes Farmer's market occurs on the first Saturday of every month