

## Climate & Biodiversity update



**As much as 62% of the future reduction in emissions will rely on individual choices and behaviours.**

It doesn't matter how big or small your contribution is, it all helps towards saving our planet.



Saffron Walden museum wooden planters

### How to stay warm

Heating homes accounts for [over 70%](#) of household energy consumption. So reducing this figure – while keeping homes warm enough – not only cuts energy bills, but helps meet the [carbon reduction commitments](#) that the UK government is legally required to deliver.

#### 1. Use your curtains

Heat from the sun is free so make the most of it. Open your curtains and let the sunlight in during the day to make use of this free [heat](#). When it gets dark, [shut your curtains](#), which act as another layer of insulation and keep warmth in your rooms.

#### 2. Use timers on your central heating

The [Centre for Sustainable Energy](#) advises that programming your boiler to turn the heating on a little earlier – such as 30 minutes before you get up in the morning – but at a lower temperature is cheaper than turning it on just as you need it at a higher temperature.

#### 3. Move your sofa

It might feel great to have your favourite seat in front of the radiator, but it's absorbing heat that could be warming your home. By moving it away from the radiator, hot air can circulate freely.

#### 4. Maximise your insulation

When it comes to heat, around 25% is lost [through the roof](#). This can be easily reduced by installing 25cm of insulation throughout your loft. It's also worth seeing what's going on in your walls, as around a third of the heat in an uninsulated home is lost this way.

## 5. Wrap up warm

If you have a hot water tank, make sure it is properly lagged – or insulated. This will keep the water warmer for longer and reduce heating costs.

## 6. Turn down the dial

The World Health Organisation previously recommended a minimum temperature of 21°C in the living room, but Public Health England revised this to 18°C in 2014. And research shows that turning your thermostat down by 1°C could cut your heating bill by up to 10%.

## 7. Block out the draughts

The Energy Saving Trust estimates that DIY draught-proofing your doors, windows and cracks in the floor could save £25 per year. Self-adhesive rubber seals around doors and windows and door draught excluders are relatively cheap and easy to install. So, it's worth getting those doors and windows sealed before winter properly kicks in.

## 8. Install thermostatic radiator valves

Research at the University of Salford has shown that installing heating controls and thermostatic radiator valves results in energy savings of 40% compared to a house with no controls.

## 9. Replace your boiler

The average boiler lasts **around 15 years** if well maintained and although a yearly service can improve the lifespan, an older boiler has to work harder to heat your home. It may be time to replace it with a heat pump.

## 10. Reflect the heat

Radiator panels are relatively cheap, easy to install, and ensure that heat from your radiators warms up your room and not your walls. They work by reflecting the heat back into the room.

**There are a number of initiatives and grants available to help you keep warm**

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/grants-and-assistance-for-householders#green-homes-grant>

## New comers on the endangered red list



**Swift**



**House Martin**



**Green finch**

The latest update to the UK's Red List has shown that more bird species than ever are in serious trouble.

The report, *Birds of Conservation Concern 5*, is compiled by a coalition of the UK's leading bird conservation and monitoring organisations, assessing 245 regularly occurring species. Its findings show that 70 of these species should be placed on the Red List, meaning they are of highest conservation concern.

New additions include the familiar **Common Swift, House Martin and Greenfinch**, which all feature as Red-listed for the first time in the assessment's history. Swift and House Martin have both moved from Amber to Red owing to alarming decreases in their population size

(58% since 1995 and 57% since 1969 respectively). Greenfinch, meanwhile, moves directly from Green to Red after a sharp population crash (62% since 1993) caused by a severe outbreak of the disease trichomonosis.

As outlined in the 2019 *State of Nature* report, the UK's bird populations face many pressures both at home and abroad. These include changes in the way land is managed (particularly farmland which makes up 75% of the UK's land area), climate change, urbanisation, invasive non-native species and pollution.

### How to clean a bird feeder



### Don't let them harbour nasty bacteria!

Hanging feeders in your garden can be a lifesaver for the wild bird population during the winter. With the weather set to get colder, food shortages can occur.

The [RSPB](#) recommends you put food and water on a regular basis to help our feathered friends through the winter months. **In severe weather, it even recommends feeding the birds in your garden twice a day.** And, with the possibility of luring dunnocks, song thrushes and chaffinches to your garden, you'll be missing out on an exciting view from your kitchen if you don't!

***It's really important to regularly clean your bird feeders, as mouldy food and bird droppings encourage bacterial growth. Here's how to keep your feeders clean and disease-free...***

### Keep it clean

Spray the feeder with a veterinary disinfectant, to kill off any lurking bugs. Make sure the disinfectant is non-toxic and bird safe, like [Johnson's Poultry Virenza Disinfectant and Cleaner](#).

After disinfecting, rinse the feeder once more under the cold tap and then allow to dry completely again.

### Refill with food

Once your feeder has completely dried, it's time to refill it with food to keep those peckish birds happy!

Make sure you feed birds a variety of food during the winter months when food is scarce. The RSPB recommends putting out high-energy, protein-filled foods during the summer months. The [Really Wild Bird Food Co. Peckaballs](#) are mini suet balls packed full of protein, which fit into standard peanut mesh feeders.

### How to help all woodland birds



On average, woodland birds that don't use garden bird feeders have declined over the past 25 years, some to the point where they have almost disappeared from the UK countryside. Nobody knows exactly why, and while this may be partly due to their habitat fragmenting and the climate warming, garden bird-feeding may have also played a role.

Due to people feeding them, there are now more dominant blue and great tits in the woods than 25 years ago, eating more of the limited natural food and evicting other species from their nests. There are also more great spotted woodpeckers and squirrels, which eat the chicks of some birds. Perhaps an extra 700,000 pairs of very healthy and dominant great tits in woodlands is too much for the UK's remaining 2,000 pairs of shy and subordinate willow tits.

Meanwhile, there are more natural ways to encourage wild birds into your garden. Planting native shrubs and trees like rowan, hawthorn, silver birch, spindle and guelder rose is one option. They are all beautiful year-round, fairly small and provide excellent habitats for wild birds. Other ideas include mowing lawns less often and digging ponds.

## Autumn walks

If you are looking to get out and about this autumn, why not join one of our health walks?

Trained leaders will be there to lead you on interesting walks through the local countryside or past places of interest.

We have wide range of regular healthy walks arranged. Families are welcome but not all walks are suitable for dogs.



<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5597/Health-walks-in-Uttlesford>

## Simple steps to fight climate change



### [How can our community help with climate change](#)

How you can help by making some lifestyle changes that will hugely benefit the environment.

<http://uttlesford.gov.uk/how-can-our-community-help-with-climate-change>

## Xmas ideas – shop locally



**Tree saplings**



**Wildflower seeds**



**Bee box**



**Refill shops**

Nature needs our help. We are suffering from a global biodiversity crisis. We can all make an important contribution to our local ecology. For Christmas, think about buying a tree for loved ones or in memory of someone you've lost or a Friends of the Earth bee saver kit, a bee, bird, or bat box, or a packet of wildflower seeds and beebombs, make great stocking fillers. Buy from eco or refill shops selling items that help to reduce waste, are sustainable and save on wasteful plastic packaging. Charity shops also provide some lovely gift ideas. The more we support nature and change the way we shop, the more likely our planet will have a chance to thrive.

**To all parish & town councillors**



Cllr Pepper 6/12/21