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Just have a Think

"[Just have a Think](#)" offers informative and concise videos on the climate and nature emergency.

The web is overflowing with articles and videos on the subject; it can be challenging to know where to start.

Dave Borlace, the presenter, holds a BSc Hons. degree in Technology.

He addresses complex issues in a way that is easy to follow and understand. There are lots of short videos ((10-15 minutes in length)) to explore, offer food for thought backed up with data and ,his research into matters very relevant to us all.



Happy New Year

New Year, new goals for a greener future? There are many websites providing ways we can all do our bit for a more environmentally friendly year ahead. Here are just a couple of links and some of their ideas:

[BusinessWaste.co.uk](https://www.businesswaste.co.uk)
[Countryliving.com](https://www.countryliving.com)

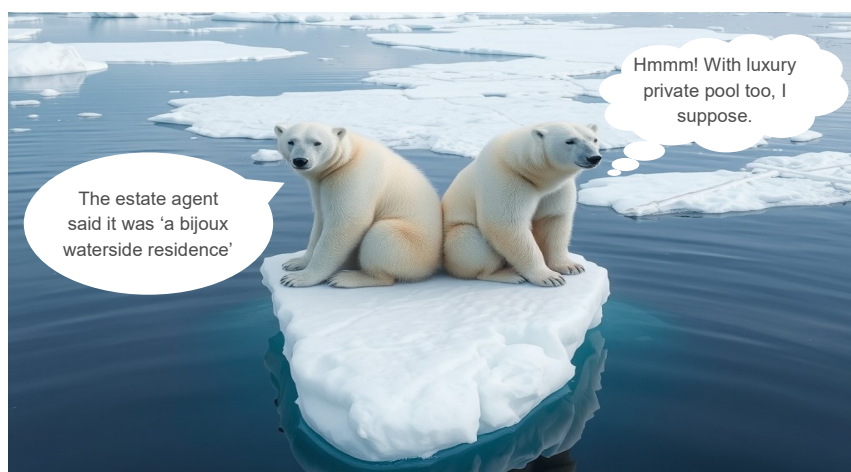
- **Support your local milkman** - A glass milk bottle can be reused around 20+ times
- **Eat less meat** – ‘meatless Mondays’ perhaps?
- **Plan ahead when food shopping** – only buy what you need. As a nation we throw away more than 4.5 million tonnes of food each year and so it’s important that we all do our bit to reuse left-overs. (Leftover food bits that we can’t eat such as vegetable peels and eggshells make great compost.)
- **Buy refillable eco-friendly toiletries and cleaning projects** - to reduce the amount of packaging heading to landfill.
- **Donate clothes** - the perfect opportunity to organise your wardrobe and donate any clothes to friends, family and local charity shops.

To name but a few ... **BUT don’t overwhelm yourself with a long list of goals.** Choose 2-3 that you would really like to build into your habits.

Track your progress – maybe keep track of what you’ve achieved in an app (there are many options), diary or notebook.

Don’t feel disheartened – It’s hard changing entrenched habits, so if you’re struggling to work on your goals, allow yourself a few days off and then return to them.

Think about your “why” - if you do feel like giving up just remember why you set your goal and how it would fit into your life.

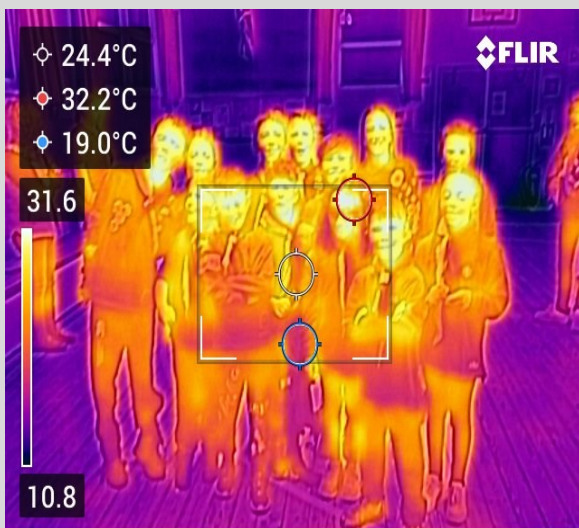




An Evening with Barrow's Monday night Cub Group



In the mellow month of September, BGL were invited by the local Cub Group to present on the topic of green energy to their Monday night cub scout group. The event took place on the 25th of November, when two members of BGL's steering group, along with our thermal camera, conducted a well-received session with the boys and girls. The presentation as a whole focused on the importance of green energy and ways to conserve it. During the session, the young audience had the opportunity to learn about various insulation materials and their effectiveness in preventing heat loss. A practical demonstration involving a sealed jar of warm water was conducted to showcase how effective different materials are in retaining heat. The group were a delight and were eager to participate with their own ideas and suggestions to conserve energy.



participants reaffirmed our belief in the power of education and awareness in promoting a sustainable future. We look forward to receiving more requests from community groups like the Cub Scouts (grown ups too!) to further spread the message of environmental conservation and the essential transition to green energy.

