

A quick guide to low carbon living in older homes



Bath Preservation Trust (BPT) recognises the Climate Emergency and the need for urgent climate action. The implications of climate change will have a significant impact on the heritage, environment and future of our City, our country and planet. We believe that Bath's traditional buildings and World Heritage Site landscape, alongside sustainable growth, have unavoidable roles to play in reducing carbon emissions and reaching a nature-positive net-zero future.

Most occupants of older traditional homes recognise their responsibility for carbon emissions. Maintaining and adapting our homes is a powerful climate action as it 'locks in' the carbon used to build them in the first place.

All old homes and energy efficiency technology can cut carbon, and cutting back on fossil fuel derived energy use is what we all have to start doing. Changing the way we live our lives and occupy our homes is perhaps the most difficult challenge we face if we want to sustain our environment and heritage for future generations.

Energy saving changes can result in significant carbon and running cost reductions and warmer living conditions. If you live in an old home there are plenty of steps you can take with no or very low risk, which do not require expertise or huge amounts of money.

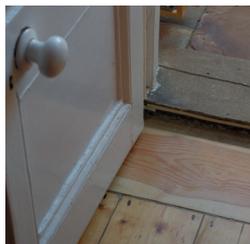
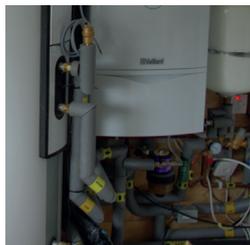
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Ways to reduce energy use and waste in older homes

Little and low cost

- Keep your home well maintained – make sure roof coverings, gutters, stonework/pointing, windows and doors are in a good state of repair
- Install a smart meter
- Install a thermostat to control heating temperatures
- Insulate loft to a minimum of 270mm, avoiding spray on or adhesive insulation – or place old blankets or duvets between the rafters
- Lag (insulate) hot water pipes and install hot water tank jacket
- Insulate any openings for pipes and wires
- Hang curtains, preferably thick or thermally lined curtains and blinds over draughty windows and doors. (If you can't afford curtains charity shops are good places to find them).
- DIY draughtproof letterboxes, chimneys, floors, doors and old windows
- Overhaul sash windows so they fit better and draughtproof
- Use draught excluders at the bottom of doors
- Use rugs on wood floors to help reduce floor draughts
- Switch to LED lightbulbs
- Use more solar powered devices
- Use A rated appliances



No cost

- Make sure your home is naturally ventilated to maintain a constant temperature and avoid trapped moisture
- Set the thermostat lower and use the timer to maintain comfortable heat
- Turn radiators off or down in less occupied rooms
- Bleed radiators regularly so they work more efficiently
- Make sure the heat from radiators is not obstructed by furniture or curtains
- Turn lights and appliances off and unplug them
- Close external and internal doors to keep heat in
- Close shutters at sundown if you have them
- Take short showers and fewer baths
- Don't leave hot taps running
- Use a plug in the sink
- Harvest rainwater for the garden and outside cleaning jobs
- Hang washing to dry outside and/or install overhead clothes airers
- Boil water in pans with the lid on
- Only use the dishwasher and washing machine when they are full and use 'eco' or low temperature cycles
- Maximise the use of sunnier and warmer rooms and daylight over artificial light

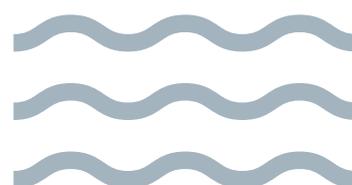
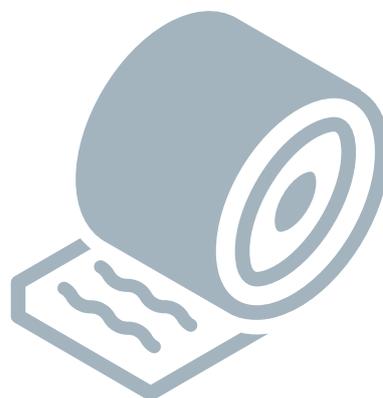
Make the switch to carbon cutting behaviours

- Question your energy habits
- Use the car less and reduce reliance
- Wear more layers at home to keep warm
- Shop local
- Eat less meat
- Consider carbon when making decisions about travel and where food and purchases come from



Before deciding on any energy efficiency retrofitting measures for your home you should...

- Start with the quick wins listed on the previous page
- Consider what you can do cheap or for free
- Reduce energy demand, use and waste
- Maintain and repair buildings to improve thermal efficiency
- Repair historic building fabric rather than replace
- Consider whole life carbon costs not just immediate energy and cost savings
- Understand the fabric, heritage value and context of the site or building
- Undertake or commission an energy assessment and seek advice from technical consultants to understand where you can save
- Plan objectives considering users, comfort, cost, energy and carbon savings
- Minimise harm to historic character and 'significance' (what's special because of its age or design)
- Improve the efficiency of building services, heating, water and lighting and controls
- Seek practical and professional advice from BPT and the Local Planning Authority as some work may require planning permission
- Weigh up the costs, benefits, energy cost saving, carbon saving, heritage impact disruption and risks
- Consider ventilation, the risks and potential consequences
- Look for available grants and funds that can help with costs of retrofit



Underfloor basement level insulation held in by netting



Working closed shutters in a good state of repair



Underfloor-board insulation



Magnetic secondary glazing @WillAnderson



DIY draught stripped windows @WillAnderson



Secondary glazing @WillAnderson



Further resources for energy efficiency and energy saving retrofits can be found here:

<https://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk/how-can-we-help-you/guidance-and-publications/climate-emergency/>

Get in touch

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