



CLIMATE

CHAT



**How green is
your group?**

How to do a

Climate Audit

Your guide to climate auditing

Individuals and communities cannot fix the climate emergency alone because it also needs businesses, industry, national and local governments to take action. However, we can still help by taking our own small and everyday actions, and by pressuring our politicians and services to do more.

Big organisations and businesses might have the resources to do complex, in-depth audits that measure their carbon footprint and identify ways to reduce it – but it doesn't need to be that complicated. Small groups can do their own 'group audit' to identify what they're already doing and what their next steps might be.

This guide is full of helpful tips on easy changes you can make to ensure your group is as green as possible. We hope you find it useful.



Making greener changes to the group like buying plastic reusable cups, cutlery, and refreshments in bulk has saved the group so much money and helped them become much more sustainable



Refreshments

Lots of groups offer their members something to eat and drink at their meetings or activity sessions. This ranges from a hot drink with a biscuit to a 3-course hot meal, and everything in between. Here are some ideas that groups have shared with us on how they are reducing waste.

The 'Moments of Freedom' group suggest:

- Swap from bottled water to reusable jugs and cups. Most community spaces will have a drinking water tap that you can use to refill your water jugs.
- Bring in reusable mugs/travel cups and ask the café to fill these instead of using single-use paper cups that get thrown away after the session.
- We use a kettle and hot water flask. Once a month we stock up on tea, coffee, sugar etc. and a group member brings in fresh milk each meeting. This means we're not wasting takeaway cups and it saves our group money each meeting.

The LINKS Eyemouth group suggests:

- We had a soup-making session and rather than sending the peelings to landfill (as there is no food waste collection here), one person took them home for their compost pile.
- If you keep a carrier bag in your pocket, you can see if there is any surplus food at the Community Larder when you go to a session at the community centre.
- Our closed Facebook group is a great place for sharing recipe ideas and tips for using all sorts of ingredients, so they don't go to waste!

Some other ideas from groups across Scotland:

- Sign up to a food share scheme for your group's refreshments. Programmes like Fare Share and Olio redistribute surplus food from supermarkets and the food industry to charities.

You can find out more information here: Fare Share <https://fareshare.org.uk/> and Olio <https://olioapp.com/en/>

- Lots of shops and supermarkets have their own food share scheme and will donate to small community groups. Co-op, Asda, Tesco and other shops all have their own surplus programmes with different ways to apply. Each store will have a member of staff who can give you more information, they are sometimes called the 'Community Champion' or 'Rep'.
- If your group only wants some cakes or biscuits, you could try your local community larder.
- Think about what food you are buying and how long it will stay fresh. Individually wrapped cakes and biscuits will last longer but create more packaging waste so you'll want a plan to collect and recycle those with your soft plastics. Air-tight Tupperware will keep opened packets of biscuits and cakes fresher for longer.
- Create a food-swap at your group sessions. Set up a table where members can bring and swap any unwanted or surplus food. It could be a great opportunity to start a recipe swap and get some new ideas for mealtimes.
- See if your local community garden has some spare fruit for sharing with your group. Locally grown fruit with zero packaging is good for everyone and for the planet!

Travel and Transport

Most people have to travel somehow to get to a group venue. Sometimes there can be challenges with public transport, or in rural areas taking a car can be the only practical option. We have been hearing from different groups about how they manage to save on carbon emissions when getting around.

On the North Coast of Moray, a few small communities have been making use of a local community bus to share resources and tackle social isolation. If there is an event or social hub in the small villages such as Burghead or Hopeman, the Community bus will take people along and pick them up afterwards. If there is a talk or event in the area, then the bus can be booked to take those without transport along. They can also use the bus to get to the local health centre and hospital appointments.

Community transport is an important part of transitioning to net zero as we find ways to reduce the climate impact of our journeys and tackle loneliness and isolation:

- LINKS Eyemouth have an e-cargo bike for local deliveries of recipe bags.
- LINKS Eyemouth also has volunteers who make deliveries while on the school run – saving time, money, and emissions!
- Greener Peebles has a great resource on car sharing, the advantages, disadvantages and benefits for the environment: <https://greenerpeebles.org/climate-action/>.

