

Individual Sustainable Living.

For individuals and individual households, sustainable living means:-

1. Do not have too many children, and do not encourage others to have too many. You should not press to have lots of grand-children.

What is too many? - more than 2. Less than 2 is better.

It may be surprising that this is the number one item in sustainable living, but the reality is that the world cannot sustain its current population size, let alone the increase that is predicted. This is not only a problem for the developing world. The UK cannot from its own resources sustain its present population level. Further a new UK child represents a carbon footprint that on average will be 800 tons of CO₂ in its lifetime - if it is an affluent citizen it is likely to be double this. In contrast the average Tanzanian child represents a footprint of only 30 tons.

Sensible targets for population are 1 billion for the world and 5-10 million for the UK.

2. Think very hard about every pound you spend.

Every single thing we pay for has a carbon footprint and uses up the limited resources of the Earth. Become aware of the resource and pollution costs of everything we pay for and adjust your lifestyle to reduce your impact. Be aware also that every thing we do that damages the Earth also brings death, sickness and injury to our fellow human beings. We cannot avoid this but we can attempt to minimise the harm we cause and to evaluate our needs and desires against the harm we cause to others.

A few things may actually reduce your impact on the Earth - insulating your home properly, or buying a bicycle to replace other means of transport. But most things will increase your impact on the Earth. This is also true of many more efficient devices. Our consumption led society may promote the early scrapping of goods and replacement by new and more efficient ones - cars, washing machines, fridges etc. But these will often not be justified because of the embodied energy in the products. Often it will be better to squeeze more life out of an old product even if it is less efficient than a new one. Of course when goods have to be replaced go for the most efficient.

Equally of course some goods and services have a very small impact on the Earth. Works of art, which may cost millions, have only a small impact on the planet. Similarly attending an open-air concert may have quite a small impact.

3. Travel less and travel responsibly.

Powered travel has a huge negative impact on the Earth. It uses large amounts of resources and land, creates noise, congestion, pollution and causes death and injury. By far the most damaging form of common travel is flying. Give up flying, or at the very least cut it down. Given the damage it does flying for pleasure and recreation is a selfish indulgence. Other forms of powered travel are also damaging but in general not on the same scale.

Fundamentally we need to organise our lives to travel less. Live near your work, send children to local schools, use local shops and facilities, do not travel to far off places for holidays. When we do travel do so efficiently. Combine journeys. Walk and cycle for local journeys. Use public transport. When you do use a car, share journeys and fill the car up. (The average car on the road has only 1.3 occupants). If you can give up your car but if you have a car get an economical one. Like for like diesels are more economical. Drive economically - driving style can reduce fuel consumption by 10% with almost no change in journey times and

driving more slowly can make much bigger reductions. (See Travel facts for comparison of modes of travel).

4. Think about what you eat.

What we eat has a significant impact on the Earth. Meat has a very high impact. Beef is the worst form of meat being up to 3 times worse than pork, lamb or poultry. A vegetarian diet in general has a much lower footprint and is much less damaging to the Earth. Try to have at least some vegetarian meals each week. When eating meat eat less.

There are problems with dairy products and fish - but one has to eat something!

Buy much of what you eat locally and from local sources. Eat in season fruit and vegetables.

5. Detailed Actions.

See Theresa's Top Tips for details of actions you can take.

<Click here>

1. Turning down the heating in one's home and wearing more clothing.
2. Doing what one can to improve the insulation of one's home.

Note that depending on the base from which one starts, insulation options will actually save money. Though obviously if one already has a very well insulated home, further improvement will save little money. The cost v benefits depend very much on where one starts from.

For "leaky" homes the most cost effective insulation options are:-

- a) Draught exclusion.
- b) Loft insulation - if you have little or none. These days the recommendation is for about 27 cms of mineral wool but less if you use polyurethane or multi-layer foils.
- c) Cavity wall insulation - if you have reasonable loft insulation (say 12 cms or more cms of insulation)
- d) Double glazing.

Insulation of solid walls can be achieved either internally (which reduces room size by about 5-8 cms for external walls). Or with greater cost and difficulty externally.

3. Please, give up, or at least reduce the amount you fly. Holiday in the UK, go by train or coach, or bicycle!
4. When you drive do so e