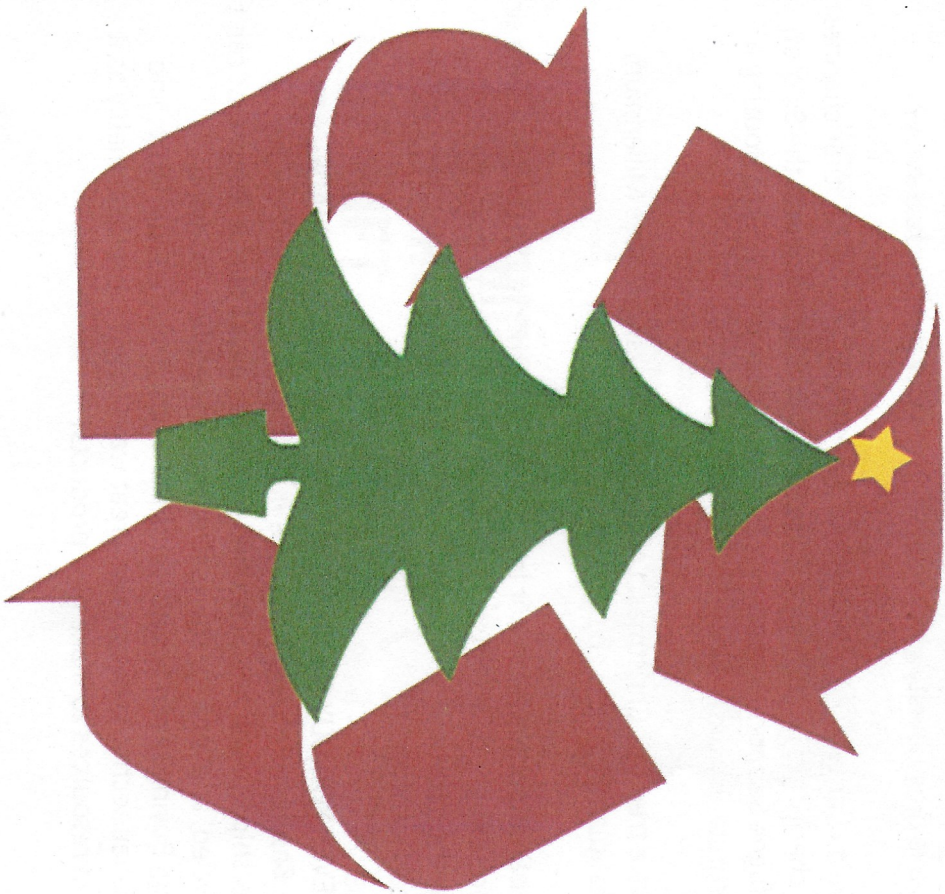


## **Have Yourself a Very Sustainable Christmas**

There's a growing appetite for keeping Christmas sustainable and ethical, reflecting a marked rise in responsible saving and investing. Shopping locally, using ethical retailers and buying zero-carbon gifts can all help you be an ethical consumer during the festive season



