

GRASP



*Green Action for
Sustainable Places*

Our World and God's in our GRASP



Canon Ian Gaskell writes:

GRASP has been produced by Wakefield Diocese Church in Society Group as a resource to give you ideas, suggestions and examples. Using **GRASP**, you can look at what you do everyday, and perhaps reconsider some of your choices and actions, to help reduce harmful impacts on the environment, and increase beneficial ones.

GRASP is not an encyclopaedia of all the things you can do. At the UN's Earth Summit in Rio, 1992, world leaders agreed that if we were to leave a fair share of the world's resources to those who follow us on this earth, we need to develop a more sustainable way of living. Out of that, grew the idea of an agenda for the 21st Century (Agenda 21).

GRASP is not an encyclopaedia of all the things you can do. One of the problems with environmental issues is that they sometimes seem so complex and threatening that you feel better putting them on one side and getting on with the daily demands of living! **GRASP** concentrates on the things that we can change and do.

GRASP is about environment in its broadest sense – not just the green bits, although they are there as well! It is about sustainability – the principle of living within our means and ensuring that our children can enjoy their fair share of those resources we enjoy ourselves. It's about sustaining quality of life and responsible freedom of choice, for all.

God's Creation is in your GRASP.



DISCOVER YOUR WILD SIDE

Worldwide, over 50 species of plant or animal become extinct each day.

90% of Britain's ponds have disappeared over the last 50 years.

Britain has fewer trees per square mile than any other European country, except Iceland and Ireland.

Particular habitats have value in terms of the 'special' plants and animals they support – such as heath lands, ancient woodlands and water meadows.

Wildlife exists everywhere. In urban areas, life for wildlife is made difficult by pollution and loss of green spaces through over-development. In rural areas, intensive farming involving pesticides, herbicides, hedgerow removal and drainage, reduces habitats and so wildlife itself.

There are special places for wildlife all over in our Diocese. But ordinary places such as back gardens and roadside verges are also important. Similarly with species – there are a number of rare or endangered species whose habitats and way of life need to be protected. But the common or garden species are often more important to us in our daily lives, and shouldn't be forgotten.

Many organisations are working to conserve wildlife and its habitats

Most people respond as individuals to wildlife. But in economic terms, wildlife has few big money supporters – it is not properly built into the 'system' – too often having to rely on charity or goodwill, one-off efforts, or special arrangements. A key to this problem could be to tie agricultural subsidies into more sensitive farming practices, through reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

What you can do:

In your garden/allotment, or on your farm:

Plant native species where you can, i.e. things that grow naturally in this country, and leave a semi-wild area to attract and feed wildlife.

Try to delay trimming your hedges until January, to leave the fruit in place for wildlife, as long as possible.

Use natural rather than non-natural fertilisers and use a peat alternative (to protect valuable peat land habitats).

Try to reduce your use of pesticides and herbicides, and use natural forms of weed and pest control where possible.

Plant or sponsor a tree

GETTING AROUND

Transport is the fastest growing contribution to global warming, acid rain, smog and many respiratory diseases. As a nation we are committed to reducing our CO₂ output year on year, but the impact of traffic on our daily lives increases.

Forecasts say there will be 142% more vehicles on our roads by 2025, if we don't do anything about it.

New roads only temporarily relieve congestion and always generate new traffic.

In many urban areas traffic regularly becomes grid locked.

20% of all children now suffer from asthma, linked to increasing levels of vehicle pollutants.

And yet: 46% of all our journeys are less than 2 miles.

We need to reduce the need to travel. Not to stop people doing things, but to make things more accessible by better locational policies, and by encouraging alternative ways of getting there.



SAVE YOUR ENERGY

Energy is used in much of what we do at home, and at work – cooking, heating, lighting, electrical equipment, and so on. Much is wasted through inefficient production and use.

Saving energy saves you money. Investment in energy-saving behaviour, products and systems really does pay off, whether at home, at work, or in your other interests.

Using less energy reduces resources used (many of them non-renewable) and reduces pollution – cutting down acid rain and reducing impact on health. It also cuts down greenhouse gases which contribute to global warming and climate change.

Most of the energy produced in the UK is from fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas) and is non-renewable and polluting. Energy from renewable sources, e.g. the wind, sun, water and waves, is safe, clean, sustainable, potentially abundant, and secure. Renewable energy technology is in its infancy, but growing rapidly.

What you can do:

Of all the aspects of sustainable living, energy saving is the most obvious money saver. With the most straightforward action you can reduce your fuel bills by more than 20%, saving at least £100 a year.

You can influence your energy use AT HOME by:

- The products you buy and install
- Your behaviour.

This list of things you can do at home makes good sense in sustainability and financial terms:

- Insulate yourself by wearing warmer clothes around the house – the cheapest way of saving energy!
- Turn off unused lights and appliances – it is not more expensive to constantly turn lights on and off.
- Only heat water when you need it – it is not cheaper to leave it on all the time.
- Don't leave the TV or other equipment on standby – they can use up to 80% of power and costs money.
- Use manual, rather than power tools where possible.
- Insulate your loft with 150 mm (6") of insulation – save up to £50 per year.
- Draught proof your doors and windows – save up to £20 per year.
- Lag your hot water tank with a 75 mm (3") jacket – save up to £15 per year.
- Insulate your cavity walls – save up to £90 per year.
- Fit an energy-efficient condensing boiler when buying or replacing an old central heating boiler – save up to £100 per year.
- Use low energy light bulbs – save up to £10 per light bulb.

