

CHAR CHAT

Char Valley Parish Council Newsletter

Whitchurch Canonorum, Stanton St Gabriel, Wootton Fitzpaine

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Trees

West Dorset District Council's Tree Preservation Officer stresses that NOBODY should ever agree to have tree work done from someone who calls at the door suggesting that a tree needs attention or is dangerous. They should instead ring one of the Tree Preservation Officers at WDDC: Ron Martin on 01305 252421 or Graham Cox on 01305 252511 and leave a message to ring back if they are not in. They can inspect to see whether work is necessary and provide advice on contractors.



National Trust Golden Cap Estate

The new path to the beach was opened by Professor Brunsten in October.

Although it is now legal for us all to go down to the beach, the photograph indicates the degree of difficulty in accessing it. This is a permissive path not a Right of Way and there are notices stating that the path is used at your own risk. Take care if you are elderly or are taking young children.

If you decide to go down, be aware that there is no local parking. You have to walk from Morcombelake, Stonebarrow or Langdon Woods.

John Bridle

Emergencies

Your Parish Councillors are compiling an Emergency Plan to cover a range of eventualities to include flooding, extreme weather conditions, power failure and other disasters. The plan should be completed within the next 6 months and will include a list of those with heavy lifting gear, generators and other useful equipment. It will be sent to each household and available in village halls and/or churches.

Meanwhile, as this year is forecast as likely to have a particularly hard winter, be prepared.

- Food is critical! Stock up on tinned and/or dried foods that do not need a freezer to keep them fresh - and don't forget the animals!
- We ask those households who have oil or solid fuel cookers to offer all-electric householders drinks and food if there are power cuts.
- Be warm! Check fuel supplies and stock up on wood, paraffin for heaters, gas canisters etc.
- Stock up on candles, paraffin for lamps and batteries for the radio and torch.
- Make sure you have a sufficient supply of necessary prescription drugs if bad weather is forecast.
- Look out for your neighbours, particularly if they are elderly.

Preparing for Winter Weather and

Flood Warning Codes:

Flood Watch: Flooding is possible. Be aware.

Flood Warning: Flooding of homes, businesses and roads is expected. Act now!

Severe Flood Warning: Severe flooding is expected. Imminent danger to life and property. Act now!

All clear: There are no Flood Watches or Flood Warnings in the area.

Reducing Energy Bills and Helping to Protect Our Environment

There are many good reasons for trying to reduce domestic energy consumption, of which increasing fuel prices and the threat of an energy shortage are but two. Using more energy in our homes than we need does not just waste our money; fossil fuel power stations have to produce the excess energy and that, in turn, means that they emit more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than is necessary. Nearly all the world's leading environmental experts have now accepted the link between carbon dioxide emissions and global warming.

Research has shown that many of us want to be more 'environmentally friendly' in our homes but we do not act because we believe it is too difficult or expensive. In this article we list measures that we can all take to reduce energy consumption, starting with the simplest and ending with the very ambitious.

Simple energy-saving measures

- Close **curtains** at dusk. This will improve your windows' insulating properties.
- Do not leave your **fridge door** open for longer than necessary. Fridges consume large amounts of energy.
- Turn off the **lights** in a room when you leave it.
- Do not leave appliances on **stand-by**. Contrary to popular belief, this wastes lots of energy.
- Boil only as much **water** as you need; there is no need to use a full kettle each time.
- Try turning down your **central heating** by a degree or two to see if you notice the difference.
- Have your central heating system **serviced** annually.
- Turn your **water heater** off if you are absent for more than a few days.
- **Dishwashers** are more efficient than hand-washes. Make sure the dishwasher is full before using it.
- Try to use your **washing machine** only with full loads.
- Enable the energy-saving feature on your **computer equipment**. Make sure the monitor and hard drive shut down after a set period without activity (go to 'power options' on the Control Panel).

Fairly simple energy-saving measures.

- As your **light bulbs** wear out, replace them with energy-saving equivalents. These are more expensive than ordinary bulbs, but can last up to twelve times longer.
- When replacing **electrical appliances**, choose those that have the orange and blue energy-saving logo on them.
- Reduce **draughts** by filling gaps under skirting boards with beading, sealant or newspaper.
- Insulate your **hot water tank** with a 3" jacket. The cylinder thermostat should never be set at a temperature above 60°C.
- Burn **wood**. Wood is a sustainable fuel and is 'carbon neutral'. Many people think that burning wood also adds to carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, but this is not so because trees and plants absorb CO₂ while growing, then give off an equal amount when burnt.