Travel and Transport

Our team at Outside the Box has been logging our 'train miles' with the Trainline, to see how we have saved on carbon emissions.

Greener Duns have put up 'No idling' posters around Duns encouraging people to switch off their engines when not driving.

Some other suggestions to think about:

- If public transport is available in your area, is your group meeting at times that work well for people using bus or rail travel? If you changed your timings, would it make public transport easier?
- Could your group members set up their own car-share, taking it in turn to pick up and drop each other off?
- Could your group make use of a local 'community transport' organisation? They often provide mini-bus or car-share transport at a very affordable price. Could you swap individual car journeys for group transport to some of your meetings or outings?
- Check out some of your Community Transport options using the [Interactive Community Transport Map](https://ctauk.org/mapping-scotland-project/) from the Community Transport Association <https://ctauk.org/mapping-scotland-project/>



Resources and Materials

Many groups we are in touch with have been coming up with creative ways to save money and resources, by reusing or recycling materials in different ways. Here are a few ideas:

- LINKS Eyemouth have been taking part in fabric upcycling sessions by making draught excluders from old clothing. This stops fabric ending up in landfill and keeps homes warmer – saving money and reducing energy usage.
- LINKS Eyemouth are using reusable jute shopping bags – families use these for their recipe bags and return them each time for a new batch of ingredients. Jute is an eco-friendly and sustainable fibre so a great option for the group to use.
- Before your group buys new resources it's worth seeing if you could get them from somewhere else. You could swap or barter for the supplies you need, lots of people will be happy to donate what you need if it saves it from being thrown away. We've heard of groups getting crafting supplies, games, kitchenware, gardening tools, and lots more from local Facebook barter pages.
- If something your group uses breaks, could it be repaired instead of getting thrown away? You might be lucky enough to have someone in the group who has the skills to fix it. Lots of us don't have those skills or knowledge so you could take it along to a local 'Repair Hub' like the 'Glasgow Repair Café'. Take along the item needing fixed and have a cuppa and a chat while you wait – what a great idea!
<https://repaircafeglasgow.org/services/>

Resources and Materials

- If your group has been running for a while you might have built up lots of equipment and resources over the years. Could you share any of these with other groups to reduce the amount of new products needing purchased? Groups have told us about borrowing sports equipment a few times a year so their group can do something a little different. Lots of groups have made good use of our 'New Age Kurling Kit' and our outdoor equipment.
- If your group uses lots of one type of product, like a crafting group, it might be worth visiting a 'Scrap Store' like '[ScrapAntics](#)' a creative recycling project in Dundee. It's a great way to stock up on any supplies and donate what you don't need anymore.

These are just a few ideas about how your group can reduce or reuse – and take part in the 'circular economy'.

If you want to know more about this, or how to think about the raw materials in the things your group uses, have a read of our blog '[Climate Chat: What is the circular economy?](#)'
<https://otbds.org/climate-chat-the-circular-economy/>



Top Tips

- If you're unsure how to raise these ideas with your group or committee use these resources as a prompt for a quick chat with members, or a discussion at your next meeting.
- Don't feel overwhelmed by the thought that you must change everything or make any changes quickly. Select one goal that is relevant to your group and plan out the small steps you can take to achieve it. A series of small changes can make a big impact!
- Acknowledge and celebrate your achievements as you go. It can be hard to feel like we're making a difference so think of ways to keep you and your group motivated.
- Share what you're doing with others in your community – you might inspire them to act too. Share your learning – we can support each other to copy and adapt our actions to make an even bigger collective impact.
- Let us know how you get on. Share your ideas with us and we will update this resource with more information as we learn together. Tag us at #ClimateChat to let us see what you get up to!



CLIMATE CHECK LIST

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Refreshments

Resources

Recycling

Notes

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An Outside the Box project, funded by the Scottish
Government Climate Engagement Fund

Communities committed to climate action



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba