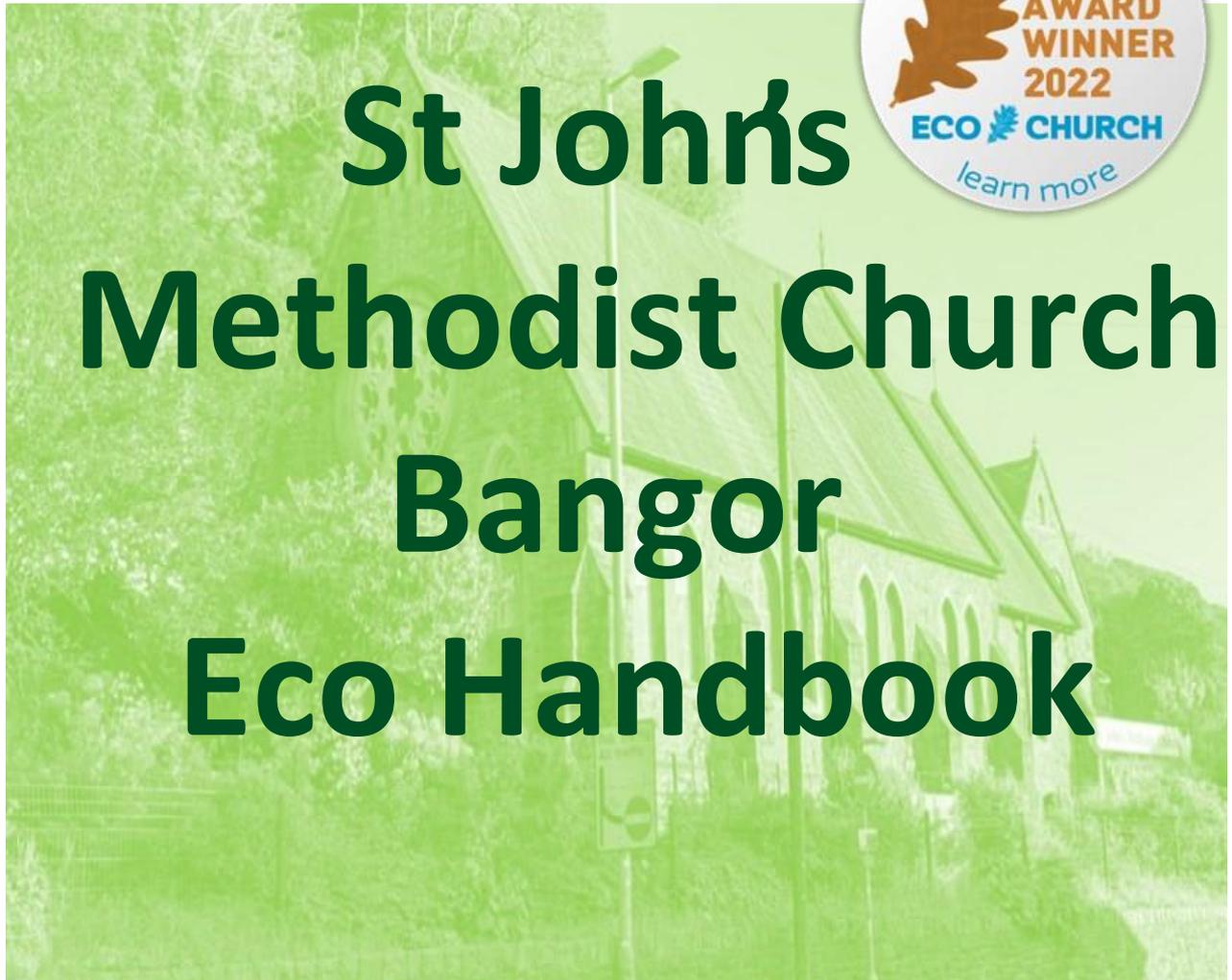




**St John's
Methodist Church
Bangor
Eco Handbook**



St John's Methodist Church Eco Handbook

Aim and objectives

The aim of this Handbook is to help individual members of the congregation at St John's Methodist Church consider their own lifestyle choices.

