



Join the
**Lewisham
Climate
Conversation**

You have more power than you think



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Introduction

Climate change can feel scary sometimes, right? We know how you feel. We also know that coming together, sharing our perspectives and taking practical actions can be a powerful antidote to climate anxiety.

Where some people see the scale of the challenge, we see opportunity. Because by stepping up and making the changes needed to keep our planet and borough the way we love it, we can also make our air cleaner and our homes warmer, we can make ourselves healthier and fitter, and we can design our neighbourhoods so they are brimming with life. We might even save some money along the way too!

This November, the UK is hosting [COP26](#), bringing together more than 200 countries from across the United Nations with the aim of tackling climate change.

This is a brilliant opportunity for us to tell decision-makers what we expect and to come together to make things happen in Lewisham. As we look ahead to [Lewisham's Borough of Culture](#) year in 2022, together we can do something about climate change.

This guide shows that you (yes, you!) have more power than you think and shares some inspiration and positive things you can do for the planet and yourself, while getting involved in this exciting year for environmental action.



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You have more power than you think

It can sometimes feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. We hear you. But it's easy to forget how many circles we move in without thinking about it and how much influence we all really have in our interconnected world.

You are:

A friend and family member.

You have the power to discuss ideas and start conversations that will help other people make more sustainable choices.

★ *Check out [page 5](#) for tips on starting a climate conversation.*

A valued customer. You can vote with your pocket everyday by [shopping locally](#) or buying from brands that share your values on the environment.

★ *[Heard of B Corps? They're businesses that balance profit and purpose.](#)*

Part of the [local community](#).

You know what could be improved locally and you might be part of a local group that you could inspire to make a difference together.

★ *[Want to get your community group excited to take action? Check out our tips on \[page 7\]\(#\).](#)*

An employee, employer, retired or unemployed.

You can help make your workplace more sustainable or volunteer in your spare time.

★ *[Why not put your heads together with other passionate colleagues and see what you could do together at work?](#)*

A tenant or homeowner. You live in, rent or rent out a house that you could make more sustainable by making it more energy efficient, for example.

A constituent. You can let your [elected MP](#) or [councillor](#) know how important sustainability is to you and your community, and you can tell them what *they* can do.

A voice for change:

You can join protests, sign and share petitions, share positive messages on your channels and start conversations.

These are just some examples. You're probably also a transport user and a foody, you might be a business owner and you may be a student or even a teacher. **The point is, you have more influence than you perhaps imagine.**

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Be a gardener

You don't have to do anything remarkable. You don't have to invent carbon capture technology, plant a forest or survive on a diet of foraged food. You don't even have to hold your own Climate Conference either, it can be as simple as having a cuppa with a friend, speaking to a neighbour over the fence or chatting to fellow students about what you could do together; these all count for much more than you think.

Tip:

When starting conversations, think of yourself as a gardener planting seeds. Studies show that people have to hear something seven times on average before they fully process it. You never know if the person you're speaking to is hearing something for the first time, fifth time, seventh time or maybe the twentieth time (some people just need a bit longer to clock on – and that's ok!).

No matter where someone is on their sustainability journey, by talking to them in an open and positive way you will help move them a bit further down the line towards caring and taking action. As a gardener, you don't know for sure when the seeds you plant will flower and you may never see the results, but by having conversations, you have planted a seed.

“The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago, the second best time is now.”

- Chinese Proverb

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Starting a climate conversation

Starting a conversation about looking after our borough and our planet might sound simple, but it's one of the most effective ways to create positive change.

You could chat with a friend, housemate or colleague. Or maybe you're part of a faith group, sports club, community action group, or even a street WhatsApp group that you want to come up with ideas with. Whoever you want to talk to, here are some tips for starting a climate conversation.

Pick your moment

- Are you in the mood to talk about the climate? Trust your own judgment on this! E.g. If your partner comes home and tells you they've just had the worst day at work... that might not be the best time.

Don't worry about getting it 'right'

- There's no one way to talk to everyone: we're all different and have our own ideas, views and preferences. However, the vast majority of people in the UK recognise there's a climate emergency ([according to 2021 report by the UNDP](#)) and the vast majority of those want to do something about it—that's a good place to start!
- Don't worry if the person you speak to seems indifferent about the conversation. Remember: you will have planted a seed.



Two ears, one mouth

- Ask open questions, be curious and most importantly listen to what others say with an open mind. You are likely to learn something yourself if you take this approach!
- Share your own story, your shortcomings and your successes. No one is perfect. And that's fine! By avoiding judgment and listening, we make others much more likely to listen back.

Make it relevant

- Maybe you have a passion for food? Or cycling? Or maybe you love seeing new places? Talk about the things you are passionate about!
- We are all naturally more likely to do something when it benefits us too. Which is lucky, because what is good for us is often good for the planet too! See [page 7](#) for inspiration and ideas which could spark great conversations.

