

'Tis the season to be jolly good to the planet...

Christmas time can mean lots of extra waste... which is linked to climate change and the plastics crisis in our oceans. But it's easy to be big on giving yet small on environmental impact.



**Use these
top tips**

to reduce the excess
and keep Hertfordshire
green this Christmas.



Gift buying

1 in 10 gifts are never used

Planning is key! Make a list of what you are buying to help prevent impulse buying gifts. Plan something they will really love before you head to the shops and remember your reusable bags!

Advent calendars

To avoid single-use plastic, choose a reusable Advent Calendar. Sweet tooth? Fill with your favourite sweets and treats but look for chocolates in recyclable foil wrapping and avoid (unsustainable) palm oil.

Turn the idea on its head...

with a 'reverse advent calendar'. Add one item of non-perishable foods or toiletries to a Christmas hamper each day (a plastic bag or cardboard box will do). On Christmas Eve, donate it to your local foodbank or homeless charity [The Trussell Trust](#).



Buying chocolate?

Opt for fair trade or organic and remember to recycle all parts of the box.



Shop Local

There's never been a better time to support local and independent shops, markets and crafters. [Local fairs and fetes](#) with local artisan makers offer really unique gifts.

You can even explore artisan products from the warmth of your home, with the [Hertfordshire Christmas Market](#) on Facebook.



Give yourself a greener Christmas gift for the years ahead by swapping to a [sustainable energy provider](#).

Need inspiration? Use the Gift Givers' Mantra:

"Want, Need, Wear, Read"

Be as creative as you want e.g. by gifting a magazine subscription or voucher for a favourite restaurant. Or try our ['Alternative Gift Buying list'](#).

Secret Santa

Try a family Secret Santa... there's less to buy meaning more personalised gifts and fewer unwanted presents. Pop in the gift receipt just in case. Any unwanted gifts can be donated to a charity shop, re-gifted or put on Freecycle.

Packaging

125,000 tonnes of plastic packaging are generated over the holiday. For anyone who needs a nudge in the sustainability direction check this list of local [zero waste shops](#) for great gift ideas -from wax food wraps to washable make-up wipes.

Avoid gifting battery-operated items - **20,000** of them end up in landfill each year!!



Gift yourself year-long WasteAware tips by subscribing to the monthly Rubbish and Recycling email bulletin [Hertfordshire County Council](#).



Food waste



A survey of Hertfordshire bins last year found that:
24% of our household waste was avoidable food – edible food that was simply thrown away instead of being eaten.

Uneaten food waste is a major factor in climate change as explained below. Imagine all that turkey, sprouts and Christmas pudding just thrown in the bin!

Thankfully, it's easy to reduce food waste:

- Plan meals so you know what you're cooking.
- Then write a shopping list so you only buy what you need... look in cupboards first to avoid buying double.
- It's only the turkey who needs to be stuffed! Plan your portion sizes so you prepare only as much food as is needed.
- Left over sprouts? Turn them into something tasty with the Love Food Hate Waste recipes for reusing your leftovers. Simply type your leftover food(s) into the search bar.
- Made too much? Freeze it to eat later... ice cream and margarine tubs make great storage tubs! Clear out your freezer ahead of time so you have space available.
- Unused non-perishable food can be donated to a local charity / shelters. There's often a Food Bank collection point in supermarkets.
- Local community food sharing apps – download a food sharing app like Olio and share your food with your local community.
- Can't face another sprout? As a last resort, if you really can't eat it, you can recycle ALL food waste – including bones, turkey skin and cranberry sauce in your kitchen caddy or put compostable items in your green waste bin.

Food waste feeds climate change

To reduce your carbon footprint, reducing meat eating is a great place to start. Cattle release a third of the human-caused methane and **15%** of all climate emissions.

- **'Meat-free' and 'Christmas'** may sound dull, but you'll be surprised at how easy – and delicious – it can be.
- **Avoid fatbergs.** Don't pour oils and fats down the sink as it causes 'fatbergs' which block drains and sewers. Instead, wait for it to solidify and put it in the bin.
- **Check your fridge temperature.** Keep it at 5 degrees or lower to keep your food fresher for longer.
- **Save energy and time** by using a lid on your pots and pans and turn off the heat a couple of minutes before your meal is fully cooked. Electric hobs, in particular, take time to cool down and your food will continue to cook in the pan.
- **Add only as much water** as needed in your kettle.
- **When you've watched enough Christmas films,** fully turn off your TV and other appliances to save energy and reduce your bills.

FACT!

If wasted food were a country it would be the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases after the U.S. and China.



Party and decorations



Looking the part

Thinking about a new party dress or Christmas jumper? Think again. It takes **2,700 litres of water** to make just one T-Shirt. That's enough water for one person for 900 days.