The Biblical creation stories give human beings privilege and responsibility in relation to the earth and every living creature. We are called to be partners with the rest of creation and co-partners in the ongoing creative and renewing activity of God. As members of an industrialised nation, we must accept responsibility for the damage that has been done to the earth and do whatever we can to mitigate the effects of our actions on those who are now experiencing climate poverty and injustice and for those in the future who will inherit the earth.

St John's Methodist Church is committed to playing its part and seeks to be part of the solution.

In January 2021 the Church formed an Eco-Group to encourage the Church to act responsibly on matters of environmental concern through our calling as Methodists. Among the things this group has done is to make an application for A Rocha Eco-Church status which has led to the grant of a Bronze Award.



As part of the application process we drafted an Environmental Policy which provides a framework in which this commitment can be translated into decision-making and action concerning all our activities at individual, local community and worldwide levels. The policy is supported by a document which details specifically the sorts of actions that will result from that commitment. One of the sections is headed "**Lifestyle**" and reads

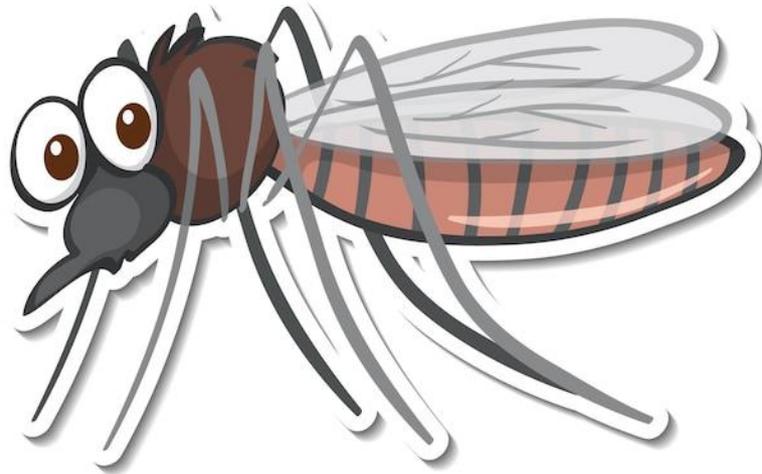
"We will actively promote and support members of the congregation to take individual responsibility for the way they live so that we can all live more sustainably. We aim to raise awareness of the effect we can each have on God's world."

The group has sought to do this through themed services, a Green Fair and items/articles placed in the weekly Notice/ News sheet and the periodic Circuit Newsletter which promote a more sustainable and green way of life. What follows is in part a collation and summary of the material with appropriate references and links.

Lifestyle

If you think you are too small to make a difference.....

.....you haven't spent the night with a mosquito (African proverb).



As we consider the impact of COP26 (Conference of Parties), knowing that decisions and commitments made by powerful people at this conference will impact the future of our beautiful, fragile, damaged world, we might feel unable to do anything significant to make a difference. Whilst big decisions were made (or not made, as the case may be) about carbon capture, strengthening resilience, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and funding just transitions, we also have to consider our own behaviours which, like the mosquito, can have an impact far greater than our size would suggest.

The 4 R's of sustainable living (<https://www.trvst.world/sustainable-living/importance-of-4rs-refuse-reduce-reuse-recycle/>) might help us understand how we can actively promote a lifestyle which will help to reduce the devastating effects of climate change. Following on from COP26, we suggest that we all consider how we can respond to the four R's – **Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.**

REFUSE

Most of our activity here will be about purchases we make and often about food though frequently alternatives are limited. Consider whether you can refuse to buy food which is packed in plastic, whether you can choose loose fruit and vegetables which you can put into recyclable bags or reusable bags such as the small net bags available for sale in many stores. Refuse to buy the cheapest meat and eggs – look for labels indicating high welfare standards, locally-sourced or at least British. Look for alternatives to buying plastic bottles of any description – not easy! Refuse to use anything other than 'bags for life' and never go shopping without them. Refuse to use cling film whenever possible – alternatives are available. Consider the clothing you buy – where has it come from? Is it made of

sustainably produced materials (often difficult to determine)? Are people being damaged in it's production? There will be many other ideas that people have – please share!

