

Sustainability newsletter – May 2022

“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it; the world, and all who live in it.” (Psalm 24:1)

Home – energy

Welcome to our May hints and tips. This newsletter focuses on being more sustainable at home and where better to start than energy use. Prices for energy are going up significantly and some of the tips below to help save energy will not only benefit the planet but also our pockets.

1. Switch to a renewable energy supplier

I’m putting this first, before any energy saving tips, because this is one of the six highest impact actions (according to the Institute of Physics) that we can take to mitigate climate change. Renewable energy comes from a source that is not depleted e.g. so solar, wind, tidal...The more renewable energy we use collectively, the more fossil fuels will stay in the ground.

The electricity we use in church is sourced from a company using 100% renewable energy, which in the year to March 2020 equated to saving 3.7 tonnes of CO2 from entering the atmosphere.

It’s easy to switch!

Energy comparison sites such as Big Clean Switch (<https://bigcleanswitch.org/>) can help. They list companies with only renewable supply. Or you can contact companies directly. Some to consider are Ecotricity, Coop Energy, Good Energy, Octopus Energy. We’ve been using Ecotricity for over 10 years and customer service is also good.



2. Save energy at home

- Turn off lights!
As lighting typically accounts for about 15% of household energy bills, this is a pretty good return for not much effort.
- Switch your light bulbs
If you haven’t already done it, switch your light bulbs to LEDs. In a typical home, replacing all bulbs with LEDs could save up to £230 a year on bills.
- Don’t leave items on standby
Leaving items like TV and computers on standby accounts for around 10% of a typical household energy bill, so remember to turn them off overnight. (Standby power is responsible for roughly 1% of global CO2 emissions and accounts for £227 million a year of wasted power in UK households.)

- Turn down your thermostat by 1 degree
This simple act can mean you use up to 10% less energy heating your home.
- Put on a jumper
This may sound old-fashioned but it makes sense!
- Plug the leaks
You don't want your heating to escape to heat the outside. Most important is to make sure your loft is adequately insulated. The recommended depth of blanket-style insulation is 250-270mm. Even if you have insulation, but it was put in some time ago, it's worth checking the depth as the recommendation has increased from 100-200mm. Other ideas include: get thermal lining for your curtains, check that your boiler is insulated if 15+ years old, install draft-proof strips (available from DIY stores) around windows...
- Reduce use of tumble dryer – or ditch altogether
Line dry whenever possible, and if you have to tumble dry, spin as much water as possible out of the clothes first. Think about part drying and then hanging outside to finish.

3. Tech and gadgets!

- Smart meters

These allow you to see how much energy you're using at any given time. Although they were originally introduced to make billing simpler and more accurate, they can be a helpful tool for energy saving too because you can see the spike when you boil the kettle, use the tumble drier etc. You become more aware of the energy demands of different appliances and can see where you can make small changes.



- Smart thermostats

These allow you to control your heating remotely via smartphone or tablet. You can tell your smart thermostat what time you want your home to be warm, and it will use information (current external air temperature, what it has 'learned' about how long your house takes to warm up...) to ensure that the house is warm when you walk in. These are particularly useful if your house is empty during the day.

Many of these ideas and the datapoints have been taken from Jen Gale's book 'The Sustainable(ish) Living Guide'.

We will be providing tips on a variety of topics over the coming months, so if you have any you'd like to share, please let us know by emailing them to jwilks@jwa-consultancy.co.uk.