



A-Z New Years resolutions

Creator God,

You created a world of community, richness, and love. But human greed has brought separation, destruction, and injustice.

So, we pray for the opportunities and boldness to act together with others, to break down the barriers of our selfish desires.

We pray our collective actions will be driven by wisdom and love, so that we your church will be agents for justice, as we seek a world fruitful for all of creation. In Jesus' name, Amen

a Already, renewable energy is a big contributor to UK's energy production. In November 2022 more than 20GW of electricity was produced by wind for the first time, representing over 70% of electricity generated on that day (National Grid data). Switching to a renewable energy supplier such as E.ON or Ecotricity cuts your domestic carbon footprint.

b Become a volunteer (or customer) in one of the many sustainability organisations in Colchester – from the Food Co-Op and Enform's terracyclers to charity shops or cycle repair teams. <https://enform.org.uk/resource-centre/waste-and-recycling/>

c Cycling is pollution free, healthy, fun and is more convenient than a car for some trips – but you need to feel safe and confident on your bike – look up 'Big Bike Revival' online for local support, or find them at St Cedd's Community Café, Shrub End on Monday mornings. <https://www.cyclinguk.org/bigbiker-evival>

d Decide to reduce new clothes purchases – swapping or buying second hand is a more sustainable option and we have some excellent charity shops locally. Live by the principles of 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' in all areas of your life.

e Explore free exchange sites such as freecycle when you need something or have unwanted items to pass on (ask someone to help you if it's a new online venture) or join others and share items that you only need occasionally, from car shares to camping, garden, decorating or cooking equipment, less 'stuff' can be a good thing! The Toy library is another way to avoid buying more.

f Food choices matter! Everyone has different taste but sustainability is all about eating more plant-based foods. Could you commit to that more often, or even cut meat out of meals?

g Go electric! Look at electric vehicles if you need a different car this year. Second hand electric cars are sometimes a great option especially for local trips, and they cut pollution. If you cycle, think about an electric bike for longer trips or when you need more carrying capacity.

h 'Heat the person not the room' – is a philosophy for keeping cosy at home. Use a hot water bottle or microwavable heat pillow if you have to sit for a long time.

i Insulation! If your house has cavity walls, getting cavity wall insulation is one of the most efficient ways to save heat energy. To tell if you have cavity walls and get clear advice see <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/cavity-wall-insulation/>

j Join up this year - in campaigning and keeping informed about the environment! Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Christian Aid, Christian Climate Action, Green Christians, Essex Wildlife Trust and the Soil Association are just some of the global, national and local groups with strong environmental messages. These groups also help us put pressure on politicians and businesses – to make the changes we need to see in climate policy and actions.

k Keep it clean! Using biodegradable cleaning materials, washing powder and liquids such as Ecover or Bio D cuts down chemical pollution in waste water. Shampoo bars such as Lush are also plastic-free. You can refill shampoo, washing up liquid etc at refill shops.

l Locally grown items have lower carbon footprints and support local producers – from honey to summer fruit, vegetables, milk, fish and meat, know where your food comes from! Eating seasonally helps cut food miles as fruit and veg are available from local sources.

m Most of us can't be self-sufficient for food, but growing some fruit and veg, even windowsill herbs, cuts food miles and imports, reminds us of seasons and keeps us tuned in to nature. You can be sure it's organic if you grow it yourself – and look for the organic accreditation on produce you buy

q Quit food packaging and plastic bottles – support local refill shops such as the one in Layer Road or Colchester Food Co-op in Queen Street. The range available is amazing! Say no to single use plastics – have a water bottle and cup you re-use when you travel. <https://colchesterfoodcoop.org.uk/>

u Use the library! the library has an excellent collection, all free to borrow ... again and again. You can also order books online for free and new titles appear all the time.

y You can do this! Saying 'no' to some of the things we call essentials, or come to rely on, or even resent as clutter, can be genuinely freeing.

