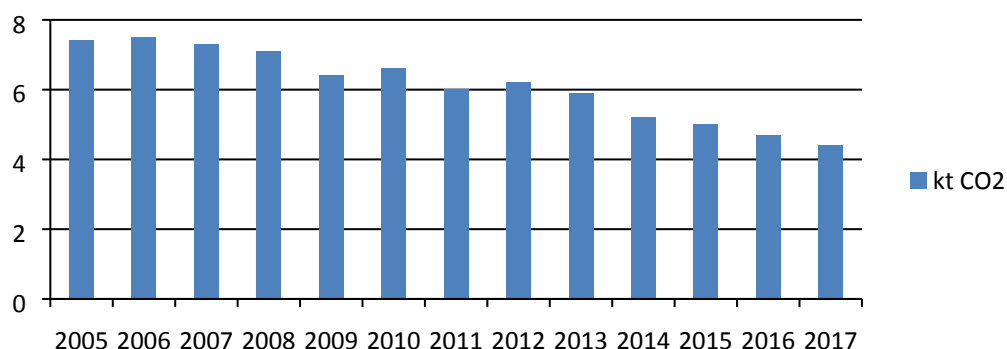


Pledging to help the climate crisis – list of possible actions we can all take

Stevenage's estimated per person (capita) emissions have been declining since 2006 and are one of the lowest in Hertfordshire (2017 figures). Per capita carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are calculated by dividing the overall emissions of Stevenage by the population, with most of the reduction over the last decade coming from more efficient and renewable energy use in the town's industrial sector. Whilst this decrease is something to be celebrated, if as a town we are to achieve our target of net zero by 2030, we must each make drastic reductions.

Figure 1:

Estimated kt CO₂ emissions per capita for Stevenage 2005 - 2017



Source: UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

While local and national policy on energy is critical, we also want to support and empower our residents to make changes in their everyday life. We want to encourage you, our residents to each pick a few actions that you feel would be the most feasible for you and your family. By committing to these actions, you can ensure you are taking meaningful steps to tackle climate change. **Try and pick at least two from each category.**

Transport

- **I pledge to only use the car for journeys which would take longer to walk than 20 minutes.** *By reducing the mileage of the average new car from 15,000 to 10,000 miles per annum you could save a tonne of CO₂ which would mean you could cut your carbon footprint by 15%.*
- **I pledge to drive in an eco-conscious way.** *If you must drive, avoid unnecessary braking and acceleration. Some studies found that aggressive driving can result in 40 percent more fuel consumption than consistent, calm driving.*
- **I pledge to get public transport to work instead of using the car.** *Taking the bus will cut your transport emissions by more than half when compared to driving. Emission from bus rides are 101 g of CO₂ per kilometre, whilst for an average car its 271g CO₂.*

- **I pledge to give up or cut down long range flying.** *A flight from London to New York produces 986kg CO₂ per passenger which is more than the average citizen produces in a year in the 56 lowest emissions countries.*
- **I pledge to try out cycling.** *The production and energy used through riding bicycles release just 21g of CO₂ per km per person, less than 10% of this 271g for a standard car.*
- **I pledge to not drive to the gym or local shop but cycle, walk or run instead.** *Not using your car for just one mile a day, twice a day, reduces your annual CO₂ imprint by about 76kg.*
- **I pledge to work from home once a week.** *The possible savings if you could avoid a 31-mile (50km) round trip once a week could be as high as 275kg in CO₂ a year.*

Home

- **I pledge to install LEDs in my home.** *By replacing standard lights with LED, you can make huge savings, going from 50 watts of electricity per hour to just 6.*
- **I pledge to ensure the walls and loft of my home are properly insulated.** *Half of heat can escape through uninsulated wall and roofs*
- **I pledge to ensure I have thermostats and controls that allow me to track my energy usage.** *You can save £80 & 320 kg carbon dioxide a year by turning the room thermostat down by one degree.*
- **I pledge to do my laundry at 30°C and to dry it on a washing line or clothes horse.** *By washing your laundry at 30°C and drying it on the line, you produce just 0.6kg CO₂e vs 3.3kg if washed at 60°C and dried in the machine.*
- **I pledge to enquire about switching my energy supplier to renewable.** *By switching to a 100% renewable energy supplier you pledge to make the grid greener. This is essential if the UK is to achieve a carbon neutral status.*
- *heating of 71% if you replace electricity from the grid and 55% if you were to replace your mains gas supply.*
- **I pledge to adjust the power setting on my computer so it goes into sleep mode when I am not using it.** *This usually drops monitor and computer power use down to 1–3 watts approx.*
- **I pledge to turn my devices off once they are fully charged.** *This will stop it continuing to draw from the power source.*
- **I pledge to install a low-flow showerhead to reduce hot water.** *This reduced hot water use can save 158kg of CO₂ per year. Taking shorter showers helps, too.*

Consumption

- **I pledge to start composting my food waste.** *In the UK the average family throws away 22% of their weekly shop, which is worth £800 per year, if you must throw away some non-edible food, make sure you compost it.*
- **I pledge to cut out palm oil.** *The palm oil industry is one of the biggest contributors to the global deforestation crisis.*
- **I pledge to cut out or significantly reduce red meat from my diet.** *According to Zero Waste Scotland, 98% of a cheeseburger's total carbon impact comes from its production. Its waste impact accounts for just 2%.*

- **I pledge to use up my leftovers.** *According to WRAP the savings associated with the reduction in food that could have been eaten amount to around 5.0 million tonnes of CO₂e a year (in 2015 compared to 2007) and this saving is equivalent to taking 2.2 million cars off the road for a year. We must continue to strive to not waste any edible food in our households.*
- **I pledge to join 'Meatless Monday'.** *A Meatless Monday advocate saves about 869kg of CO₂e per year compared to a typical meat eater.*
- **I pledge to say no to fast fashion.** *Buying a new top could have a similar carbon impact as several days' typical power consumption. In the UK, we buy more clothes per person than any other country in Europe – five times what we bought in the 1980s, which creates 1.3m tonnes of waste each year.*
- **I pledge to buying more of my clothes from a charity shop.** *The volume of clothes bought in 2016 rose by nearly 200,000 tonnes to 1.13 million tonnes, causing 26 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions from production to disposal according to research by the government's waste advisory body Wrap.*
- **I pledge to choose repair over buying a new product.** *80% of the carbon emitted in relation to a new laptop is released during the manufacturing and distribution processes, so try and get products repaired rather than simply buying new.*
- **I pledge to try to grow my own vegetables.** *Although the carbon savings are nowhere near as significant as switching to a plant-based diet, growing your own vegetables can be a great way to start understanding the food production chain and give you insight into the benefits of eating locally.*