

BROWNSHILL, BUSSAGE, CHALFORD & FRANCE LYNCH

The start of a new year is an obvious time to make new resolutions on what we can do to live more sustainably. Many of us have already made conscious changes to our life styles in a bid to try and combat the climate emergency, but there are always some more steps we can take: check out these suggestions.

1. Invest responsibly

Do you know what your money is invested in? Research what companies your bank/ building society/ pension provider invests in and opt out of those invested in fossil fuels: choose a provider that invests in renewable energy and low carbon concerns. The returns may be just as good.

2. Switch to a green energy supplier

To avoid electricity generated from fossil fuels, find a supplier using renewable sources. However, beware 'greenwash' as very few companies supply 100% green energy. At present only Ecotricity, Good Energy and Green Energy own and invest in wind and solar firms themselves. You can compare different tariffs by using a price comparison sites, specifying green energy.

3. Sharing is caring & reduces your carbon footprint

If you need a new tool, book or outfit consider asking to see if anyone has one you can borrow, or have a look on sites like www.freecycle.org. ChalCAN are looking into setting up a Library of Things and if you are interested in helping co-ordinate this please do get in touch.

4. Help spread the word and talk to others

Mention to your friends, family, colleagues enthusiastically what steps and alterations you are taking in your life to help combat climate change. Suggesting solutions will hopefully encourage others, and makes a positive change from the disaster warnings we read about.

5. Express your views and use your power as a consumer and voter

Do not under-estimate the power of your voice – write to your MP, local councils and relevant companies letting them know your thoughts on

climate change and what actions you would like taken. We need to voice our support to protect the environment - ask the government to do the same.

6. Step up your recycling

Many of us may be pretty good with recycling using the fortnightly household collection. But there are so many other good to consider: batteries, electronics, wrappers and packaging, spectacles, bikes, toys, furniture, clothes etc. Have a look on our web-site for ideas.

7. Audit your IT habits

Think about what browser you use, how much storage space your old emails and photos take up, whether you could use a green supplier for your phone, how often you stream videos and films.

8. Take steps to cut the carbon in your diet

Try cutting out or cutting down on meat and dairy. Buy local produce -we have some terrific local small-scale producers meaning fewer food miles, less packaging and you will be supporting local commerce and jobs. Ensure you use up leftover food and recycling waste. Keep asking questions and checking labels. Go one further and sign up for Veganuary.

9. Take action to promote biodiversity

Have a good look at your garden and think what changes you can make to enhance our environment – tree or hedge planting, wild flowers, 'scrub' areas for insects, hedgehog highways through fences or bird boxes.

10. Keep up the energy saving measures

*Is this the year to invest in insulation, a sustainable energy source, better thermostats, an electric car or bike? **Check out our website for advice and suggestions.***