REDUCE

This is really important and probably a key commitment if we are to have an impact. Over time we have come to expect to own and have access to 'stuff'. It's described as an increase in the standard of living but do we need it all? Can we live without some of it? Can we repair it rather than throw it away? Reducing consumption – of food, of clothing, of water, of electricity/gas/petrol – will have an impact. Turn the tap off when you're brushing your teeth, switch-off a light when you're leaving a room, cook adequate proportions of food so there's no waste, don't buy that extra jumper unless you really need it, put tape around a brush handle rather than replacing it, reduce the number of journeys you make (what else can you do while you're out there, can you do one shop rather than two?) – all these seem minor acts but will, eventually, make a difference.

REUSE

We know that plastic is an amazing material which is used in many products. It's valuable but made from fossil fuels and damaging to the environment in many ways when thrown away. Whenever we use plastic we should try to avoid it being a single use – a good example of this is the disposable face mask when a reusable one can be just as effective. What can we reuse? This is easy if it's a bottle as it can be refilled many times. Try washing and reusing cling film and plastic bags which have stored food – not difficult! Other materials can be repurposed too so that we can achieve the **Reduce** target of using less stuff. The centres of toilet rolls or newspapers can be used to make pots for growing seedlings for instance. So-called disposable items can often be used many times so think before you bin them. Ask yourself what you reuse on a daily basis and whether you can increase these items.

RECYCLE

we have all become used to recycling items and most people are very good at it. If we can't reuse something, can we recycle it (or consider **Refusing** to buy it next time as it's not recyclable)? Tesco now has a collection point for soft plastics like crisp packets which are not taken in our household recycling so look out for these opportunities. Consider whether someone else could use an item you don't need. There are plenty of places where you can take unwanted goods for others to take away or buy – charity shops, recycling centres, the Freecycle organisation.

Consider this tale from John Hay, September 2021.....



“A few weeks ago a fly-tipper decided to leave a clutch of unwanted items at the side of a public footpath opposite my house. After walking past the mess for a few days, I decided to do something about it rather than just bemoaning the anti-social values of others. My initial thought was to get the stuff in the car and take it to the tip. Then I had a closer look at the big object which once put on its side appears to be the drum from a tumble dryer or something similar. It conveniently has holes at the bottom, so the paint is going to be out again shortly and voila, another planter is born!!!!”

If we were all to try to adjust our lifestyle by using the 4 R's, together we would make a big difference. We need to value our world and recognise its fragility, be determined to do what we can live carefully to minimise the damage, consider how we can share rather than drain the resources for all, raise awareness of our collective responsibility. There's not much time so let's start changing things now.

The St. John's Eco Group would welcome any suggestions about activities that could be organised to support individuals in our community to achieve the 4R's.

St John's Eco Group (but mostly Della Fazey!), Nov 2021

More Tips on personal Lifestyle Changes

As a starting point, why not assess your own carbon footprint. There are lots of different calculators out there, but one we recommend is this one from WWF which can be found at <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>

It takes about 5 minutes to do, and will give you an idea of your carbon footprint compared to the average person in the UK and world. Not only that, but it gives handy hints as to how you might reduce your carbon footprint.

Greenpeace have prepared a brilliant Guide to life, with 100 top tips when you follow the link!

<https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Greenpeace-Guide-To-Life-2.pdf>

The BBC have numerous relevant items on their website. There is a particularly good summary taken from the BBC Website 25/10/21 which sets out 4 things we can do to reduce our carbon footprint.

1. Heating – from installing a heat pump to turning down the heating there is a raft of changes around the home that can help the planet.
2. Food – cut out foodwaste and cut down on red meat.
3. Travel - drive and fly less.
4. Retail purchases - think before you buy. Do you really need something new? Could you repair what you have or buy second hand?

