

# WHATEVER YOU DO

Justice, peace and social responsibility at St Joseph's

A brand new year: 2022, what is it going to look like? Have you made some New Year resolutions? It is not too late to add one or two more. How about adding something new and environmentally friendly, if you have not already?

It can be difficult to take that first step, but to paraphrase Simon Reeves, that is all it takes. Just a first step and that can lead to another and another and before we know it, we look back and see we have made a journey and things have changed.

So here are some ideas and thoughts to help with that first or second step towards a greener and more sustainable life.

Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) is a wonderful resource to get practical tips from. For those with access to computers, this is the web address [dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk)

Here are some of their Top Tips from a variety of Actions to Help Wildlife (and our PLANET).

1. Our top tip for going chemical free is to ensure your garden has as much variety as possible, so that no one species will be able to gain control.
2. Put a large bottle of tap water in the fridge to save waiting for the tap to run cold. Waiting for the tap to run cold can waste about 2 gallons (10 litres) of water a day!
3. Solitary bees are important pollinators and a gardener's friend. Help them by building a bee hotel for your home or garden and watch them buzz happily about their business. There are detailed instructions on how to do this on the DWT website.
4. We Brits love a good brew, but you may be surprised to hear that many teabags have plastic woven into the fibres, or are sealed with a plastic based glue (something to be mindful of when composting!). Following public pressure, a few companies have committed to eliminating plastic from their teabags, and a quick internet search will show you which brands are plastic-free.

Another way to take a step forward is to re-connect with nature. By taking a little time out of our busy lives to appreciate the wonders of nature we can dramatically improve our physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing. As well, it can be a focus for our determination to save our wonderful wildlife. We are so lucky living in Christchurch with so many open spaces to visit. One of them is the local **Stanpit Marsh Nature Reserve**, with excellent paths throughout.

Their website is [friendsofstanpitmarsh.org.uk](http://friendsofstanpitmarsh.org.uk)



From the Friends of Stanpit Marsh website "The 65 hectare site has an unusual combination of habitats including salt marsh with creeks and salt pans, reed beds, freshwater marsh, gravel estuarine banks and sandy scrub. It was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 1964 and in 1986 as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Marsh is home to over 300 species of plants, 14 of which are nationally rare and endangered. The diversity of plants supports a strong community of wildlife: invertebrate fauna includes a great number of butterflies and dragonflies and there have been 313 bird species recorded, some of which breed on Stanpit but most arrive with the spring or autumn migration".

If you are not able to get to this reserve, any local open space is usually a haven for wildlife and a sanctuary for peace and wellbeing. I walked across to a local allotment site just an hour before the early winter sunset recently. The deepening blue sky was glowing red over to the west, as the sinking sun lit up the high clouds. A crescent moon and the planet Venus low in the evening sky gave a sense of perspective to my daily routine. It was almost deserted, but in the space of a few minutes I saw two buzzards flying low towards an electricity pylon and then swoop up to take their night's roost. A couple of jays, some blue tits a seasonal robin and numerous blackbirds and sparrows all taking a chance for a last minute forage, before darkness. A few steps, then a few more, that's all it took.

We mentioned tea earlier and it wouldn't be fair not to mention coffee. A recent article about oat milk highlighted the growing trend to replace the dairy milk in the coffee we drink, with oat milk. There are over 1.4 billion cows in the world and the UK alone consumes 4 billion litres of cow milk. Think of the plastic alone, never mind the huge quantities of methane that the cows produce, causing serious global warming. At the recent Cop26 meeting US President Joe Biden called methane one of the most potent greenhouse gases there is.

So pull up a chair, have a nice cup of tea/coffee and take one step towards a better world ... it's an easy first step, go on, what have we to lose?