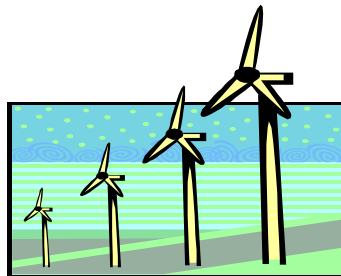
- Install a room thermostat to give you more control – save up to £40 per year.
- Buy energy efficient fridges, freezers, washing machines etc. By law the European Community Energy Efficiency label must be displayed on all new domestic refrigerators, freezers, fridge-freezer combinations, washing machines, electric tumble dryers and combined washer-dryers displayed for sale, hire or hire-purchase. Appliances labelled as 'A' are more efficient than those labelled as 'G'. You could save up to £30 per year for a freezer/fridge freezer with a high energy efficiency rating.
- Turn down your central heating by 1° C and water heating to 55° C to cut fuel use and bills by as much as 10%.

Above figures based on gas-heated semi-detached house; capital costs not included.

You can apply these principles to energy use at work, at school, or in other buildings where you have some influence over how things are run.

Spending on these actions now will save money in the future – many actions pay back in one year!

Take advantage of the liberalisation of the energy industry. Since 1998 you can now choose to buy your electricity from a company which supplies energy from renewable sources such as solar, wind, wave and biomass. Contact your supplier for details



For further details:
Energy Saving Trust
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/

EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY

The average vegetable in the UK travels 600 miles before reaching your supermarket trolley! Increasingly, 'food miles' are a real concern, using significant amounts of non-renewable energy and creating pollution in the transportation of food. At least 44% of UK arable land is thought to be losing top soil faster than it can be replaced.

Gardeners spend an estimated £30m every year on pesticides. 70% of UK's organic food (i.e. grown without the use of growth hormones, artificial fertiliser or chemical pesticides) is imported. Heavily processed foods are generally less healthy. Heavily packaged foods waste valuable resources. The decline in food growing and cooking habits is contributing to the de-skilling of society: with health, economic, and social implications.

Agricultural support and the Common Agricultural Policy could be better targeted to provide healthy, safe food, to conserve the natural resource base in its widest sense, and to maintain the vitality of rural communities. Farmers need positive incentives to farm more extensively. B.S.E. Organophosphates and genetically engineered food have sharpened concerns about safe food. Local Agenda 21 recognises that compartmentalising of issues associated with food has added to the problem and that these linked issues should be tackled together.

What you can do:

Grow your own fruit and vegetables. This way your food is local, it's fresh, it's cheap, and it's there for the picking. If your garden isn't big enough, get an allotment. Most towns and some larger villages have allotments. They are very good value, and growing things in a community of other grower's means there's lots of help and advice around. Allotments help provide a healthy diet, good company, fresh air and exercise and protect valuable open space.

Cut down, or better still, cut out your use of artificial weed killers, pesticides and fertilisers, and go organic. A diet rich in fruit and vegetables especially organically grown is a healthy diet.

Don't use peat, use alternatives and so protect peat land habitats. Make your own compost from kitchen and garden waste to help enrich your soil and improve drainage. In this way you recycle 'waste', enrich soils, reduce the use of peat, and reduce the amount of waste that has to be tipped on landfill sites. If you're not sure how to go about composting, your local council may be able to help.

USING WATER

We are just beginning to realise in this country that water is a limited resource and as such it's in our interests not to squander it.

You can cut down your use of water by:

Taking a shower instead of a bath.

Putting a brick in your toilet cistern to reduce its flush volume.

Collecting rainwater in a butt for garden – watering.

Plant drought-tolerant plants in drier areas.

Water at the base of plants in early morning or evening to reduce evaporation.

At school or work, introduce switch-off mechanisms where appropriate.

Go easy on your use of chemicals in the bathroom and kitchen. Where possible, use cleaning products that are phosphate-free and biodegradable, so reducing the pollution levels in wastewater.

WHEN SHOPPING OR EATING OUT

- Support your local market and other markets where local produce is sold.
- Buy local produce – reduce food miles.
- Buy organic where you can, to be sure of residue-free food.
- Buy food that is in season, usually fresher and less travelled.
- Select local produce from the menu.

WHAT CAN WE DO AS INDIVIDUALS?

Pray daily for the necessary 'conversion' in ourselves, our neighbours and our leaders to do all in our power to combat global warming.

Buy 'green energy' from renewable sources.

Cut out unnecessary use of cars and inessential air travel.

Buy food grown or produced locally in order to reduce the distance that food is transported.

Cut down energy use at home: -

Fit energy-saving light bulbs; turn off lights.

Turn down the central heating thermostat by 1 degree C
and set the hot water cylinder thermostat at 60 degrees C.

Insulate hot water tanks and pipes.

Shower rather than bathe.

Close curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through windows.

Switch off TV and video rather than leaving them on stand-by.

Use full loads in washing machines.

Choose the right size pan for cooking food, keep lids on; don't overfill kettles.

Cut down on draughts but keep enough ventilation. Wear an extra jumper!

Also:

Ask your MP to press the government to deal more seriously with the issue and set a personal example by using sustainable transport.

Encourage your local church to join the EcoCongregation - ew.ecocongregation.org

- Get your local church to include regular prayers on this issue.

WHAT CAN WE DO AS A PARISH?

**See Module 1— Get Going from Eco—Congregations —
ew.ecocongregation.org for simple, practical ways as well as
worship resources and ideas to begin.**