For more detail including some excellent graphics and short videos explaining carbon footprint, CO2 and the problem of deforestation click

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-58171814>

Plastic

Plastic sticks around in the environment for ages, **threatening wildlife and spreading toxins**. Plastic also contributes to global warming (almost all plastics are made from chemicals that come from the production of planet-warming fuels like gas, oil and even coal).

More and more people are trying to cut down on the amount of plastic they use. It's not easy because there is just so much of it about, but there are some clever ideas out there, and we've collected as many as we know together here, some from members contributions, some from further afield.

These tips will help you avoid household plastics that can end up in our seas – harming our dolphins, turtles and other wildlife too.



Members ideas for reducing use of single-use plastic

1. Use a bar of soap at home rather than bottles of hand-gel or shower-gel. One soap bar = 4 x bottles of hand-gel (Norma Caughter quoting BBC website)
2. Ideas for reducing single-use plastic Della Fazey – article for St John’s notices 18.02.21

“I have been trying to reduce our use of single-use plastic in our lives and here are some suggestions. I am sure that other people have more to add.

- 1) *We bought some caps to cover food in the ‘fridge. They look like shower caps and come in various sizes to adapt to different sized containers. I haven’t used cling film since I bought them. There is no suggestion that they are made from recycled plastic which would be the next step. Look on the Lakeland website for ‘Covermates’ (£2.29 for 8 or £3.69 for 12) and other ideas.*
- 2) *Buying liquid in larger containers and refilling smaller (recycled containers) when needed. We have washing-up liquid, liquid laundry soap, handwash soap, shampoo, toilet cleaner and multi-surface cleaner in this form, with all of them eco-friendly products. I have a business account with Suma the wholesaler but there’s another firm – Out of Eden – who don’t require a business account or minimum order but don’t have as wide a range of products.*
- 3) *Do you have a kitchen compost bin? Do you use it without a bin-liner so that the container just gets washed out after being emptied? You may use compostable bin*

liners or have a magazines arriving in compostable packing which I find difficult to compost! I cut them into small pieces before putting them into the compost but use them as bathroom bin-liners before then.

- 4) *If you feel the need to use bin liners try to buy plant-based bags which contain no plastic. I find them more fragile than plastic and they are certainly more expensive but I do feel that I am helping to saving the planet! Maistic is the name of the bags I use but I'm sure there'll be others.*
- 5) *If you make your own compost but only have a small garden, think about using a wormery. A recommended one is the Tiger Wormery – not cheap but rat-proof and made from recycled plastic.*
- 6) *On the farm we have, for years now, been using sheep pens made from recycled plastic. Solway Recycling produces many products, mostly for farming but also dog kennels and hen coops.”*

Della Fazey 18.02.21

3. Top tips to avoid with alternatives based on Cliff Newman's Eco Poster first published in St John's notices Jan 2021

*AVOID pre-packed meat and cheese, INSTEAD CHOOSE from the Deli counter.
AVOID Plastic drinking straws, INSTEAD CHOOSE reuseable straws or better still cut out altogether!*

AVOID Pre-packed fruit and veg, INSTEAD CHOOSE loose items in paper bag (many supermarkets or stalls will provide but if not take your own)

AVOID tea bags (as believe it or not, most have mesh made of plastic), INSTEAD CHOOSE either compostable teabags (for example, PG Tips and some Fairtrade brands) or loose tea.

AVOID Cotton-buds with plastic stalks.

AVOID paper tissues, INSTEAD CHOOSE cotton hankies.

AVOID thin carrier-bags, INSTEAD CHOOSE re-useable bags for life.

4. There are lots of campaign groups which have publicised some really good information sheets and lifestyle tips about how to avoid plastic. Why not have a look at one or two of them occasionally, such as

a) Greenpeace – that link again! <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Greenpeace-Guide-To-Life-2.pdf>

b) Friends of the Earth have lots of great ideas on their website. Here are 5 quickies.