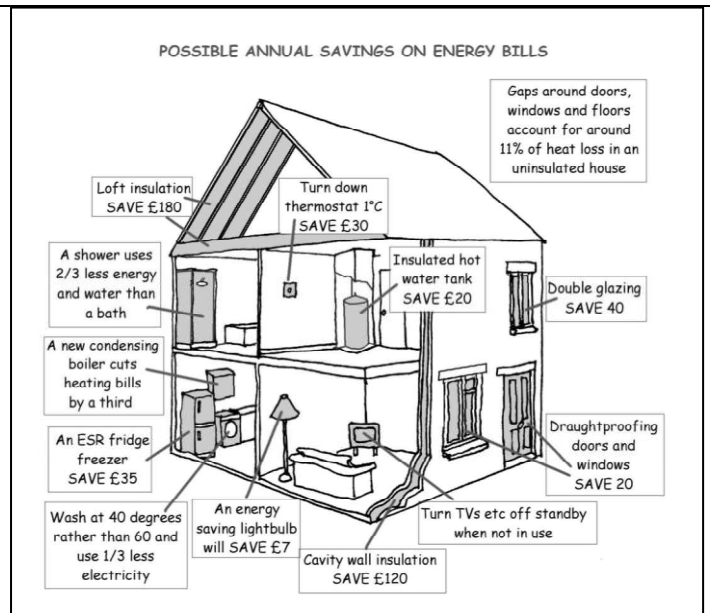
More involved energy-saving measures

- Insulate your **roof space**. Laying 10" of insulation in the loft can reduce the average home's energy use by about a quarter.
- Replace **boilers** that are more than 15 years old with new energy-efficient models.
- Have **cavity walls** filled.

Advanced measures

- Install **solar panels** on the roof of your house to produce heat or electricity.
- Erect a **wind turbine** in the garden or on the roof to produce electricity.
- Use **geothermal** heating to provide heating for your house.

In this country, these three approaches are unusual but perfectly possible and we give more details below.



SOLAR ENERGY.

Energy from the sun can be captured by using solar panels. There are two main types:

1. *Solar water-heating collectors:* These panels absorb the energy from the sun and transfer it to heat water. Solar power water heating systems are the most popular form of solar energy used in the UK. The system is connected to the hot water system and can provide over half of your household's hot water requirements over the year. These systems are not designed to work in conjunction with your central heating radiators - they can only heat your water. They depend on radiation, not direct sunlight so they work even on dull days. However, in winter, although a panel can be effective in helping warm your water, you will still need your existing hot water heater to provide most of your water heating needs.
2. *Photovoltaic (PV) or solar electric panels:* These panels convert solar radiation directly into electricity and could provide a household with about 40% of its annual electricity needs.

For advice on both types, visit www.pv-uk.org.uk and www.solartradeassociation.org.uk

WIND ENERGY

Wind turbines use the wind to rotate aerodynamic blades and these turn a rotor to produce electricity. Small-scale domestic wind turbines vary in size and a range of models is available, capable of generating from less than 100 watts up to 50 kilowatts. A typical domestic system would generate between 2.5 and 6 kilowatts, depending on its location. There is funding and advice available to help you with the cost of installing a small-scale wind turbine.

Small wind energy installations require *planning permission*. Overall, national planning policies support the development of small-scale wind energy. Useful web sites are www.clear-skies.org, www.bwea.com and www.bwea.com/pdf/mid%20wales%20microwind.pdf

GEOTHERMAL ENERGY

Geothermal energy is energy from the Earth's interior. Geothermal energy comes from the decaying of radioactive elements within the Earth's crust. Heat from this source is then transferred through the Earth's crust where it heats other substances, such as water. Ground source heat pumps can extract this energy to use for space heating.

In the UK, ground temperature a few metres down is constant at around 12°C, independent of season, and this can be exploited to heat and cool buildings. Pipes are buried underground in a trench or in a vertical well, water is pumped through and heated by the underground energy. A heat pump can then extract this heat and transfer it into a building for space and water heating, or it can remove heat from a building and deposit it into the ground to cool the building during hot weather. Once the pipes are filled with water, no extra is required. Heat Pumps do need *some* power to operate. However, for one unit of energy used for this purpose, they generate about four units of power. The energy generated by a ground source heat pump can be considered 100% renewable if the power to operate the pump comes from solar electric panels or a wind turbine, for example. Useful sites to visit for information about renewable energy and related grants are www.est.org.uk and www.earthenergy.co.uk (telephone 01326 211 070).

LOCAL EXPERIENCE

In Morcombelake, a house has recently been constructed that uses geothermal energy for hot water and space heating. Clare Mahaddie has kindly agreed to discuss her experience with this system if you care to ring her on 01297 489813.

