



To mark the five weeks running up to the UN Climate Summit COP26, the St Paul's Cathedral Eco-group set a COPTober Climate Challenge to:

- **Learn** more about the climate crisis and the COP26 UN Climate Conference.
- **Reflect** on our own responses to the climate crisis. Pray for those most impacted by it and pray for the success of the conference.
- **Make** at least one change each week to reduce our climate impact.

Over five weeks we suggested practical steps to take, with a different theme each week. The themes were:

FOOD

Producing the food we eat accounts for over a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing meat and dairy consumption is the most impactful dietary change we can make to reduce the climate footprint of our food.

Around a third of the food we produce is wasted worldwide each year. Not only does this food go to waste, but uneaten food taken to landfill releases the destructive greenhouse gas methane into the air. By making healthy, sustainable food choices and eating greener we can all play our part. <https://www.netzeronation.scot/take-action/eating-greener>

TREAD LIGHTLY (TRANSPORT)

Transport is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland. But it's also an area where we have an opportunity to significantly reduce our emissions by choosing more active forms of travel. Given that over half of journeys we make in Scotland are under 5km, if we choose to walk, or cycle instead of taking the car for these shorter journeys, we'll be reducing our climate impact. <https://www.netzeronation.scot/take-action/active-travel>. Although most people don't fly regularly, flying is a major source of carbon emissions. One long-distance return flight generates more CO₂ than the total annual emissions of the average UK resident.

LIVE SIMPLY

Manufacturing is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions globally. To reduce our carbon footprint we need to reduce the amount of new products we buy. The more waste that can be diverted from landfill, the better. Decaying, biodegradable landfill waste releases greenhouse gases which contribute to climate change. If we recycle as much as possible, less goes to landfill and

precious materials can be used again to create new things instead of being used only once. By making sustainable choices where we can, for example, moving away from 'fast fashion' clothing choices, always making use of recycling facilities when they're available and choosing reusable items rather than single use items, we can help tackle climate change by reducing our emissions. Actions like this help create what is known as a 'circular economy', where goods and materials are kept in use for longer as we reduce, reuse, repair and recycle.

GARDENING

'Each and every garden is a tiny carbon sink, with every plant busily vacuuming carbon dioxide from the air and locking it away for years.'¹ The carbon stored in the top metre of garden soil is 145 tonnes (160 tons) per hectare meaning in the UK alone 62 million tonnes (68 million tons) are already stored and with an increased effort by all gardeners they have the ability to sequester (capture and store) more.² The problem is that too often we return all that carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere by using peat-based compost, artificial fertilizers and insecticides. We must re-think and garden with a 'light touch' so if you are a gardener please try some of the challenges. NO GARDEN? – Please pass this on and talk to friends/family to try, plant a tub or window box, use your voice and vote on such subjects as bees, soil management, use of insecticides etc., buy gifts such as terracotta filled pots, packets of native wildflowers (<https://www.seedsofhope.scot/our-seeds>) Arbroath Social Enterprise with seeds sourced from Angus and Fife. <https://scotiaseeds.co.uk>) or buy packets with the RHS logo for pollinator friendly ones.

¹ Sally Nex – How to Garden the Low Carbon Way

¹H.S. Report on Gardening in a Changing Climate 2021

HOME ENERGY

Although it may not be obvious, there's a direct connection between your home energy use and the environment. Almost a quarter of carbon generated in the UK is from the heating and electricity use in our homes. By consuming less power, you reduce the amount of toxic fumes released by the power plants, conserve the earth's natural resources and protect ecosystems from destruction. By taking steps to reduce your energy intake, you'll contribute to a healthier and happier world. <https://www.netzeronation.scot/take-action/home-energy>.
