

### **Saving money doesn't cost the Earth**

At this time of cutting down on spending you may assume it's more expensive to be green. Actually there are many simple ways you can look after the environment and save money immediately. You're probably already doing some really great green stuff and keen to do more but don't know where to start.

Firstly it's important you don't reinvent the wheel, it costs nothing for you to talk to local people and listen to what they're doing. Your friends and neighbours are bound to have ideas they'll want to share with you, also, being green is taught in local schools as part of the National Curriculum and your children will be enthusiastic about trying out things they've learned at school.

We've all become more socially aware and realise that the more we ask for green goods and services the sooner they'll become available in our area. This applies at home, in our places of work and the local community. It's important that smaller businesses and suppliers don't get left behind by the corporate responsibility plans of larger companies. In fact it's vital that local shops, offices and other businesses keep up with their green customers' expectations by making changes now. Anyone wanting to know simple ways to make their business more environmentally friendly should contact me straight away.

We can all make a big difference now by questioning the day to day things we buy. If I'm changing something that's worn out I check first to see whether the old one can be repaired or if a suitable second hand one is available. When buying something new, I always look at environmentally friendly options first and choose equipment that uses the least amount of energy; I've replaced traditional lamps with low energy bulbs that save money on my fuel bills. I prefer to purchase from local suppliers; fresh produce grown nearby is tastier, supports our community and doesn't involve the cost of transportation from a distance. At work I'm using environmentally friendly goods including recycled photocopying paper, stationery and pens - these are just as effective and often cost less than traditional products.

On a larger scale, I'm planning to replace the boiler that heats my house with a new highly efficient electrical heat pump system that transfers free energy from the outside atmosphere into my home. My next car will be a fuel efficient hybrid that's virtually emission free at low speeds. Within a year these will both pay back.

I'm keen to pass on what I've learned and hear your ideas. By sharing our successes we can all benefit. Contact me now if you want to know how to be more environmentally friendly. I can write an environmental policy suitable for any type of business and help with anything from where to find local suppliers of green goods, products and services to sourcing a nearby contractor who will install an energy efficient heating system into your home or business premises.

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