



Carbonbusting: stuff

The goods and service use each year on average contribute an astonishing two tonnes of carbon emissions on our footprints. All along their life cycle, from production to disposal, the goods we buy use up precious natural resources and energy. We only have one planet to sustain us, but if everyone was to live like an average European would need three planets. Here are some ideas to help us ensure we only use our fair share.

TAKE ACTION

REDUCE consumption

Resist consumerism! There are better ways to spend precious leisure time than shopping.

Give (and ask for) cinema/theatre tickets, or other treats, as gifts, rather than 'stuff'.

When you do shop, buy quality not quantity. Plus make do and mend. Do as your granny did!

Buy second-hand – clothes, books, DVDs. Hire an outfit for a special occasion rather than buying.

Use libraries – DVDs & CDs are very cheap to rent, and books are free (and can be reserved).

Practice smart shopping – buy non-perishables in bulk, and in refillable packaging (e.g. Ecover). Buy concentrated products. Choose products with less, or recyclable, packaging.

Enjoy seasonal and local food which comes in much less packaging than imported/frozen/ready meal format foods. Choose loose fruit and veg, go to local markets and Pick Your Own farms for fresh produce or use a veg box scheme. Have milk (and even juice) delivered in bottles.

The average British family wastes £70 worth of food every month - make a shopping list and plan meals, keep and use leftovers. Make sure you understand date labels – Use By is about safety, whereas Best Before relates to quality. Make sure your fridge is set to under 5 degrees in order to keep food fresher for longer.

Drink tap water rather than bottled - bottled water is around 2000 times more expensive than tap water, is less regulated, often loses out to tap water in taste tests, and most bottles are dumped. Get a reusable bottle and check out refilloxford.org to find locations where you can fill it for free.

Go paperless on bills and statements. Print on both sides of the paper when printing.

We receive around 650 items of junk mail each a year. Opt out using the Mail Preference Service (mpsonline.org.uk), or affix a card requesting 'No flyers, circulars or leaflets' by your letterbox. Cancel directories.

Use rechargeable batteries (around 1 billion household batteries are used in the UK every year. In 2009, only 3% of household batteries were recycled and the rest went to landfill).

REUSE as much as possible

Use reusable containers for packed lunches/storage and take reusable shopping bags out with you (and taking a backpack or tote means you can also take a reusable water bottle out with you!) Use cloth dishcloths instead of kitchen roll and use plastic food trays and pots as seed trays and plant pots.

Use real nappies. Read the testimonials for the alternatives to disposable sanitary wear.

Compost jiffy bags, kitchen roll, shredded paper and natural materials eg. wool, cotton and linen.

Pass stuff on to other people: share unwanted good food using the Olio app, and giveaway items to local people for free on the 'Everything for Free in Oxfordshire' Facebook group.

Look out for Bring and Takes in West Oxford, donate to charity shops (ring before you bring to check they have a use for your stuff, but many do take electrical goods), organise a clothes swap ('swishing') party with friends and

neighbours, offer things on Freecycle or the like, sell stuff at car boot sales or via the small ads – someone somewhere (probably locally) will want your stuff!

Furniture and good quality electrical goods can be donated to Emmaus (details below) see if your local playgroup or nursery school would like items your children have grown out of.

RECYCLE/RECOVER everything you can

Battery recycling points in community buildings and retailers.-anywhere that sells them should take them

Compost at home, or put all food waste into your kerbside collection.

Give your old appliance to the retailer when buying a new one – they are obliged to take it free of charge regardless of where it was bought.

And last but by no means least... buy recycled products – complete the recycling loop!

HELP AVAILABLE TO YOU IN OXFORD

There are a number of services in the Oxford area to help you reduce, reuse and recycle.

Find homes for unwanted items: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OxfordFreecycle/>

Donate unwanted furniture and good condition electrical goods to Emmaus - tel 01865 763698, <http://www.emmaus.org.uk/oxford>

Orinoco Scrapstore – recycles tools and random items - tel 01865 761113, www.oxorinoco.org

Real nappies call 08450 50 45 50 or www.oxfordshirewaste.gov.uk/realnappies

Redbridge Recycling Centre (don't think of it as the dump!) takes white goods, bicycles, tools, chemicals, timber, clothes & shoes, telecoms & computers, energy saving & fluorescent lightbulbs.

To stop Junk Mail - Mail Preference Service 0845 703 4599 or www.mpsonline.org.uk/mpsr/

To cancel Yellow Pages 0800 671 444 (look services up online instead),

To cancel Thomson Local Directory 01252 555 555 or email distribution@thomsonlocal.com,
email Royal Mail to opt out of junk mail delivery by getting a form from: optout@royalmail.com

MYTH BUSTING

“Things I put in the recycling bins are not actually recycled”

There are calls for local authorities to publicise in detail who handles the materials it collects for recycling and where they end up. You can find out where your recycling goes in Oxfordshire at www.recycleforoxfordshire.org.uk/cms/content/what-happens-your-recycling

FIND OUT MORE

www.oxfordshirewaste.gov.uk - Oxfordshire Waste Partnership of the county and district councils

www.recyclenow.com

www.recycledproducts.org.uk – search for specific products made from recycled materials

www.storyofstuff.org – A 20-minute animation of the consumerist society

www.junkbuster.org.uk – one stop shop for cancelling junk mail & directories

www.lovefoodhatewaste.com – loads of tips and recipes to help you throw away less food

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