Climate change: the future is in our hands
Your impact on climate change

The change in our climate is happening as a result of the way we all live. To beat it we must all work together. Making small changes to our lifestyle will make a big difference to our environment.

This booklet will give you facts and tips to help you make a difference to Merton and the planet.

Climate change explained

Our climate is changing mainly because of an increase in greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, particularly carbon dioxide (CO2). This is the so-called greenhouse effect. There is still time to reduce the impact we are having on our climate if we act now. But if we don’t, the unpredictable weather we are already experiencing will become more severe.

What changes will happen in the future?

- More extreme weather such as hurricanes, flash floods, droughts and heat waves.
- More pests and diseases that up until now have been prevented by cold weather.
- Loss of species such as polar bears.
- Greater risk of roads melting, rails buckling in the heat and drains not coping with increased rainfall.

The UK government has said that by 2050 we should reduce our CO2 emissions by 80%.

Who is responsible for minimising the effects of climate change?

We are all responsible. We must all be prepared to make changes to the way we live so we can limit the effects of climate change.
Energy

We have to start reducing the amount of fossil fuels we burn and increase the amount of renewable energy resources we use.

FACT:
- 75% of our energy needs are met by burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas. These fuels emit high levels of CO2, are expensive and will continue to become more expensive as supplies run lower.
- 22% of our energy comes from nuclear power and only 3% comes from renewable energy resources like sun and wind.
- 46% of Merton’s CO2 comes from our homes – the gas we use for cooking meals and heating as well as the electricity we use for lights and appliances like computers, DVD players, PlayStations and TVs.

What can you do to reduce the CO2 you are generating?
- Switch off the lights in rooms that aren’t being used.
- Don’t leave your electrical appliances on standby.

Doing these two things would save 150kg of CO2 per year.

TIPS:
- Make sure all the light bulbs in your house are energy efficient.
- When mum or dad puts the washing on tell them that it only needs to be at 30°C.
- Turn the thermostat down by 1°C – every degree makes a difference.

For all new buildings in Merton at least 10% of the energy they use must be generated by renewable energy. This is Merton’s very own Merton Rule, which has been adopted by central government to apply to buildings throughout the UK.
Rubbish

Cutting down on the rubbish that we all produce is vital to combating climate change. Merton households produce 75,700 tonnes in a year – about 380kg per year per household. Even though we are recycling more than ever before, we are still generating too much rubbish in the first place.

FACT:
- The UK throws away 14 billion plastic bags every year. Many end up in the sea and cause harm to the creatures living there.

We can all reduce our rubbish.

TIPS:
- Why not use a reusable bag when shopping instead of a plastic one... they look great and last longer.
- Don’t throw away your old furniture. The Vine Project based in Mitcham is an innovative charity which repairs old furniture so it can be reused elsewhere.
- Try and get whoever buys the food in your house to choose products with no packaging.
- If you’ve got things you don’t want any more, think about giving them away to someone who could use them or selling them on e-bay.

Generating energy from rubbish...
Using new technology, it is possible to generate power to heat and light our homes, schools and offices. This means that we reduce the amount of rubbish that goes to landfill sites and produce low-carbon energy.
Water

Scientific research suggests there will be a change in weather patterns. Flooding is more likely in some parts of the UK while other areas will have to put up with hose pipe bans.

FACT:
- London and the south east have experienced less rainfall over the last few years and it is predicted to decrease further.

Did you know?
There are around 45 million toilets in UK homes, using an estimated two billion litres of fresh water every day – that’s a lot of water.
(source: www.waterwise.org.uk)

How can you reduce the amount of water you use?

TIPS:
- Don’t leave the tap running when cleaning your teeth.
- When making a cup of tea, just fill the kettle with the water you need.
- Make sure whoever does the washing in your house only uses the washing machine if it’s full. This goes for the dishwasher too.

TIPS:
- Thames Water provides free water saving devices your mum or dad can install in your toilet cistern. www.thameswater.co.uk
- You can collect rain water in a water butt and use it to water the garden. South East Water offers discounts on water butts. www.southeastwater.co.uk
Transport

One of the main contributors to the amount of greenhouse gas emissions like CO₂ that we generate is transport. Almost a third (29%) of all emissions comes from our cars, buses, trains and planes.

How can you reduce the amount of CO₂ emissions that go into the atmosphere?

TIPS:
- Use a bike or walk instead of taking the car.
- If you have to go on longer journeys, use public transport.
- Use the great tram service in Merton. Since the tram has been in operation about 7,000 cars a day have been taken off the road.

Our natural environment

Trees not only look beautiful, but they convert CO₂ emissions into oxygen. Trees also provide shade in the summer and shelter in the winter and help absorb water during heavy rainfall.

FACT:
- Global warming will change our natural environment putting many of our birds, animals and insects at risk.

What you can do to improve the wildlife in your local area.

TIPS:
- Feed the birds in your garden.
- Put up nesting boxes or create a wildlife area at home or at school. This could be a small window box or a pond.
Environmental education and awareness raising

More people than ever before are concerned about climate change and how it will affect the planet. We all need to work together so that we can help protect our precious Earth.

What you can do to help the environment.

TIPS:
- Ask your teacher if your school is part of the national Eco-Schools programme www.eco-schools.org.uk

What you buy makes a difference.

