

# Colchester City Council Climate Emergency



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Taking environmental action also has multiple benefits, with opportunities for you to save money and improve your physical and mental health. For example cycling and walking for more journeys, helps reduce costs for fuel, helps you get fitter and allows you to explore more places. Getting outside and interacting with nature and the environment has proven benefits for mental health.

We all need to help reduce our environmental impact in order to tackle and adapt to climate change. However, it's unrealistic to become 100% green – a great quote from Mike Berners-Lee, author of [‘How bad are bananas?’](#) summarises this well:

“Very few of us are squeaky clean in carbon terms. You don't have to become so overnight, but most of us do need to make serious changes over the next few years.

It's important to keep moving in the right direction and enjoy the process of cutting carbon out of our lives. Don't beat yourself up, but don't let yourself off the hook either.”

### Calculating your carbon footprint

If you're just starting on your environmental journey, you may want to understand how your lifestyle contributes to the production of greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts. Filling in a carbon footprint calculator like that from the [WWF](#) may be a good place to start. [Giki Zero](#) have also produced an excellent calculator that enables you to add lots of detail about your lifestyle. It then gives you sets of actions that you could take to help lower your environmental impact, along with guidance to help you take them.

### Taking action

Ready to take action, but not sure what to start with? The best place to start is with something that is manageable within your daily life, before then proceeding onto bigger actions. Not all actions will be suitable for everyone, but an example of some actions you could take are shown below.

- **Reducing the amount of meat and dairy you eat in your diet.** Lots of land, energy and water use goes into livestock farming making it [a big contributor to greenhouse gas emissions](#). Switching your diet to become more plant based can help improve your health as well as lowering emissions. See tips and recipes from a range of sites including [Meat Free Monday](#), [BBC Good Food](#) and [Veganuary](#). Eating local and seasonal produce and making the most of leftovers to reduce food waste are also great tips to reduce emissions. See the [Love Food Hate Waste](#) website for more information on reducing food waste.
- **Taking the bike for more journeys** – Cycling to places is a great way to stay healthy, cut costs from fuel and reduce emissions. Perhaps you could help cycle with your kids to school on the school run? Pop to the shops on your bike with some panniers for storage? Find the best routes for cycling to and from different locations using [Cycle Streets](#) or the [Cycle Colchester website](#). If your bike is in need of a maintenance check, take it down to [Colchester Bike Kitchen](#) where they'll help you repair your bike. Want to increase your cycling confidence – Visit [Safer Essex Roads Partnership](#) for information on bike training, a lot of which is FREE till March 2023.

- **Reducing your water use** – Colchester is one of the driest areas of the UK, receiving less rainfall than some places in the Mediterranean! The climate is likely to get drier as climate changes, so we need to get better at using water efficiently and not wasting it. Actions like cutting showering time and frequency, getting a water butt to store rainwater for plants in dry spells and boiling the right amount of water for your cuppa and more are all good ways to save water and your pocket! See more water saving tips on [Anglian Water's website](#).
- **Supporting biodiversity in your garden** – Gardens can be a great way to provide a green space to support nature in an increasingly urban environment. There's lots of ways you can support local wildlife, for example the planting of wildflowers to support insects and pollinators, putting up bird feeders (see how to make your own [here](#)) and nest boxes or creating a pond. Find out more at [Essex Wildlife Trust](#) and on [Colchester Museums site](#) with children's activities that support wildlife.
- **Turning your engine off when stationary** – Air pollution from cars and log fires contributes to damaging human health, with approximately 1 in 20 deaths in Colchester linked to air pollution. One simple way you can help cut air pollution from your car is by turning your car engine off when stationary (not idling your engine), for example when waiting in a long queue at traffic lights or waiting outside schools. For more information on taking action on engine idling, including campaign resources to encourage others to turn off their engine can be found from the Council's [CAReless Pollution project website](#).
- **Environmental volunteering** – There are loads of great organisations where you can learn valuable skills in protecting the environment and also those that will boost your own personal development. In Colchester, there are a wide range of organisations offering volunteering opportunities such as

[Essex Wildlife Trust](#), [The Conservation Volunteers](#), [Eco Colchester](#), [Colchester Litter Pickers](#), [Together We Grow CIC](#) and the [Council](#) (amongst others). Consider looking at volunteering websites such as [Volunteer Essex](#) or visiting the [One Colchester Community Hub](#) in Colchester city centre to find out more.

En-Form are also opening an environment centre in 2023 located on 27-28 Priory Walk, a space for workshops, talks, exhibitions and more, all related to the environment and climate change. There will be volunteering opportunities as well as chances to learn more about environmental issues. Keep your eyes out for developments coming soon!

## ONLINE

There are also several great websites which show you actions you could take and provide extra guidance and advice to help you take these actions.

[The Jump](#) – A grassroots project encouraging the take up of 6 specific actions or 'shifts' to lifestyles to help reduce environmental impacts and reduce consumption of resources. Actions can be pledged for different timescales, with support provided along the way.

