

## Eco-tips January 2025

### Heating and home insulation

It's a cold month and following on from our energy saving tips in November we are focusing on reducing our impact on the environment by tips to conserve the heating in our homes.

Identify and seal draughts in the home especially loft openings windows and doors. Thick curtains can keep heat in. Draught proofing strips can be added to doors and windows. A door may have a brush at the bottom or you can use portable sausage shaped draught excluders!

Foil or radiator panels can reflect heat into the room

Getting professional help is the best advice when considering loft and wall insulation both of which considerably lower environmental impact. You can get a free survey with some companies.

Turning down the thermostat from 19C to 18 C can save over £100 annually. Your room must be at least 18C. If you are older, or ill, you may need it to be warmer.

Use your timer so that heating is switched off when the house is empty. A smart device or hive can monitor room temperature and can be remotely controlled by your phone for efficient heating and energy conservation.

Turn down radiator valves (if indeed you have them!) in unused rooms to say 3 out of 5 and keep doors closed.

Have you considered an air source heat pump (sometimes called an air-to-water heat pump) which transfers heat from the outside air to the water in your central heating system? This heats rooms in your home via radiators or underfloor heating. It can also heat water stored in a hot water cylinder for your hot taps, showers, and baths. Unlike traditional boilers (which use fossil fuels), heat pumps use electricity. And heat pumps are more than three times more efficient than a gas or oil boiler, helping to lower your energy use.

Dress in warm clothes to keep the body feeling comfortable

Did you know that Energy saving week is from 17<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> January

See link: <https://www.gas-elec.co.uk/energy-saving-week/>



## Eco-tips March 2025 *Looking after Wildlife*

Who doesn't love a panda, an elephant, a penguin or a lion? And what about the bugs, snails, spiders, wasps and worms? Are they less important in their ecosystems? The answer is a decisive "No"!

Here are a few ecological functions of native animals, including the ones above: They are recyclers of organic matter (slugs & snails, some beetles, earth worms etc.), pollinators (wasps, beetles, hoverflies – not only bees!), predators, keeping populations in balance (wasps, hedgehogs, hoverflies, spiders, centipedes, bats etc.), tunnel builders in soil, improving drainage and soil structure (earth worms, moles, voles etc.), spreaders or planters of seeds (birds, squirrels, badgers etc) and even builders of dams creating new habitat (beavers). All of them have important roles and should be respected as God's creation.

Our way of life puts an increasing number of species under pressure by reducing and fragmenting their habitat, creating deadly hazards (like road traffic) or polluting air, water and soil with various chemicals and waste. The three categories of English wildlife that are most affected are: 1. Butterflies, 2. Birds, 3. Amphibians & Reptiles (according to the Red List Index for England by broad taxonomic group, published by DEFRA).

What could you do?

- Find out about threatened species and habitats – [www.surreywildlifetrust.org](http://www.surreywildlifetrust.org)
- Participate in citizen science projects, monitoring wildlife – Butterfly Conservation Trust; Surrey Amphibian & Reptile Group; Bird Surveying with BTO
- Create habitats on your property (if you have one) – heaps of sticks & leaves over winter; logs of decaying wood; mini ponds; mixed hedges with blossom, berries and nuts; leave long grass with wildflowers.
- Join campaigns for protection, creation and connection of habitats: wetlands; wildlife crossings; wildflower meadows; hedgerows etc.
- Avoid using potentially harmful chemicals in your garden

In May there will be an organised bat watch with a short presentation on one or two evenings in St Mary's church yard – join us watching the Serotine Bats leaving their shelter through the roof tiles at dusk! For more information check our Eco-Church web page in April.

P.S. The Eco-Team at St. Mary's would love to know how many church members actually read the Eco-Tips and how useful they are. If you read them, please drop us a note with a comment and any suggestions you may have: [stmarysecoteam@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysecoteam@gmail.com) Have you been able to act upon any of the previous articles?



## Eco-tips July 2025 *Plastic free July*

It's "Plastic Free July" again! This is a global movement where millions of us can be part of the solution to plastic pollution. See Eco Tips 2024 for the tips we sent last year!

Why is single-use plastic problematic?

It takes hundreds of years to disappear as it is difficult to break down

Single use plastic is produced from fossil fuels and creating them emits vast amounts of greenhouse gases

Plastic ends up in the ground, the waterways and the sea. Burning them releases harmful pollutants into the air. It is hard to see animals trapped by plastic wire or in containers, Large marine animals can ingest plastics or be trapped in fishing lines and nets leading to thousands of deaths.

Plastics eventually degrade to microplastics smaller than a grain of sand and are ingested by wildlife and humans alike potentially causing harm

Plastic also releases harmful chemicals into the soil and sea

It degrades habitats making them less suitable for wildlife

What can we do?

Bring a reusable cup to where you have coffee or tea

Buy loose products in markets, farm shops, or greengrocers

Have your own shopping bags

Use reusable water bottles! In this weather the keep cool water bottles are really good !

Avoid plastic packaged products where possible and take your own containers to shops

Buy natural fibres

Choose kitchen and bathroom products that don't have plastic

In the fridge use lids or beeswax wraps to preserve food

Join litter picks or pick up any litter when you see it

Pray for inspiration creativity and agreements / legislation to prevent single use plastics

For more information and to try the Pesky Plastics Quiz!