n Not got solar panels yet? If your roof is suitable, a solar system can be really cost effective over time, maybe with a battery. Money Saving Expert gives clear estimates of costs and benefits. <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/free-solar-panels/>

r Re-use packaging such as wrapping paper, ribbon and padded envelopes. Fold it and keep it for next Christmas or birthdays ... along with some saved A4 envelopes and gift bags to use again, and this year's Christmas cards to recycle as gift tags next time round!

v Very little is said about investing ethically – but it's one thing we can all think about if we have a pension, bank account or savings. Our investments affect how people and environments are exploited or conserved. Look at Money Saving Expert's 'ethical banking' page for a helpful start on this. <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/banking/ethical-banking/>

z Zzzz While we're sleep, electricity is cheaper! Some companies offer homes with smart meters special deals to cut their consumption at peak times when prices are higher, and use cheaper off peak electricity instead. Ovo offers deals to customers who cut energy use at peak times, as does Octopus Energy's Agile tariff and 100Green's Tide tariff is coming soon.

o Overfishing is causing a rapid depletion in our global fish populations, roughly 94% of fish stocks are overfished (34%) or maximally sustainably fished (60%). When shopping or dining out, help reduce the demand for overexploited species by choosing seafood that is both healthful and sustainable.

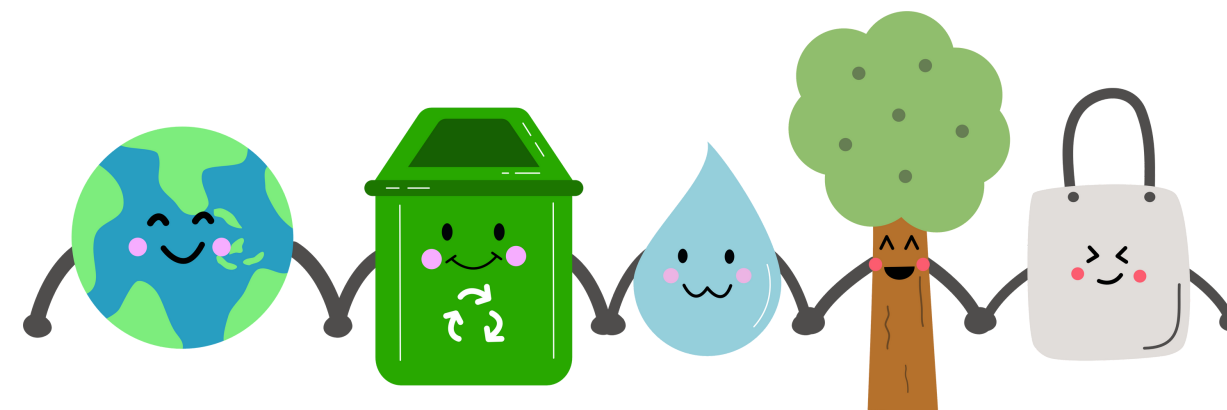
s Switch to Fair Trade – you can buy coffee, tea, cocoa, sugar and chocolate at supermarkets or the Oxfam shop, plus other food, ingredients and small household items. It's more than Advent calenders and Easter eggs, but remember them too!

w Water! We know about the 4 minute shower to save water, and the value of a water butt, but what about quitting the garden sprinkler, flushing the loo less, washing clothes only when they really are dirty, and being more aware of every running tap in the kitchen or bathroom?

p Plan your travelling to go by train – it costs 10 times less carbon than flying. While you enjoy the train journey, pray for the work of sustainability organisations and climate campaigners before you read your book, chat, enjoy your coffee or have a snooze!

t Take the bus when you can, to avoid car use – or walk and cycle if that's an option. The £2 local bus fare continues to the end of 2024 – including trips as far as Clacton or Bury St Edmunds!

x X (formerly Twitter) What's your relationship with social media, email and screens like? Estimates vary but generally, the average letter has a carbon footprint of about 29 g of CO₂ and the carbon footprint of a normal email is much less, about 4 g of CO₂. Delete unwanted emails and limit attachments as these both add to carbon costs via storage.



Have your best, happiest and most sustainable New Year ever!