Increasing the wearable life of an item by just 3 months, reduces the carbon, water and waste footprints by 5-10%... so choose a 'new to you' option instead:


- Green is the new black – shop vintage using second-hand clothes apps like: [Vinted – Sell and buy clothes, shoes and accessories](#), [Depop – buy, sell, discover unique fashion](#)
- Have a dig around in your wardrobe, check out your local charity shop, swap jumpers between friends or customise old outfits to fight #FastFashion and save some cash.
- Go for longevity... Wear your Christmas Jumper with pride all winter long... and it could save on your heating bills too.



Remember to consider visitors to your garden this winter. Give local wildlife a helping hand with these **5 super-simple tips** from the RSPCA.

Swap single-use paper and plastic plates for reusable options by hiring from the **Party Kit Network**.

Find local reusable party supplies near you. Some companies will even do the washing up for you!



What can I recycle? Many people think 'vegware' or wooden cutlery can be recycled, but sadly it can't. Dispose of your party goods responsibly by checking what goes where.






Send E Christmas cards (or party invites) rather than physical cards.



Parties

- Encourage your friends and family to car share or travel to your event sustainably.
- Set up recycling area inside and make it easy for your guests.
- Head to your local brewery... Some offer refillable growlers or kegs, so you can reduce your waste while trying some local produce!
- If you do use cans and bottles, rinse then recycle them at home.
- Steer clear of balloon and lantern releases as they cause litter when they come down.



An estimated **100 million crackers** are pulled each year, creating a lot of waste! Choose eco options or make your own: personalise them for family members with these [cracker filler ideas](#).



Buy good quality Christmas decorations, so they last for many Christmases to come!



It can be tempting to buy cheaper decorations, like tinsel – which isn't recyclable, you'll probably need to buy more next year.

Waste reduction and reuse hacks



One person's rubbish is another's Christmas present. Items in good condition that you no longer can be donated for re-use or re-sale at reuse centres, charity shops, or even by selling them online – disposal should always be the **last resort**.



Reuse Christmas cards as gift tags or to write shopping lists on!



Don't buy novelty items or knick-knacks no-one is going to use. Remember: **Want, Need, Wear, Read...** And pop in the gift receipt just in case!



Gift wrapping

Help reduce the **277,000 miles of wrapping paper** going to landfill each year by avoiding glossy, glittery, or metallic gift wrap which cannot be recycled. Instead, try brown / Kraft paper tied up with ribbon or string and a nice tag. Maybe even a sprig of spruce?

If you're likely to reuse it, opt for the best quality wrapping paper you can as it won't rip upon opening.

Or ditch the rolls of wrapping paper entirely and go for fabric gift wrap (furoshiki) recycled paper, or a reusable gift bag.

If you're buying a real Christmas tree, look for a young one in a pot so it can live in the garden year-round.




If you're buying an artificial Christmas tree, buy one to last so you can use it year on year.








What can I recycle?

Remember to check your council calendar for bin collection days over the festive season.


 **Batteries** – Choose reusable if you can. Remember batteries can't go in any household bin. Use battery banks at your nearest recycling centre or large shops selling batteries.



 **Baubles** – whether glass or plastic, these are not recyclable. Reuse, or dispose of in the bin.


 **Bubble wrap** can't be recycled from home either but is easily reused - many charity shops are grateful for bubble wrap donations!


 **Cardboard packaging** is recycled at the kerbside and recycling centres. Reuse cardboard boxes from online orders and flatten them before recycling.


  **Christmas Cards** – Only plain Christmas cards are recyclable. Anything with glitter, ribbons, plastic or foil add-ons must go in the bin.


 **Christmas Trees** – Check if your local council collect real trees or take it to your nearest recycling centre for composting. Remember to remove all decorations first!



  **Crackers** – Some crackers are recyclable, but not all, so think before you buy!



 **Expanded polystyrene / foam packing** is not recyclable and must go in the bin.

 **Foil** – enjoyed a mince pie or two? foil packaging can be recycled, including meat trays and aerosol cans.

 **Glass and Cans** – Recycle your empties! Any glass bottles or cans can go in your recycling container or take to your nearest Recycling Centre. All sites are open on 2nd January.

 **Tinsel is not recyclable** – if it's completely lost its sparkle please place in the bin.

  **Wrapping paper** – Only unadorned wrapping paper is recyclable. Anything with glitter, plastic or foil add-ons must go in the bin.

  **Wreaths** – natural material such as ivy, pine cones etc can be returned to your garden or composted in a garden waste bin (or at a Recycling Centre). Reuse your artificial wreath next year or donate it. If broken, put in the refuse bin.

Find out what else you can recycle here: [**What can I recycle?**](#)

REMEMBER

When it comes to your recycling bin, if in doubt, leave it out!

Heading to the tip?

All [recycling centres](#) sites are open on all bank holidays except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Check the live webcams before setting off to avoid the queues, and remember to give quality items to an onsite re-use shop if possible.

 'Tis the season

   HertsWasteAware

 Hertfordshire recycles