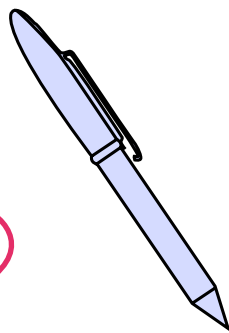


Have fun

- 'Climate action' can sound painfully sincere, but it can actually be a lot of fun! Whether it's listening to an inspiring podcast, joining a silent disco litter pick or growing plants at home, there's loads of ways to make climate action fun.
- Ask people you know for their suggestions, or [follow Hubbub's channels](#) below for more fun inspiration and ideas .

Shout about what you do

- Sharing your ideas, progress and conversations is a great way to encourage others to do the same. Why? For the same reason we buy products with good reviews.
- 2/3 of people are willing to make changes for the planet if they see others are doing the same (YouGov 2019) so sharing what you do can boost your impact.



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10 things that are good for the environment and good for you

Need some inspiration? Would it help to get your climate conversation started with some practical ideas for action? Here are 10 suggestions to get you going that will benefit both you and the planet (definitely) and bring you a lifetime of good fortune (possibly).

1. Buy less stuff

Make a list. Any time you want to make an impulse purchase, put it on the list. If you still really want the thing in a month's time then consider treating yourself. If not, then scrap it – you've just saved yourself time, money and space.

- + Save money
- + Reduce clutter and guilt of buying things you didn't really need

82% of us have felt buyer's remorse at some point

2. Cut down on meat and dairy

Let's say you love spaghetti Bolognese. Why not give it a go with plant-based mince and extra veg?

- + Good for your health
- + Try new ingredients and recipes
- + Save money

Livestock take up nearly 80% of global agricultural land despite contributing less than 20% of global calories.

3. Eat more seasonal and locally sourced food

Find a local farmers market or keep an eye out for fresh food from the UK when you do your shopping - all fruit and veg will say where it's from on the label.

- + Fruit and veg that are in season usually taste a lot better e.g. British butternut squash in autumn are best!
- + It's cheaper and fresher as it hasn't had to travel or store too long.

4. Cut food waste

Meal planning is key to reducing waste. Apps like Olio can help you to share any spare food you have. Or drop it off at the [Community Fridge in Catford](#).

- ⊕ Save money
- ⊕ Eat healthier with meal planning

A third of all food goes to waste and in the UK, the average household wastes around £720 worth of food per year.

5. Recycle your electronic waste

Rehome your old tech to someone who can make the most of it with [Catbytes](#) or [Community Calling](#). Recycle your small electrics [here](#) or your old monitor [here](#).

- ⊕ Declutter
- ⊕ Help someone else in need

There are 28 million old smartphones sitting around in people's homes in the UK. And that's not to mention all the other gear!

6. Save water

Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth. Only run the washing machine and dishwasher when full. Use a washing up bowl when sink washing. Spend one minute less in the shower. Get any leaks fixed. Fill the kettle using your mug instead of the tap to avoid overfilling. There you go – six tips for the price of one!

- ⊕ Save on water and energy bills – heating water takes a lot of energy!

The average person in the UK uses an eye-watering [141 litres of water a day](#).

7. Switch short car journeys to active travel

If you're used to driving for short journeys, walking, cycling or space hopping can feel like a big commitment. But it's a chance to slow down and drink in your surroundings – you might even spot something you hadn't noticed before!

- ⊕ Good for your physical and mental health

Just 10 minutes of moderate physical activity (including walking or cycling) has [significant physical and mental health benefits](#).

8. Dial it down

Turning down your thermostat just one degree has a big impact! In fact it could save you more than £60 a year. Don't forget to turn off radiators in rooms where they're not needed too. Here are some [more tips to save you money at home](#), or [get advice from South East London Community Energy!](#)

+ Save money

9. Remember your reusables

Invest in a reusable you love, and you'll want to remember it everywhere you go. Many coffee outlets actually offer discounts for using a reusable cup, so you'll soon make your money back.

+ Save money

10. Give it a grow

[Join a local gardening group like these](#) to learn new skills and meet new people.

+ Great for your mental health

+ Learn new skills

+ Grow fresh fruit and veg

52% of Lewisham's carbon emission's come from homes.

In the UK we use a total of 25 billion [plastic bottles, cans and single use coffee cups](#) every year. That's almost 50,000 a minute!

If every Londoner greened a patch [1m squared](#), we'd make more than 50% of London physically green.



“We don't need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions of people doing it imperfectly”*

- Anne Marie Bonneau.

*(This actually applies nicely to all the things we just mentioned. Far better to do something imperfectly than worrying about doing it perfectly, and doing nothing.)

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Join the Lewisham Climate Conversation

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Lewisham Council declared a climate emergency and published its [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) in 2020 setting out plans to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The programme for [Lewisham Borough of Culture 2022](#) will have these critical issues at its heart, amplifying diverse voices to create a lasting legacy and inspire positive change. **Three themes emerged that will form the heart of this cultural programme:**

- We will protect this place we love: A call to action on the climate emergency.
- We are strengthened by our diversity: A celebration of our diverse communities and borough of sanctuary.
- We will be happy here: A commitment to building an inclusive society.

We hope that the Lewisham Climate Conversation can start a discussion that will encourage action across the borough, inform the development of the Council's climate emergency work, and push for action at a national level.

Let's use today as a chance to start the conversation. We're ready to listen.

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