One of the fun highlights of the evening was the use of BGL's thermal camera to identify hot spots (**shots!**) in a group picture. The children were fascinated by the technology and eagerly participated in the activity. The experience with thermal imaging not only added a fun element to the session but also helped the cubs understand the concept of energy efficiency in a practical way.

The enthusiasm and engagement of the Cub Group left a lasting impression on the BGL team. We are grateful for the opportunity to share our knowledge about green energy with such a bright and inquisitive group of young people. It is our hope that the experience gained during the session will inspire them to incorporate eco-friendly practices in their daily lives and future endeavours.

The interest and curiosity shown by the young

If you would like to see our thermal camera in action first hand and benefit from an Energy Survey of your home, it's **FREE** on request to all members of **Barrow Greener Living**



To become a BGL member, scan the QR code or click [here](#)

Here are few words of feedback from BGL members who have had an Energy Survey in their home:

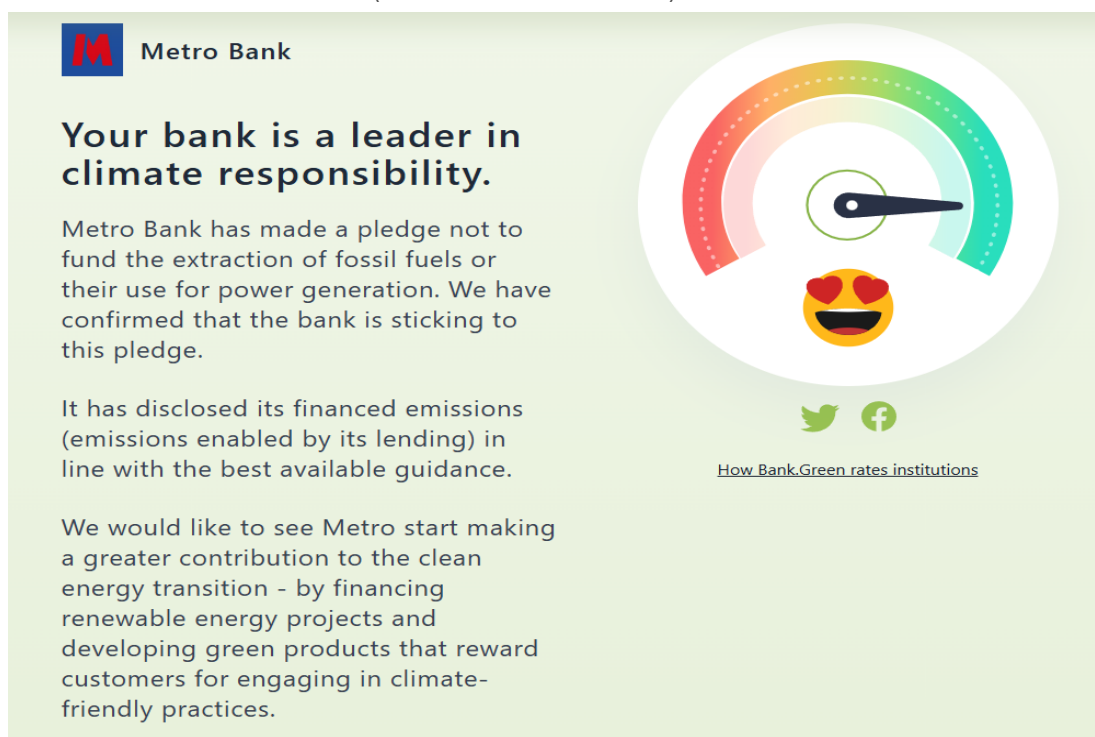
- “... this is really useful and we will look at each of the comments so we can make any improvements suggested. The process was really beneficial and we are so glad we had it done.”
- “Lovely detailed report with good explanations. I appreciate the time and effort that the team have put into this.”
- “Many thanks for the survey. It is super useful. See you again at a Greener Living meeting. Cheers.”

