

## April 2022 Newsletter

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# AIR POLLUTION THEME OF THE MONTH: SAVING MONEY AND THE PLANET

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## Reduce Air Pollution Whilst Saving Money

The cost of living is at an all time high for us all right now, but there are ways that you can save money and help reduce air pollution and reduce our negative impacts on our environment. Here are a few ideas for thought...



- **Save energy heating your home** – by turning down your heating one degree and putting on a jumper instead you could save at least £80 per year if not more and reduce the amount of pollution being emitted from your gas boiler or other heating appliances.
- **Skip driving your car** – especially for short trips like the school run or nipping to the shops. This will save you money on fuel, whilst being beneficial for local air pollution as well- and has the added benefits of being better for your physical and mental health.
- **Try a bus, train or tram** - if you can't get somewhere by walking or cycling, try public transport or even car sharing.
- **Get yourself a bike** - (buy secondhand to save money) and try cycling to place you would usually drive. It's a great workout, makes a significant difference to your carbon footprint and once you've bought the bike its free.

- **Still need to use a car?** – then check your tyres regularly. By keeping your tyres inflated to the car manufacturer’s recommendations will make it more efficient and use less fuel. This way you'll create less pollution and save money on fuel too.

- **Turn off lights when not in the room and switch off your electrical appliances at night** - ‘vampire appliances’ use energy even when you’re not using them and increase your energy bills. Examples include televisions, cable and satellite boxes, game consoles, DVD players, computers, remote controlled devices, chargers for phones/cameras and even printers.



- **Use energy efficient lightbulbs** – the annual saving from one bulb is around £18. If every household changed just 1 light bulb to an energy saving one, we would save £1,300 billion pounds! It would also save the equivalent of 1.7 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, equivalent to taking 370,000 cars off the road each year!
- **Buy more energy efficient appliances** – when replacing broken and unfixable appliances, A rated appliances may cost more initially but in the long run they will save you money.
- **Only boil enough water in the kettle for what you need** – it costs about 42p to boil a full kettle and descale your kettle regularly as this makes it much more efficient.
- **If you have a dishwasher and/or washing machine only run them when they’re full** – and use the eco settings. Interestingly washing your dishes by hand uses four times as much warm water as putting the same number of items in the dishwasher.
- **Air dry your clothes** - avoiding using the tumble dryer can save a lot of money. Did you know it can cost between 60p and £1.50 per cycle depending on how energy efficient your machine is?



- **Draught-proof windows and doors** – draught excluders are cheap to buy to put around doors and windows and can save you around £45 a year and draught proofing a chimney around £65 a year.
- **Insulate your loft** – you can do it yourself for around £100 or between £300 - £400 if you pay a loft insulation installer. Following loft insulation heating bills generally reduce by over £300 a year so you would get your money back quickly and after that you would just be making savings!
- **Fix it** – instead of throwing it out and replacing with a new see if you can fix it first. DIY can be a great money saver and lengthens the life of the things you own.
- **Give up bottled water** – marketing has lead people to believe that bottled water is healthier than tap water, when the reality is that it's **not**. In the UK we throw away 7.7 billion plastic water bottles a year, despite us having some of the best quality drinking water in the world! To make matters worse, an estimated 15 million bottles are littered, landfilled or incinerated every day. This is believed to produce up to 233,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions a year. It's therefore no surprise that plastic bottles are in the top 10 most found items on beaches across Europe.

## What are Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)?

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are gases found in many common household products and are an air pollutant. They are found in things like paints, paint strippers, cleaning aerosols, glues, pesticides and more.



Studies have also shown that VOC pollutants levels are up to **5 times higher** indoors than outdoors, regardless of where the homes are located.

### HOW DO VOCs IMPACT ON YOUR HEALTH?

VOCs cause health effects like eye, nose and throat irritation, headaches, nausea, damage to liver, kidneys and central nervous system and more.

### HOW DO YOU REDUCE EXPOSURE?

- **Increase ventilation when using products that emit VOCs**
- **Avoid buying cleaning products that are in aerosol cans** - if you really want these products look for trigger spray versions instead for products such as, hair spray, air fresheners, kitchen and bathroom cleaners, furniture polish and use roll on or stick deodorants.
- **Try to purchase products labelled as "low VOC" when buying paints**

We now emit more harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from our homes than all the vehicles in the UK!

- **Try not to store paints or other high VOC products in the home** – where possible store them outside in sheds or garages
- **Don't use pesticides**
- **Throw away unused or expired products safely at the household waste recycling centre.**

## Sandwell Council's Climate Change Grants

New grants for community groups are available for climate change projects from April 2022. Free training sessions about what climate change is, and how to have climate change conversations, is available as part of the grants as well. Find out more about these grants from Sandwell Community Voluntary Organisation (SCVO) <https://www.scvo.info/>.



## Sandwell's Air Quality Dashboard is now showing real-time air pollution data from a Faith Centre near you!

You can access this dashboard yourself by going to this webpage:

<https://portal.earthsense.co.uk/SandwellPublic>. The link is also available on Sandwell's Faith Centre Air Quality [project webpage](#). Each faith centre also has a TV screen to display the dashboard for everyone to see when entering their building.

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If you have any questions about the content of this newsletter, please contact a member of the Air Quality team via [pollution\\_control@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:pollution_control@sandwell.gov.uk). The content of this email is correct at time of circulation.