- i) Use loose tea not tea bags (If this is a step too far, consider compostable teabags, which many brands including PG Tips now do).
- ii) Choose vegetables without packaging (Many of the main supermarkets, like Morrisons, also now have a range of products which can be bought loose and put in paper bags).
- iii) Buy a reusable coffee cup
- iv) Try soap nuts for laundry
- iv) Get a bamboo toothbrush.

For more detail see <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/plastics>

Energy consumption

Given the massive overlap with the cost-of-living crisis, there are now lots of websites dealing with energy saving tips. One of the best and most trusted is Martyn Lewis' Moneysavingexpert website which has lots of hot tips regularly updated. Here are 4 to be going on with (with images sourced by Cliff Newman and used in one of his 6 Eco Posters published in the St John's Notices in Spring 2021 on this very theme). Click on the link to see the full up to date list.

1. Wash more clothes in one go, but less often – and try a cooler setting.



2. Similarly, bear in mind that tumble dryers are one of the most expensive appliances to run, so minimize use and maximise load.
3. Only run your dishwasher when it has been filled



4. Cut your shower time – think about using a timer!



Below is the link.

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/energy-saving-tips/>

Food Waste

Food waste is one of the lesser-known enemies of the planet, creating six times more greenhouse gases than aviation. Besides the waste of precious resources used in growing, packaging and transporting the food in the first place, when left to rot in landfill, food waste produces methane, a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide. Globally a third of food never makes it to the table and in the UK, homes discard 4.5 million tonnes of it every year. If everyone stopped doing that for one day, it would have the same impact as planting 500,000 trees!!!!



In a very useful article in Waitrose's free magazine, Weekend, dated 7/10/21, Anna Shepard shares 25 tips to reduce food which are in 4 different categories – **Planning**, **Shopping**, **Leftovers** and **Storage** and I thought it might be good to pass some of these on.

Planning

1. **Take stock before you shop.** Assess the contents of your cupboards, fridge and freezer and make a note of what needs using up. You also might find something already lurking there you thought you might need to get.
2. **Plan a weekly menu.** A good way of making sure you don't buy more than you are going to use. If that is too 1950's for you, you might find a note on the fridge with items that need using up and prioritizing use-by-dates to be helpful. If meat is nearing its use by date, cook or freeze it to extend its life.
3. **Get to know your food waste.** Check what you are throwing out and work out how to avoid it e.g., reduce portion sizes.
4. **Use your loaf.** 20 million slices of bread are thrown away at home in the UK every day, so why not slice bread you are not getting through and then freeze so it can be used as needed.

Shopping

1. Buy less food. Obvious really. Buy less and use up what's already in your cupboards.
2. Eat less meat.

Leftovers

1. Turn leftovers into great meals by building up a repertoire of recipes you can make from leftovers.

2. Be imaginative and where possible treat waste food like ingredients – for example, use chopped broccoli stalks in stir fry or try mashed potatoes with their skin on!
3. Make compost for use in your, or someone else's, garden. This not only prevents food rotting and producing methane in landfill, but it also means it will not create a further transport footprint. The next best thing is a council collection food scheme which mostly turns our scraps into energy or fertilizer.

Storage

1. Use the top shelf in your fridge for food that is close to its use by date, or that needs using up, so that you do not forget about it. Maybe even get into the habit of having a “flung together meal” once a week that uses up this food.
2. Eat frozen once a week, so that items don't get forgotten about or stick around for too long, as well as making space for more food to be frozen.
3. Bananas are our most wasted food product with 920,000 being thrown away every day in the UK. If they are getting too ripe, slice and freeze them to later use in smoothies and milkshakes or make them into banana bread!

To find out more check out lovefoodhatewaste.com or recyclenow.com/reduce-waste/composting

John Hay, with details and stats from Weekend #7/10/21, Christmas Circuit Newsletter 2021

TREES

Tree planting is part of the solution but only part and can add to the problem of carbon emissions when not properly managed.