Do your Bank and Pension Fund(s) have green credentials?

As a member of BGL, your curiosity and commitment are valuable in taking steps to combat the climate and nature emergency, with practices like recycling, reducing single-use plastics, cutting down on food waste, conserving energy and promoting biodiversity in your garden or village green spaces. Locally, dedicated individuals and 'green' groups are striving for a brighter future for our children and grandchildren. But what about the bigger picture? The organisations that most of us use to either provide a service or supply our daily needs.

For example, when it comes to the banks where we entrust our finances, it's useful to know their stance and their actions on addressing climate change's threats. The [Bank Green website](#) is a valuable resource to discover how your bank is contributing to the fight against climate change in the hope of safeguarding our future.

BGL recently moved their bank account to Metro Bank and are happy to report their green credentials are excellent (see screenshot below).



Source: Bank.Green Is your money being used to fund climate chaos?

Pensions are another area where large organisations are deciding where our money is invested. If you are paying into a company pension, you can find out how 'green' their practices are. The [Pensions Guide 2024](#) provides useful information for you to assess what your pension provider is doing to ensure investments are being used in an ethical way. If you are retired and receiving a pension, it may be more challenging to influence your pension provider, but you can still act without jeopardising your income source. Check out the informative [Green Pensions](#) website for more insights on how to support environmentally friendly investment practices in your pension portfolio.

The Science Is Clear: No New Oil & Gas

Arguments in favour of new North Sea oil and gas are rife with misinformation (Part 1 of 2)

Myth

"Stopping new oil will increase bills"

Renewables now offer significantly better value and stability than fossil fuels

The high and volatile cost of gas has been a major contributor to inflation and the cost of living crisis¹, estimated to be responsible for over 90% of the increase in energy bills in recent years². The additional fossil fuels that could be produced from the North Sea would not significantly affect these gas prices, which are set globally³. Meanwhile the cost of renewables is continually falling⁴, with 2022 seeing UK offshore wind projects promising costs 9 times cheaper than the gas price⁵. Decisions to cut climate policies (or 'get rid of the green crap') back in 2013 have effectively added billions to energy bills⁶.

"New oil provides energy independence"

UK licences are no guarantee of UK supply, as once a licence is awarded, the fuels belong to the licence holder (i.e. fossil fuel companies) rather than the UK government.

This is how, even though the use of fossil fuels in the UK vastly exceeds domestic production, most oil and gas produced in the UK is exported⁷. Even if this were not the case, and if there were no climate crisis to consider, North Sea supplies are now very depleted⁸, making renewables and energy efficiency much more fundamental to energy independence than fossil fuels.

"Decarbonising our energy supply will cost too much"

NOT decarbonising rapidly costs MUCH more.

Under the pathway to net zero emissions recommended by the UK Climate Change Committee, the cost of this transition is estimated at less than 1% of GDP over 30 years - an investment that would pay for itself in savings on fuel alone, and is expected to boost GDP and employment^{9, 10}. Meanwhile, climate-related damage is currently costing the UK 1.1% GDP and is expected to increase substantially¹¹. The Office of Budgetary Responsibility has clearly stated that **"The costs of failing to get climate change under control would be much larger than those of bringing emissions down to net zero."**¹²

Most importantly, decarbonisation will save lives - both human and other species - and mitigate suffering from escalating climate impacts.

"No new oil means 'turning the taps off' overnight"

Existing reserves and production are available as we transition

According to UK Oil & Gas Authority data¹⁴, it takes an average of 28 years for an exploration licence to lead to oil and gas production. Because of this, licences given now may not be contributing to supply until the 2040s or 2050s, during which UK fossil fuel usage is to be largely phased out¹⁰.

"North Sea oil is 'lower carbon'"

Fossil fuels from any source are highly polluting. Further production is incompatible with climate commitments.¹⁰

Whilst emissions caused by transporting fuel would be lower for domestic supplies than they would be for imported supplies, it's highly misleading to suggest this makes them less carbon intensive overall: the use of particularly polluting practices makes North Sea production on average ~2.5 times, more greenhouse gas intensive than Norway's for instance¹⁶.