FACT:
- Supermarkets transport millions of tonnes of produce around the country. Their lorries create huge amounts of CO2 emissions, which end up in our atmosphere.

TIPS:
- Buying local produce and supporting local shops helps reduce these CO2 emissions.
- Make sure whoever does the shopping in your house doesn’t buy too much. About a third of the food we buy is thrown away and costs the average family £420 a year (source www.lovefoodhatewaste.com) – not great for the environment and wastes money too.

Tell us what you think

We really want to know what you think about this climate change booklet... Was it too long, too short, boring, informative or fun? Either join Merton’s climate change group on facebook or drop us a twitter...

You could even send us a short film of what you and your school are doing to tackle climate change in Merton! Just post it on the council’s YouTube web page at www.youtube.com/user/mertoncouncil
My action list

Name: ____________________________ Age: ________________________________

School: ___________ Amount of CO₂ saved: ___________ Kg

Below is a list of actions that would significantly reduce the amount of CO₂ you and your family send into the atmosphere. Do these things for a week and work out how much CO₂ you could save! Calculate your CO₂ by logging on to www.merton.gov.uk/climatechange

Send in your action list and you’ll be in with a chance of winning a new bike or tickets to Kew Gardens.

ACTIONS:
● Turn off the lights in rooms that I’m not using.
● Save water by turning off the tap properly.
● Save electricity by not leaving my computer and TV on stand-by.
● Tell my mum and dad to contact the council about energy and money saving ideas for our home. Log onto www.merton.gov.uk/topenergyefficiencytips
● Only fill the kettle with the amount of water I need.
● Ask my teacher about installing water saving devices in the school loos.
● Become a climate change champion and tell all my friends what they can do to help save the planet.

Tell us how you get on by sending your action list to Communications Department, 9th floor, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, SM4 5DX. Or email communications@merton.gov.uk and include climate change in the subject box.

Want to find out more...?

ECO-SCHOOLS PROGRAMME:
www.eco-schools.org.uk

THAMES WATER SAVING DEVICES:
www.thameswater.co.uk

GRANTS TO HELP WITH FINANCING SOLAR PANELS AND WIND TURBINES:
www.decc.gov.uk

WALK ON WEDNESDAY:
www.walktoschool.org.uk/content/wow_scheme.php

RENEWABLE ENERGY:
www.therenewableenergycentre.co.uk

THE VINE PROJECT:
www.thevineproject.org

LOVE FOOD HATE WASTE:
www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

SAVING THE PLANET:
www.wearewhatwedo.org

SUSTAINABLE MERTON:
www.sustainablemerton.wordpress.com
London Borough of Merton: Climate change: the future is in our hands

If you need any part of this document explained in your language, please tick box and contact us either by writing or by phone using our contact details below.

- Nisé ju nevejjet ndonjë pëse e këtë dokumenti e shpëtuar ná ghuhan amtare ju lëvami shëmojeni kutilë dhe na kontaktoju duke na shkruar ose telefononi duke përdorur detajet e mëposhtme.

-এই চিত্রের কোনটাক্ট ডেটা দেওয়া হয়েছে। কৃত্রিমকারণে কৃত্রিম হিসেবে পাঠ করে না এবং মূল দলে কর্মী সাথে কর্মী সম্পর্ক করুন।

- Si vous avez besoin que l'on vous explique une partie de ce document dans votre langue, cochez la case et contactez-nous par courrier ou par téléphone à nos coordonnées figurant ci-dessous.

- 만일 원하시는 언어로 대표하는 도움을 필요하다면, 전자상거래 표시물이나 휴대폰으로 멜리하시십시오.

- Aby otrzymać część tego dokumentu w polskiej wersji językowej proszę zaznaczyć kwadrat i skontaktować się z nami drogą pisemną lub telefoniczną pod podanej podanym adresem lub numerem telefonu.

- Caso você necessite qualquer parte deste documento explicada em seu idioma, favor assinalar a quadrícula respectiva e contatar-nos por escrito ou por telefone usando as informações para contato aqui fornecidas.

- Hadil aad u baahan tahay in qayb dikuumeetigan ka mid ah laguuguu sharxu xaqiixdaada, fadlan sax ku caalameen sandoon oo nagu soo xiriir waggan ama telefoon on adigoo islicmaaliyaa macluumaadka harkan hoose ku yaala.

- Si desea que alguna parte de este documento se traduzca en su idioma, le rogamos marque la casilla correspondiente y que nos contacten bien por escrito o telefónicamente utilizando nuestra información de contacto que encontrarán más abajo.

- പ്രശ്നം നമുക്ക് സേവനം തെളിയുവാൻ പ്രസ്തുതിക്കുന്നു. അംഗീകരിക്കേണ്ട വിവരണങ്ങളുടെ സമയം കൊണ്ട് അതു സ്വതന്ത്രമാക്കുക.

- ليرجى أن توجه إلى الوسيط إذا كنت بحاجة إلى إعداد دليل للغة. يمكننا الاتصال بك عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني أو الهاتف عن طريق الاتصال عبر البريد الإلكتروني أو الهاتف.

- Large print  Braille  Audiotape

Your contact:
Name.................................
Address..........................
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..........................................
Telephone.................................

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13th Floor, Civic Centre
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Telephone: 020 8545 3041