## PRESENTS

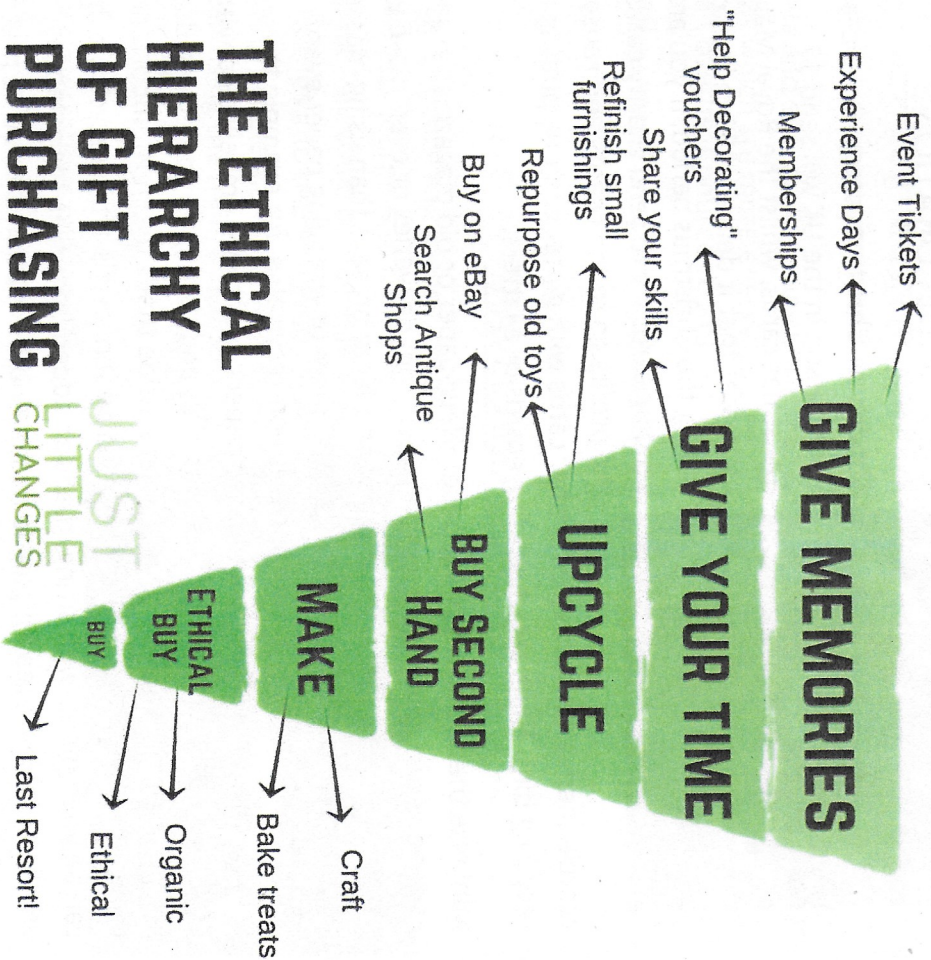
Try and set a challenge for your family - encourage them to buy plastic-free presents this year, make home-made gifts instead of hitting the shops, try your hand at home-made jams and chutneys in re-used glass jars.

It's about **QUALITY NOT QUANTITY**: Just under half of UK adults say they have received gifts they don't want and will never use. Buying fewer but better-quality gifts reduces the chances of gifts going to waste and can be better for your wallet too. Why not do a Secret Santa with your friends or family, avoiding novelty gifts that will inevitably get chucked away?

1. **Give a charity gift card.** Christian Aid, Oxfam, and many other charities do charity gift cards, or if you want something more local the Skipton Refugee Support Group have Charity Gift cards for Abigail Housing a destitute asylum seekers project in Bradford.
2. **Give a tree this Christmas.** Local charity Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust plants trees in the Yorkshire Dales for you.
3. **Gift an experience to your loved ones.** Whether it's gifting your time or a pre-bought experience, it's a great opportunity to bring people together. It could be tickets for a play a concert or just a promise of a meal or coffee?

### WHATEVER YOU BUY THINK ABOUT THE MATERIALS IT'S MADE

**FROM.** Ensure wood and paper are made from recycled or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified materials, avoid plastic items that can't be recycled, and look for things like Organic-certified food and clothing. Buying second-hand items like vintage clothes, furniture, and refurbished technology, are also great ways to gift more sustainably as it saves on resources to make new products!





## CARDS, WRAPPING PAPER AND DECORATIONS

**Know your Christmas cards:** On average, each person in the UK will send 17 Christmas cards, whilst the Royal Mail estimates that it delivers 150 million cards during the Christmas period. If you are sending cards try to send charity cards so the profits go to the charity and reuse or recycle them afterwards (remember cards with glitter can't be putting in a recycling bin). Think about sending ecards or e letters.

**Minimise the use of wrapping paper.** Newspaper or old magazines are just as good as wrapping paper or use paper from deliveries or even make your own. A blanket is just as good at hiding a large present than using masses of paper! In the UK alone, we bin 227,000 miles of wrapping paper every Christmas. A lot of wrapping paper is non-recyclable, for example the thinner cheaper varieties, laminated papers, and those embellished with gold, silver or glitter. Why waste materials and money on something that will be thrown away? Surely it is what's inside that's the most important thing. Thick brown paper is also a good option, as it's often recyclable. If you can tie your gift up with string, that's an added bonus, as sticky tape is another problem area for plastic waste. Another option is to buy a pretty scarf from a charity shop and use that to wrap your gift – two gifts in one! Toiletries could be wrapped in a face cloth or towel with festive ribbon. However, if you can't resist that festive print, you can find 100% recycled wrapping paper online.

