**News articles**

**13 May 2015**

**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**](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/england)

**30 January 2015**

**Broadband and mobile phone coverage in the Corvedale**

**Mobile Phone Signal**

You will probably have seen the press campaign undertaken by the Shropshire Star and local MP Phillip Dunne asking Orange to improve the mobile signal to rural areas of Shropshire.  Orange have responded and promised to look at ways of improving the signal and giving their customers in rural Shropshire a better service.

There is however something you can do yourself to improve your mobile phone coverage within your home.  The following is a quote from the Orange web site which explains how a signal box works

*Get better coverage at home*

*Some people struggle to get a good network signal at home - things like thick walls, basements and certain types of glass can reduce your signal. Signal box is a device that uses your home broadband connection to give you great reception around the house.*

*The Signal Box plugs into your broadband router and creates a link to the EE network to provide indoor coverage. It's really simple to set up, and once it's up and running your phone will automatically connect to make sure you can make and receive calls. Using your Signal Box won't cost you any extra - calls and texts are charged at your usual plan rates.*

*You will need to check your phone is supported to use the signal box system.  Further details are available at* <http://ee.co.uk/help/mobile-and-home-connections/checking-and-improving-your-network-coverage/signal-box/about-signal-box>

**Broadband**

Whether you use the internet for business or pleasure slow download speeds can leave you frustrated waiting for web sites to download.

Connecting Shropshire and BT are planning to introduce Fibre Optic high speed broadband to rural areas of the county and work has already started at the Seifton exchange to bring high speed broadband to the Corvedale.

Fibre optic connections should be available on some homes and businesses connected to the Seifton exchange by March 2015.

The Munslow exchange is also due to receive fibre optic capability as part of the programme but this will not be available for 18 months.

To check the programme for your area go to the connecting Shropshire web site <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/when-and-where/> and put in your phone number.  Not all premises in an exchange area will be connected to the high speed network as this will depend on the feasibility of upgrading the exchange and the distance you live from the exchange.

**29 January 2015**

**Help at Hand with Support Needs**

During the Parish Plan review undertaken in 2013 respondents to the questionnaire indicated difficulty in accessing support to enable them to maintain independent living in what is a rural community.

The parish plan committee has looked into ways in which access to support can be achieved by providing a referral pathway to services provided outside the parish.

The Homelife service offered by Shropshire Housing Group is a local service that provides help and assistance for people of any age with day to day tasks to help them live a better, more fulfilled life.  They provide a service tailored to your needs and can provide visits from once a month to several times a week.

The Homelife team are fully trained, reliable and all have been CRB checked.  The support workers are supervised by a dedicated team manager to ensure your outcomes are met.

Look out for the Homelife leaflet in your village hall or contact Homelife on 0300 303 1190 to discuss your needs.  If Homelife are unable to provide the service you require they will refer you to a specialist service for advice and assistance.