

As I am sure many of us are now aware, next year Warrington Borough Council will be starting domestic food waste collection. Currently just under half of Local Authorities in England do this (compared to all in Wales and Northern Ireland and 80% in Scotland), but next year it will be a legal requirement.

It is claimed that approximately one third of all food produced globally is lost or wasted, costing the global economy around \$940 billion each year. Food waste occurs at many points in the food chain before it reaches our homes, due to a wide variety of issues such as crops lost due to inappropriate weather conditions (loss) and food that is not sold due to supply exceeding demand (waste). Of course, food waste also occurs in our homes (hence the need for food waste collection) and we all need to take steps to reduce this – ideally, we as individuals should not produce any food waste (and I assume that things like banana skins and orange peel are not categorised as waste although they may be composted).

So, what will happen to our food waste once it has been collected (from those of us who do not have any composting facilities)? Unlike other recycling types, food waste isn't used to create food but it is repurposed into fertiliser that's used to help crops grow, or turned into biogas, which is an alternative renewable energy source.

Once collected our food waste will be recycled in one of the following ways:

Anaerobic Digestion

Food waste is placed into an anaerobic digester, which is a sealed environment without any oxygen. Bacteria break the food down within these large tanks. The components are then heated, which releases carbon dioxide and methane.

Rather than being released into the atmosphere, these biogases are collected and turned into biogas. The leftover digestate, or pulp, is rich in nutrients, making it an effective fertiliser.

In-Vessel Composting

In-vessel composting (IVC) turns any organic waste, including food and garden waste, into natural fertiliser.

The waste is first shredded, before entering a composting vessel that speeds up decomposition with a controlled heat source. This 4 to 6-week process removes harmful microorganisms and creates fertiliser, which can be used to condition soil and grow new crops.

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- [**Solutions:** To reduce food waste, individuals can plan meals, check their fridge before shopping, and o](#)

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- **Definition:** Food wastage encompasses both food loss (e.g., spoiled grains due to poor storage) and food waste (e.g., uneaten cooked meals).

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- **Environmental Impact:** Food waste contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, with up to **10% of global greenhouse gases** coming from food that is produced but not consumed.

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- **Solutions:** To reduce food waste, individuals can plan meals, check their fridge before shopping, and only buy what they need.

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By understanding and addressing food wastage, we can contribute to a more sustainable food system.

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4 Sources



[OzHarvest](#)

[Food Waste and Hunger Facts | OzHarvest](#)



[StudyIQ](#)

[Food Wastage, Issues, Challenges and Solutions - Study IQ Education](#)



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[OzHarvest](#)

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[OzHarvest is a charity that colle](#)

. Accepting that our shopping habits should be so, what are the benefits in recycling food waste about? We do this but they are now being mandated to and all my friends not in the areas

food waste collection from On Earth Day, Tuesday 22nd April, I was fortunate to attend a Liverpool Diocese event at Liverpool Cathedral celebrating churches on their journeys towards Net Zero Carbon by 2030. I was very surprised to find that within the Diocese of 258 churches only 2 churches have received a Gold Eco Church award, 25 a Silver award and 35 a Bronze award. So, here at St, Mary's, we are progressing in the right direction and in the last Eco magazine article, I talked about setting a target of applying for an Eco Church Gold award in two to three years' time and what a challenge this will be. Since we were granted a Silver award, the five categories of the survey we need to complete remain more or less the same, but the topics have expanded significantly (at all levels of the award). This will make the challenge even more demanding than previously anticipated and we will need more people to be involved if we are going to be successful.

Some examples of what we need to do are given below for each category of the survey.

Worship and Teaching

We will need to make a visible commitment that our church recognises and teaches that creation care and action to address the climate and nature crises are integral to Christian faith, life and worship.

Our worship, statements of belief and music must acknowledge and celebrate God's relationship with, and work in, creation. Specific callings to take action on environmental issues must be affirmed equally alongside other ministries/vocations (e.g. social care/action) in our church and creation care should be part of our church's work with children and young people, including schools if appropriate.

Buildings and Energy

The survey now requires us to measure our carbon footprint. We have been doing this for some time but we will need to commit to reducing our carbon footprint year-on-year. The environmental credentials of the fabric of our building (such as insulation, low energy lights and using electricity from renewable sources) remain very much as before but now we also need to consider, for example, [plans for future climate resilience](#), [policies for waste and recycling](#) as well as [having a lettings policy which prioritises the sustainable use of our site](#).

Land and Nature

There is now an emphasis on bio-diversity and we are expected to manage our land to improve diversity. To protect wildlife, we need to learn more about it and what we can do to support the wildlife we have already as well as encourage more wildlife. We also need to provide opportunities for members of our congregation to get outside and spend time enjoying events and activities in nature, for example through outdoor worship church or local walks.

Community and Local Engagement

This section focuses on our engagement with the wider community and is centred around awareness raising and “getting people on board” as well as campaigning, perhaps in respect of local issues or supporting more generic campaigns for overseas justice issues with national or international organisations. Advocacy, including working with elected representatives, such as writing letters to those with influence such as MPs, is also important and we need to ensure that we communicate what we are doing, both internally and externally.

Lifestyle

This section focuses on our behaviour, both as a Church and individually as members of the congregation, with the Church expected to play a role in educating and influencing individual church members about the actions they can take. The Church is expected to share information and encourage engagement in campaigning, as well as encouraging the congregation to assess their personal carbon footprint and reduce energy. Consideration of our consumption of goods and services and our appreciation of nature and its care and protection are also relevant.

Margaret Emsley

On behalf of the ECO Church Team