



Low Impact Christmas - and fun too!



The event *Low Impact Christmas* was organised by Sustainable St Albans; it is the first in the series *Our Planet Our Future Continues at The Harpenden Arms*. These talks follow from the launch event of Sustainable St Albans Week 2018, Our Planet Our Future on 21st April 2018. We were delighted to welcome speakers from four local organisations committed to making the district more sustainable

Low Impact Christmas, 20th November 2018, our speakers

Tania Trovarello from [The Refill Pantry](#) - getting rid of packaging
Amanda Yorwerth from [Plastic Free St Albans](#) - making Christmas plastic free
Heather Foster from [The Green Kitchen](#) - ideas for a greener Christmas
Susheel Rao from [Sustainable St Albans](#) - giving low impact gifts

Here is a summary of the presentations and discussions for having a fun, low impact Christmas.

Trees and Decorations

- Make origami or wooden tree decorations
- Make edible Christmas tree decorations, gingerbread, dried orange slices
- Make your own wreaths and decorations using plants from the garden
- Swap decorations with friends rather than buying new ones
- If you buy decorations, try charity shops first or buy ones made from wood or other natural materials
- Buy a living tree with roots in a pot & then keep it in the garden during the year.
- Buy low energy LEDs or solar lights if you need new ones
- Swap decorations with friends rather than buying new ones

Wishing people a Happy Christmas

- Ring people you don't see very often rather than send a card
- Send eCards or email
- Sending fewer cards, and particularly only to people not going to see over the festival period - using time save to include personal messages for those people.
- Buy cards made from recycled materials, supporting charities and recycle them
- Deliver local cards on foot or bike
- Recycle postage stamps (eg at the Keech Hospice shops)

Gifts

- Adopt the "No unnecessary buying of gifts" pact (see [Martin Lewis video](#))
- Arrange a secret santa or use secret santa app where you can give ideas about what you'd like to receive



Gifts that you can make or provide

- Chocolates, biscuits, vinegars, chutneys, jams, cakes, mince pies
- Spirits with foraged fruits
- Homemade crafts, personalised calendars, books of your favourite recipes
- Gifts of time, eg babysitting, lifts in car, pet sitting, DIY, decorating or gardening

Gifts that you buy

- Sponsorships, eg Toilet Twinning, Woodland Trust tree dedications
- Charity gifts eg Oxfam Unwrapped
- Gifts of experiences, event tickets, memberships, subscriptions or meals out
- Buy gifts from local independent shops (eg [The Refill Pantry](#)), charity shops or eBay

Wrapping and packaging

- Turn last year's Christmas cards into this year's gift tags, bags or boxes
- Wrap using recycled brown paper, fabric or magazines, with string and a sprig of eg eucalyptus
- Use re-usable furoshiki wrappings (traditional Japanese wrapping cloths)
- Keep hold of useful boxes and bags during December to help with wrapping
- Save the wrapping paper to use again
- Use a decorated pillow case for children's presents
- Make a Christmas stockings or use sports sock for children's Christmas stockings

Food and drink

- Plan your meals including planning to use your leftovers
- Minimise your packaging by buying ingredients at [The Refill Pantry](#)
- Make your own mulled wine, mince pies, cakes and puddings
- Buy veg from local growers - see the [Local Food Map](#) from [FoodSmiles St Albans](#)
- Make your Christmas pudding or cake as a family activity
- Having some vegan meals, with additional bonus that they keep longer so reducing potential food waste

Merry Christmas!

We hope to see you at our events in 2019.

14th Jan 2019, [Low Carbon Lifestyle](#), with guest speaker *Carolina Karlstrom*.

11th Feb 2019 and 11th March 2019, speakers tba

January to March, thermal imaging camera sessions

see sustainablestalbans.org for further details and booking information

Looking further ahead, the 2019 Sustainability Festival is ***11 May to 1 June 2019***

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