**Think about your tree:** A real or 'natural' tree is more eco-friendly on a one-off basis, if disposed of responsibly. However, an artificial tree that is well looked after can offset its higher carbon footprint if used for 10 years or

more. Either plant your real tree after Christmas, compost it or some councils organise a collection scheme for Christmas trees.

**Decorations:** Re-use your decorations from year to year, or make your own decorations using natural materials (holly and mistletoe, dried oranges, gingerbread people for your tree and strings of popcorn).

**Lights and energy:** Keep any Christmas lights modest and if possible use LED bulbs which are more energy efficient. Turn on sparingly (use a timer). Don't overheat unused rooms and use fires or extra heaters sparingly.

**Check out your local charity shops for any of the above items!**

## TRAVEL AND VISITORS

If visiting family and friends, try and plan your journeys to reduce the impact. You could combine several short trips into one longer journey visiting people along the way. How about using the train, or car sharing if you are going to be driving on your own?

Short interactions might work better online than by a special journey.

If having guests, let them know you are trying to reduce your environmental footprint such as avoiding unnecessary linen and towel washing, re-cycling where possible.



## FOOD AND DRINK

Try to avoid as much packaging as you can and shop local, trying to support independent businesses.

Meal plan, write a list, and stick to it so that you don't cater to excess.

Don't be tempted to shop early and end up with wasted food. If your plans change, and you have spare food, freeze or give it away.



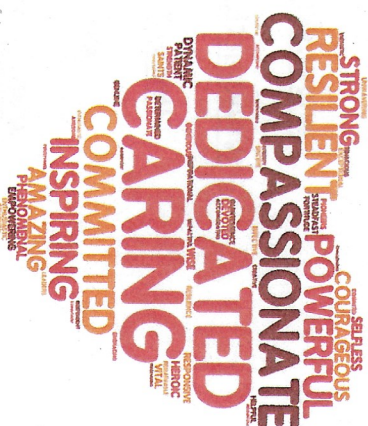
**Avoid food waste:** Don't leave food left out to cool for too long – set a timer. Freeze leftovers. Plan to use left-over food in another meal. If you have a compost bin at home, then compost anything that can't be eaten or given away. Food gives off methane in landfill. When it is composted, it can be used to grow plants. Join a 'reduce food waste' Facebook group dedicated to helping people reduce their food waste.

**Cut down on meat:** Why not try some vegetarian or vegan recipes this Christmas? Seasonal veggies are great at this time of year! You may have friends or family who don't eat meat, why not make a vegetarian main course for everyone instead of just for them?

**Food storage:** There are now plenty of alternatives to cling film to help you store your Christmas leftovers, from tiffin tins to wax cloths. Just don't throw away your plastic containers in favour of buying new ones or better still use homemade beeswax wraps.

## SUPPORTING THOSE IN NEED

Christmas is a time when you may want to reflect on your relative good fortune compared to many others and may want to give to charity through the gifts you give or how you spend Christmas. Here are just a few suggestions of some local charities and national organisations which you might choose to support. Links and details for these can be found on the back page of this leaflet.



- Give to a food bank. Skipton Food Bank is housed in St Andrews Church on Newmarket Street.
- Action for Children – secret Santa – helping vulnerable children.
- Crisis at Christmas – provides support for those who are homeless
- Toilet Twinning – twin your toilet with one overseas and receive a photo to hang in your loo! You can also twin your bin, your taps or your fridge. Unique gifts for someone who you struggle to buy for!
- Abigail Housing – local project supporting asylum seekers and refugees – gift card scheme to provide basic help
- Christmas Trees – Can be bought from Lowfield Farm near Beamsley (supports a spinal injury charity), and then recycled by Sue Ryder to raise funds for Manorlands Hospice
- Give to an international aid organisation working to alleviate poverty for those most vulnerable in the world

.... The list is endless, these are just a few suggestions!

Useful websites:

[www.skiptonfoodbank.org](http://www.skiptonfoodbank.org)

[www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)

[www.toilettwining.org](http://www.toilettwining.org)

[www.crisis.org.uk](http://www.crisis.org.uk)

[www.abigailhousing.org.uk](http://www.abigailhousing.org.uk)

[www.ydmt.org](http://www.ydmt.org)