[Grantham Institute](#) – An educational department within University College London, that has one element researching about climate change and the environment. They have produced some great guides with clear actions that we could all take to [tackle climate change](#), [protect the natural environment](#) and [improve our health and the planet](#). Each guide is simply presented with useful information included on each action you can take.

[Do Nation](#) – A website set up to encourage people to take, and stick to, environmental actions by taking a pledge to do them. The website lists many environmental actions you can take, which is great as an information resource. You can then go one step further and pledge to do any number of environmental actions for a 2 month period, with reminders and encouragement provided. You can use the site as ways to encourage work colleagues or friends to also pledge to take environmental action, perhaps in return for a pledge or action you're doing. Instead of raising money for a marathon you're doing, you could get people to take environmental pledges to support what you're doing instead!

[Essex Residents Climate Advice Pack](#) – Essex Climate Action Commission have produced a climate advice pack for residents, giving ideas of actions you can take to tackle climate change and reduce your environmental impact. This has been produced with local context in mind so there are opportunities for Essex residents to help you become greener such as free cycle training, free water saving kits and more!

[Carbon Copy](#) – This contains lots of environmental case studies that a range of organisations, from individuals, community groups to local authorities, across the UK have carried out. If there's an idea you have for an environmental project in your community, why not see if someone has done it already to get some inspiration and give you a useful starting point.

- Another great resource is the Eco Colchester [website](#) and [Facebook page](#). Eco Colchester are a mainly online environmental community groups supporting local environmental action. Their website has lots of information about environmental actions, and organisations who support this action locally. Their Facebook page is also a great forum for discussion about local environmental issues and actions.

- Got a great idea but need the funding to bring it to life? Check out the Essex Climate Action Challenge Fund – A grant pot offering schools, parish councils and community organisations up to £20,000 to fund environmental projects. Funding is currently available till March 2023

## FOR SCHOOLS

Inspired to take action in your school to make it greener? See below for some resources that you may find of use:

**CCC school webpages** – CCC has produced some dedicated webpages on support for schools to help them become greener. This details support available from the [Council, Essex County Council](#) and other [local](#) and [national organisations](#) that can help you become greener. There's also a section on actions you can take to become greener with some case studies of Colchester schools that have taken some of these. All types of actions are covered from ink cartridge recycling, air quality awareness activities and opportunities to access funding for your green projects!

**Essex Climate Action Commission Schools advice pack** – This [advice pack](#) includes many actions for schools, with examples of how other Essex schools have become greener which could provide you with some inspiration.

**Essex Schools Green Day** – This is an annual event organised by the [Multi Schools Council](#). The aim of the event is for schools to dedicate a day to environmental learning, awareness and action. The day normally takes place in June/July each year. Over 20 schools took part in 2022 in Colchester but we'd love to see more taking part. Email [mschoolscouncil@gmail.com](mailto:mschoolscouncil@gmail.com) or [climate.change@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:climate.change@colchester.gov.uk) if you'd like more information.

## FOR BUSINESS

With rising energy and fuel bills, you may be looking at ways to save energy for your business. Saving energy equals reducing emissions as well as money. There are lots of other things you can do to make your business greener, which can have lots of other benefits from improve staff wellbeing, meeting customer demand for environmental products and produce further cost savings.

Below are several resources and opportunities that may be of interest in helping your business to become greener:

**Colchester Business Enterprise Agency (COLBEA) [Sustainable Business Training](#)** – Colbea have been providing support to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to help them with the first steps of understanding their carbon footprint and how to take action on climate change. They have had several 1 ½ hour introductory workshops running till November 2022, but it is possible they may offer further workshops as part of their sustainable business training in the future, so do enquire with them if this sounds of interest. They are also currently offering a [cost reduction programme](#) for Colchester based SMEs, with a consultant providing a review of their operations to identify ways to cut costs and overheads related to energy use, waste production and more.

**[Colchester eCargo Bike Library](#)** – This project is managed and run by Colchester City Council, focussing on breaking down the barriers for businesses to uptake the use of electric cargo (eCargo) bikes for their operations. eCargo bikes are electric bikes with a storage compartment on the front, enabling a variety of items to be delivered in a cheap, fast and green way. Find out more details on our [website](#) for how businesses can apply for a free short term loan of 1-3 months to try out one of the eCargo bikes and see if it could work for their business.

**[Low Carbon Across the South and East \(LoCASE\)](#)**: This grant fund offers £10,000 to businesses to help them increase the energy efficiency of, or contribute to the decarbonisation of, their premises. This funding can also help to reduce other environmental impacts of your business, for example supporting your business to switch to electric vehicles. It is a grant fund that businesses in Colchester and the surrounding area can offer. However, other national grants are mentioned in the Business Advice pack produced by Essex Climate Action Commission (see below).

**[Essex Climate Action Commission Business Advice Pack](#)** – An advice pack of resources, funding and case studies that can help your business become greener.

For any questions on the Council's climate and environmental work, please visit the [CCC sustainability webpage](#) or email [climate.change@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:climate.change@colchester.gov.uk)