At Fivepenny Farm they generate enough power for all lighting, a computer and other electrical items from their wind turbine and solar panels. The electricity charges a battery and has always proved sufficient for their needs. They intend to add a washing machine soon. This will use hot water from a back boiler on the wood-fired Rayburn to heat the water from solar panels and wind turbine would take too much power. At present, the Rayburn provides hot water for the kitchen and two radiators in the bedrooms. Jyoti Fernandes recommends the web site www.windandsun.co.uk for useful information on products for creating sustainable energy.

At Copse Gate, Simon and Jenny Taylor are building a contemporary farmhouse using 'green' technology. Although still being built, the house will have extra thick walls in keeping with the design theme and for insulation. They will use geo-thermal energy for under-floor heating and domestic hot water. The site had a number of *Macrocarpa* trees which were at the end of their natural lives and have been felled.

Macrocarpa is a "hard" soft wood, so some will be used for flooring and doors in the house (it is stacked and drying at present) and the rest will go in the wood-burning Rayburn in the kitchen (with back boiler) and in the wood-burning stove. They are also putting in a 4,000 litre rainwater tank - enough for 18 rain-free days - which will provide all their domestic water, except drinking water. Finally, the new cow-shed has a 10° south-facing roof and in the future, they plan to install photovoltaic panels sufficient to power the heat pump for the geothermal system, so heating the house at no cost and with no net CO₂ emissions.

Highway Defects

To report highway defects, for example drainage, flooding, mud and debris, potholes, trees overhanging etc, please telephone CLARENCE on 0800 232323 and for Wessex Water LEAKSTOPPERS 0800 692 0692

An Apology

The editors would like to apologise to Sylvia Creed-Castle for not attributing to her the article on The Well House, Whitchurch Canonorum, printed in the last issue

Our Thanks

The Editors would like to thank Martin Legg for his help in delivering the Char Chat.

Home Improvements, Insulation, Draught proofing: Grants and Advice

We are told that we are to have a cold winter in 2005/2006. Whether or not this turns out to be true, many more of us could lower our fuel bills and help to conserve energy by insulating and draught proofing our homes to a higher standard. The Government is offering financial support through many bodies, including energy suppliers, DIY stores and local councils. This provides a range of options for the householder, landlord or tenant. Below, we provide contact numbers for some of the many information centres available.

The 'Warm Front' Scheme. A combination of poor energy efficiency and low incomes means that some households cannot afford to keep warm. The Warm Front scheme run by the government is used to help target these households. This scheme is most useful for homeowners and people who rent their homes from private landlords. If you receive one or more income-related government benefits, you may be eligible for a government funded 'Warm Front' grant, to help pay for insulating your home. In some cases, you may be able to get a grant for installing a heating system.

The **Warm Front Team** is part of the government Home Energy Efficiency Scheme in England, a grant-funded programme for those on low incomes. Warm Front provides packages of insulation and heating measures depending upon the needs of the householder and the construction of the property. DEFRA is the government body that has overall responsibility for policy for Warm Front and those on low incomes. The scheme manager administering Warm Front across England is **Eaga Partnership Ltd**. Freephone **0800 316 6011**. Website www.eaga.co.uk.

Local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre. Tel: **0800 512 012**

West Dorset Care and Repair Service for homeowners and private tenants. Free advice and guidance on work needed. They can advise on grants or loans and other ways of funding necessary work. They can arrange finance as well as organize and oversee a job for you. For advice and information Tel: **01305 252280**.

Many energy suppliers are offering grants and surveys to customers at present. Ring your own supplier for information on what they could offer:

SWEB Energy 'Home Insulation Scheme'. For customers on qualifying benefits, offers free cavity wall and loft insulation. Apply before 31st March 2006. Phone for a free, no obligation survey quoting 'GID'. Tel: **0800 328 9014**

Powergen 'Private Homes Insulation Scheme'. Provides insulation for lofts from £105 and cavity walls from £106. FREE for Powergen customers over 60 or those on qualifying benefits. Apply before 31st December 2005. For information Tel: **0800 479 0162** and quote 'CHANGE'.

British Gas. Insulation from £220 including labour and materials until 31st December 2005. Tel: **0845 971 7731** quoting 'GID'.

Wickes and Focus DIY Stores. A '3 for the price of 2' offer on loft insulation. Promotion funded by **Scottish Hydro Electric, SWALEC and Southern Electric** until 31st December 2005. Tel: **0800 608 9001**.

Snug as a Bug. 'Home insulation scheme' discounts up to £650 for cavity wall and loft insulation (free for homeowners on benefits) until 31st March 2008. Tel: **0845 607 6415**.