

Energy Saving Tips

The Parish Plan identified that a significant number of households spend a large amount of disposable income on energy costs and suffer from poor insulation. The Energy Savings Trust have published a number of tips to help people cut their energy costs

1. Turn it off

Almost all electrical and electronic appliances can safely be turned off at the plug without upsetting their systems. Some satellite and digital TV recorders may need to be left plugged in so they can keep track of any programmes you want to record, but check the instructions on any appliances you aren't sure about.

A typical household can save around £30 a year just by remembering to turn off appliances left on standby and those left on but not in use.

2. Careful in the kitchen

You can save over £45 a year just by using your kitchen appliances more carefully:

- set your washing machine to wash at 30 °C.
- use a bowl to wash up rather than leaving the hot tap running.
- don't fill your kettle up every time, only boil the amount of water you need.

3. Get a head

If you've got a shower that takes hot water straight from your boiler or hot water tank (rather than an electric shower), then you may be able to fit a water efficient shower head. This can reduce your hot water usage whilst retaining the sensation of a powerful shower.

Some water companies are giving shower heads away for free. Contact your water company to see if you are eligible (this is not available in Scotland). By installing a water efficient shower head, a family of four could save around £67 a year on gas for water heating, as well as a further £100 on water bills if they have a water meter.

4. Draught excluder

Unless your home is very new, you're likely to be losing some heat through draughts around doors and windows, gaps around the floor, or through the chimney.

Why not buy some draught-proofing products for doors and windows, seal your skirting boards with silicone sealant, and fit a chimney draught excluder or sealed fire guards. DIY draught-proofing of windows, doors and blocking cracks in floors and skirting boards can cost around £200, but can save between £25 to £35 a year.

5. New heating controls

Whatever the age of your boiler, the right controls will let you:

- set your heating and hot water to come on and off when you need them
- heat just the areas of your home you want
- decide how warm you want each area to be.

By installing a room thermostat, programmer and thermostatic radiator valves, you could save up to £80 to £165 a year.

This allows you to make savings by using your controls more effectively. For example, turning down your room thermostat by just one degree, if it's too warm inside, can save between £85 to £90.

6. Loft insulation

It is recommended to have at least 270mm (ten inches) of loft insulation, so it might be worth checking whether you could make your home warmer by topping up levels of loft insulation. You could save up to £140 a year if your loft is uninsulated by installing 270mm of insulation. Topping up existing insulation from 120mm to 270mm can save around £15 a year.

7. Lighten your load

You can now get LED spotlights that are bright enough to replace halogens, as well as regular energy saving bulbs ('compact fluorescent lamps' or CFLs). They come in a variety of shapes, sizes and fittings.

If the average household replaced all of their remaining old-fashioned bulbs with CFLs, and all of their halogens with LEDs, it would cost about £100 and save about £35 a year.

8. Cavity wall insulation

For homes built after 1920, the chances are that the external walls are made of two layers of brick with a gap or cavity between them. Cavity wall insulation fills that gap, keeping the warmth in to save energy. The average installation cost for cavity wall insulation is between £450 and £500 and can save up to £160 a year. The measure could pay for itself in less than four years.

9. Greater savings and income for renewable technology

While the Feed-in-Tariff for solar PV panels is going down, the average cost for electricity is going up. In addition, the cost of panels is going down which

means that now can be a great time to invest in solar PV. A typical 4kWp panel could generate and save you £755 per year. Despite costs falling over the last year, they do vary between installers and system sizes (costs can be between £5,000 and £8,000), so we recommend getting quotes from at least three MCS accredited installers.

It's also worth exploring renewable heating technologies, such as heat pumps, following the announcement of financial incentives through the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). Not only will households benefit from energy savings but they will also receive additional income for the energy produced.

10. Whole house energy makeover

There are plenty of other things that can be done to improve the energy performance of your home, such as floor and solid wall insulation, replacement doors and windows, or a new heating system. There may be schemes to help finance a comprehensive package of improvements. Call the Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234 for guidance on the most appropriate package of improvements for you, and for information on available support.

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/england

Diddlebury Parish Plan Steering Group