Sources

¹ Food and Energy Price Inflation, Office for National Statistics (2023)

² Why UK Energy Bills Are Soaring to Record Highs - and How to Cut Them, CarbonBrief (2022)

³ Oil & Gas in the UK, UK Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (2023)

⁴ Competitiveness of Renewables Continued Amid Fossil Fuel Crisis, International Renewable Energy Agency (2022)

⁵ Record-low Price for UK Offshore Wind is Nine Times Cheaper than Gas, CarbonBrief (2022)

⁶ Cutting the 'Green Crap' has Added £2.5bn to UK Energy Bills, CarbonBrief (2022)

⁷ According to government data, in 2022 UK gas production amounted to ~38 billion cubic metres (bcm), over 60% (23.5bcm) of which was exported. Natural gas demand in the UK amounted to ~72 bcm in 2022, of which around 80% was imported.

⁸ According to government data, in 2022 UK crude oil production amounted to ~38 million tonnes, over 80% (31 million tonnes) of which was exported. ~46.5 million tonnes of crude oil was imported.

⁹ Factcheck: Why Banning New North Sea Oil and Gas is not a 'Just Stop Oil plan', CarbonBrief (2023)

¹⁰ Sixth Carbon Budget, Climate Change Committee (2020)

¹¹ UK must Cut Emissions '78% by 2035' to be on Course for Net-Zero Goal, CarbonBrief (2020)

¹² Policy Brief: What Will Climate Change Cost the UK?, London School of Economics/ Grantham Research Institute (2022)

¹³ Fiscal Risks Report, Office for Budgetary Responsibility (2021)

¹⁴ Letter: Climate Compatibility of New Oil and Gas Fields, Climate Change Committee (2022)

¹⁵ New Fossil Fuels 'Incompatible' with 1.5C Goal, Comprehensive Analysis Finds, CarbonBrief (2022)

¹⁶ Contrasting Upstream Emissions: Greenhouse Gas Intensity of the North Sea, S&P Global Commodity Insights (2022)

¹⁷ Distribution of Cash Spending by the Oil and Gas Industry, International Energy Agency (2023)

¹⁸ Our Power: Offshore Workers' Demands for a Just Energy Transition, Platform (2023)

¹⁹ UK Offshore Energy Workforce Transferability Review, Robert Gordon University (2021)

²⁰ A Net-Zero Workforce, Climate Change Committee (2023)

²¹ Prime Minister's CCS Announcement Indicates A Government Disinterested In Addressing Climate Change, Prof Kevin Anderson (2023)

Why anger, anxiety and anguish are understandable psychological reactions to the climate crisis

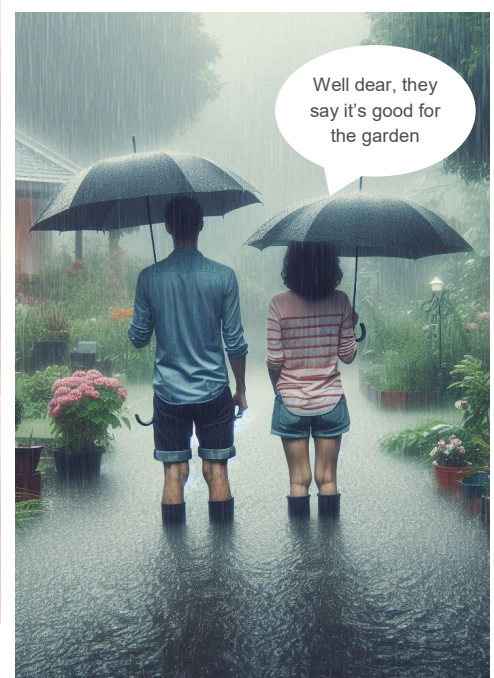
(an article from
The Conversation.com)

"You might be unsure what can be done, and feel powerless or angry. At the same time, you might feel isolated, with others around you not seeming to recognise the precariousness of our situation.

As psychologists who research psychological responses to the climate emergency, we're here to tell you something important: you are not alone.

A global [survey of 10,000 people aged 16-25](#) found that climate worries had impacted on the daily functioning, like sleeping and concentrating, of 45% of respondents. In the UK, 73% of those surveyed felt that the future is frightening, with 48% feeling dismissed or ignored when voicing concerns. Subsequent surveys found similarly high rates of distress."

Read the whole article [here](#)



Read the second part of this factsheet [here](#)

Public Transport



We are lucky in Barrow upon Soar to have buses and trains available in our village, but there is always room for improvement. BGL's focus will be on lobbying for more frequent services, extended evening and Sunday schedules and real-time information for commuters. While we work towards further upgrades, let's continue to utilise the existing public transport options we have.

