

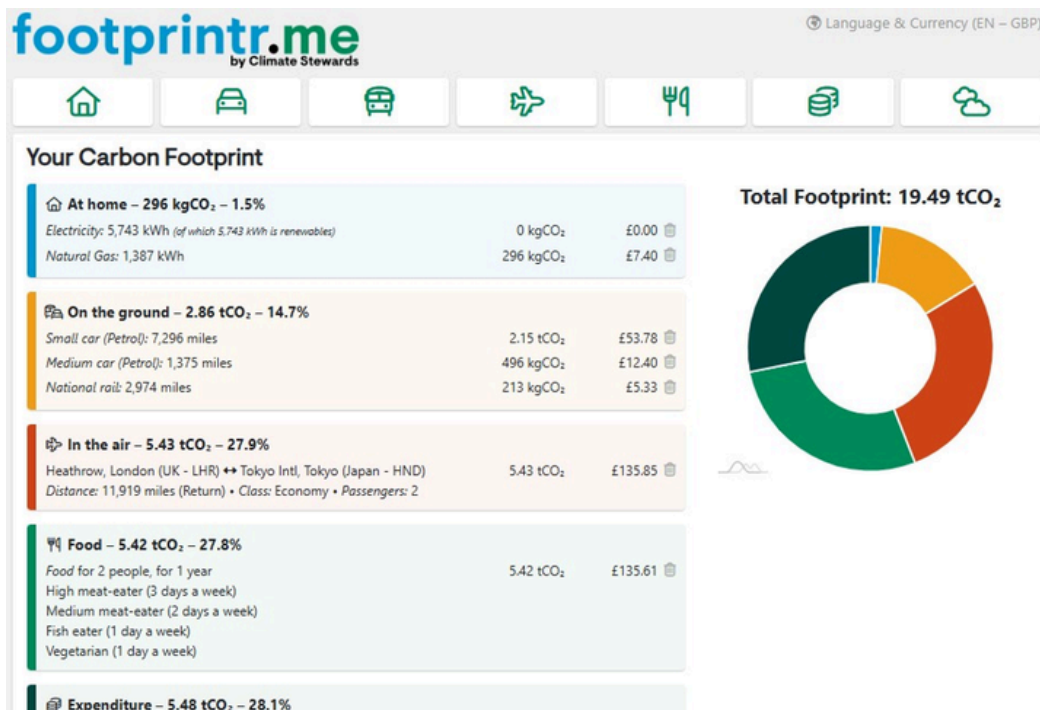
Living More Lightly: Measuring our Footprint

As I write this, the Met Office has said that this summer is on course to be the UK's hottest since records began. There is little doubt that our climate is changing and the main cause is greenhouse gases emitted by human activity. Climate scientists have advised us to reduce our emissions to minimise the risk of serious impact on present and future generations. The scientific evidence has persuaded me of the need for urgent action, and I want to honour God by caring for his creation. *But what changes can I make? How much effect will the changes have? How much change is needed?*

I'd like to share my experience with a carbon footprint tool because I have found it so enlightening.

The carbon footprint tool that I use is called footprintr.me provided by a Christian organisation called [Climate Stewards](https://climatestewards.org). I think that it strikes a good balance between sensitivity and complexity while being based upon sound science. The tool works like this: you enter your annual usage data in a high-level category e.g. 'At Home', click a button to calculate the mass of greenhouse gases emitted in CO₂e units (methane and nitrous oxide are converted into an equivalent mass of carbon dioxide). Once content with the calculation, you click another button to add it to the footprint. You repeat this process for each high-level category and then click the button labelled 'Contribute Now' to see the overall footprint – paying to offset your carbon emissions is optional, so don't worry about the button label! You can then download the footprint as a PDF file for your records.

Gathering the data took me a few hours, but I feel the insight gained justified the effort. The tool requires the total amount of electricity consumed in a year, and I found this information in my solar panel system reports. If you don't have solar panels, then you can get this information from your supplier's bills. Similarly, the total amount of gas and water can be found in your utility bills. The government's [Check MOT service](https://checkmot.service.gov.uk) was handy for estimating annual car mileage. My online bank account was good at collating the data required to complete the expenditure form, but I could have worked it out from bank statements.



My wife and I each had a carbon footprint of 9.75 metric tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (tCO₂e) in 2025. It is sobering to consider that in 2021 [climate scientists](#) set a target of 2.5 tCO₂e per person by 2030 to keep the global temperature rise within 1.5°C.

I feel the need for urgent action having arrived late to this understanding of my emissions and the globally fair and sustainable target.

Thankful for God's grace, I persevere remembering that any reduction in my emissions will help reduce the risk of more serious impact.

Reviewing my 2025 footprint, it is encouraging to see the benefits of the changes that we have made to our house and electricity supplier. The potential benefits of trading in my beloved old BMW car are noted. The size of the emissions caused by our flight Japan was a shock and I now understand the call to consider carefully the need for air travel. I was also surprised by the relatively large contribution of food to the footprint, and this has set me thinking about my diet. I hope that you can see the benefit of doing the analysis and feel inspired to have a go. Do ask if you need any help.

Your Eco Team would be delighted to facilitate the communication of our progress as a community towards sustainable fair carbon footprints for every household. Do get in touch if you are interested in joining in and we will discuss how we are going to work together.

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