Look again at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-58171814> and click on the video at the bottom which explains the problem of deforestation in key areas of the world and reforestation in the wrong places.

For more about this there is a very helpful summary of the complexities in Ros Atkins on tree planting and climate change

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p0b2btrb/ros-atkins-on-tree-planting-and-climate-change>

Nevertheless, when done right with the right trees in the right locations and under proper management, tree planting can help enormously. One organization which promotes this well by working with NGOs and local groups across the world, is Treeapp. See article below, written by John's daughter, Emma Hay which she wrote for the Circuit Newsletter in January 2021.

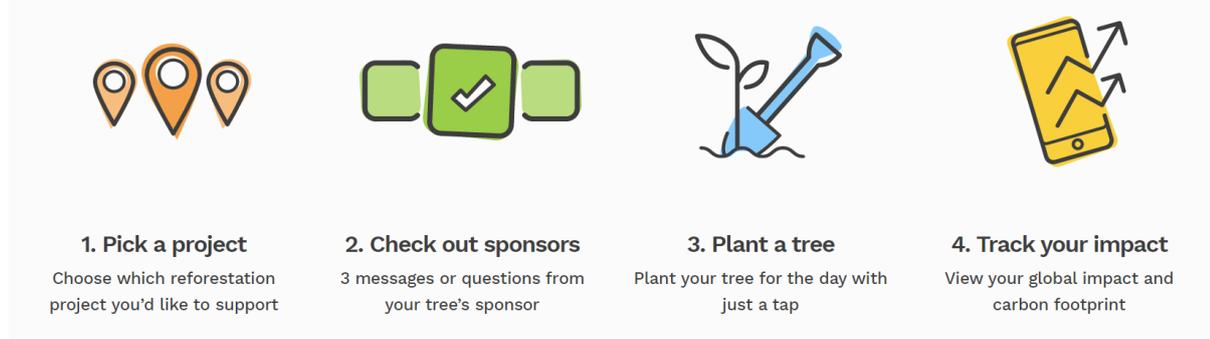
Reduce your carbon footprint and support local communities, for free,
with this upcoming start-up: Treeapp

What is Treeapp?

Treeapp is a simple app that allows you to plant trees around the world for free. This allows you to offset your carbon footprint and create local job opportunities for communities across the world. Simply answer a few questions on the app, to plant a real tree with an official reforestation project. Up to one tree can be planted per day per person.

How can you plant a tree without paying any money?

To understand how it's financially feasible for you to plant trees without paying any money you must first ask yourself, how does Facebook make its money? How does Google generate such staggering revenue? The quick answer: through advertisers. Advertisers pay Facebook to advertise their products directly to your newsfeed - without any involvement from you, whose attention is the product in this transaction. Treeapp essentially taps into this money generating interaction, but with three key differences: the advertisers paying for your attention are eco-conscious companies, the product (your attention) is voluntarily and purposefully given by you, and part of the profit funds a tree being planted from one of Treeapp's NGO partners across the world. So, if you are happy to donate 60 seconds of your attention in exchange for planting a tree (for free!) then this app is for you.



First download and open the Treeapp app on your mobile or tablet;

- 1) Then choose which project you want to plant a tree with (initially you will only have access to a few projects, but the more trees you plant, the more projects you will have access to);
- 2) Simply watch 3 messages or answer 3 quick questions from a sponsor (the advertiser) – this step shouldn't take more than a minute;
- 3) Voila! Now you get to plant your tree (up to one tree can be planted by you per day).
- 4) They even have a handy tracker section for you to monitor how many trees you've planted and how much carbon you have offsetted.

Want to know more?

Check out the official Treeapp website: <https://www.thetreeapp.org/>

SPEAKING OF MORE (AND FINALLY!!!!), IF YOU HAVE THE APPETITE, LOOK AT THESE IMPORTANT LINKS – the Methodist Church (Eco section) and A Rocha

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/environment-and-climate-change/> and <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

That's all Folks!!!!