Perhaps next time you're planning a trip, you might give public transport a thought and if timings are appropriate, consider leaving the car keys at home. As a member of BGL, you already know it's a sustainable option that helps reduce traffic congestion and environmental impact. Together, we can strive for a more efficient and convenient public transport service that benefits us all.

If you would like to check out the possibilities, the table of services and times below should be helpful:

Trains

Barrow upon Soar to Leicester - Monday to Saturday

Hourly from 7am until 10.30pm

Leicester to Barrow upon Soar - Monday to Saturday

Hourly from 6.30am until 9.30pm

Buses

Barrow upon Soar to Leicester

Monday to Friday

6.27am	Bus 2X	
7.10am	Bus 22A	
8.41am	Bus 22A	
9.41am	Bus 22A	
10.41am	Bus 22A	
11.41am	Bus 22A	
12.41pm	Bus 22A	
13.41pm	Bus 22A	
16.23pm	Bus 22A	
17.24pm	Bus 27	(To Thurmaston)

Saturday

7.27am	Bus 2X
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Leicester to Barrow upon Soar

Monday to Friday

7.24am	Bus 27	(From Thurmaston)
8.41am	Bus 22A	
9.44am	Bus 22A	
10.44am	Bus 22A	
11.44am	Bus 22A	
12.44pm	Bus 22A	
15.22pm	Bus 22A	
16.30pm	Bus 22A	
18.14pm	Bus 22A	
18.40pm	Bus 2X	
20.40pm	Bus 2X	
22.00pm	Bus 2X	

Saturday

19.45pm	Bus 2X
21.15pm	Bus 2X
23.55pm	Bus 2N



GREENER LIVING
BARROW UPON SOAR

Spring will soon be here and your garden is patiently waiting for your green thumbs! If you're an experienced vegetable grower, I expect you are already scouring seed catalogues and starting early crops, hooray for you! But don't worry if you're just dipping your toes into gardening - we all start somewhere. A fantastic way to kickstart your gardening journey is by growing easy-to-manage veg like courgettes, beans, radish and potatoes.

Remember to note sunny and shaded spots in your garden and grab a soil testing kit to get a better understanding of your soil's needs. Speaking of seeds, have you heard about F1 hybrids? These are produced by crossing two parent plants and promise higher yields, disease resistance, uniformity & early blooming. (Just a heads-up: seeds saved from F1 hybrids are unlikely to replicate their exceptional qualities, so keep that in mind!)



There is lots of free information and helpful advice for keen amateurs on the [RHS](#), [Gardeners' World](#) and the [Soil Association](#) websites, including growing organically. And locally, [Incredible Edible](#) provide informative workshops (free to attend/donations welcome) at Fearon Hall, Loughborough.

So happy gardening and enjoy the fruits of your labours on your plate in 2025.

a (fine-weather) amateur

It's sad news indeed that RealRefills, our mobile supplier of eco-friendly products, has closed down. Their monthly visits have been really welcome for sustainability-conscious residents, offering package-free dry foods, toiletries, cleaning products and more. So, where to go now? Locally, [Bradleys](#) in Quorn have refill stations. While they may be a bit of a trek, if you're on the lookout for alternative suppliers, consider checking out [Leicester Wholefoods](#) in Leicester, or [Elf Foods](#) & [Grape Tree](#) in Loughborough. Additionally, Leicester Wholefoods will deliver your order (over £30) to your home.

For the immediate future BGL are working hard to provide the following:

- Providing a number of speaker events open to all and especially members
- Holding a clothes swap event

and ... our next newsletter will include articles on Coping with High Temperatures / Conserving Water / Ideas for Sustainable Days Out with Kids

Farm Washing

'Farmwashing' is a marketing practice the major supermarkets use, giving the impression that the food is sourced from British farmers on local farms. Produce labels are emblazoned with union jacks and the word 'British'. You may believe you are supporting local farmers when the reality is very different. Organisations like [StopFarmwashing](#) aim to raise awareness about this issue and provide clarification, information and videos on their website that highlight the true sources of the food we consume, enabling consumers to make more informed choices and support genuine local producers.

Local farm shops list [here](#)



And finally ... a small correction to the work in progress entry in the last newsletter. The following announcement ...

"... are also talking with De Montfort University about holding sporting events with a green agenda in mind."

should have read ...

'are also talking with De Montfort University to learn about their work on how sports teams can become more sustainable with the ambition to engage and support local clubs'.