

Climate Crisis

Brief - November 2022



“Growth”, Nanny State and Energy Saving

Well - what a month! Truss has come and gone, primarily over issue of what her government and economists call “growth” and how this was to be delivered by a plan that totally failed on impacting with the reality of international economics.

So what is this “growth” and we are told we all seek so much? According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), there are several ways of measuring GDP the commonest is GDP from the expenditure approach – GDP(E) measures the total expenditures (money spent) on all finished goods and services produced (consumed) within the economy. As we have now seen, and been subjected to over the last month or so, GDP growth can also be boosted by increased spending now by us, and the government, using borrowed monies, at the expense of the next generation (ie increased mortgage payments). Should our leaders be advocating living within our means, not mortgaging the future?

There are many things which raise GDP that don’t make the country better off. War is one example (a lot of money is spent, so GDP goes up). Increased crime, ill health, road congestion, pollution of our air and our rivers, all incur additional expenditure and therefore increase “growth”.

A “growth” that environmentalist would call planetary ruin. It is just not possible to have infinite consumption of resources, “growth” on a finite planet - it is a recipe for the catastrophe we are experiencing with “Climate Change” and accelerating biodiversity loss.

I suspect many of us would consider that our happiness and overall wealth might be better measured by a sense of security, good health, well-being, a future for our children in a world that is ecologically sustainable and pollution free. It was interesting to note that when the Truss government announced their master plan for “growth” – the NHS and Climate Change did not get a mention. What did star was the fact that that Truss would seek to increase production of fossil fuel on the UK by taking the restrictions off fracking and drilling in the North Sea. Underlining this is the fundamental fact that GDP only really measures our gross fossil fuel/energy consumption - including that embodied in our imports.

Reduce your household expenditure on Energy (domestic and transport), and on food by reducing or eliminating food waste - Will both result in a decrease in expenditure. Hence Truss did not want a “nanny state” that will encourage and support you in this approach because it will reduce “growth” and GDP?

Maybe pursuing what might be called in economic terms “degrowth” - reducing our overall energy consumption has its benefits both to our finances and environment?

Fossil fuel and energy - where do we use it?

Commercially/industry, transport, domestically, and food.

We will take a look at transport and food another time.

Over the last month or so, there has been prolific advice on how to save energy. Some practical, some less so. Install air sourced heat pumps, fit solar panels, insulate cavity walls and attics, buy an electric vehicle - all valid IF you have a thousand or ten to spare!

No apologies for restating the no, or low cost, actions that we can all check now winter is creeping in.

These actions are equally applicable to business and homes.

Having been into offices/stores running a temperature around 24C, you might find this advice of interest in establishing a baseline.

Minimum Workplace Temperature. According to HSE the minimum workplace temperature the Approved Code of Practice suggests the minimum temperature in a workplace should normally be at least 16 degrees Celsius. If the work involves rigorous physical effort, the temperature should be at least 13 degrees Celsius. These temperatures are not absolute legal requirements; the employer has a duty to determine what reasonable comfort will be in the particular circumstances.!!!!!!

Lighting

- Fit LED lights in all those rooms that you live in and use. Compared with halogen, CFL and traditional tungsten lightbulbs,- it's a no brainer in both lifespan and consumption. Savings can be up to 90% !
- And of course – use the OFF switch when you and any others in the office or household are not in the room!
- Offices - all lights off at night other than for security. keep closed

Appliances, computers, printers, gadgets etc

- OFF when not being used.

Heating.

Can be high commercially and is THE largest component in the household energy consumption.

- **Businesses**- keep external doors closed- put a big Welcome sign up when open.
- Fit draught excluders to all external doors
- Get your boiler serviced to ensure it is operating efficiently.
- Thermostat. It is reckoned that a 1°C reduction in the thermostat setting saves up to 10% on energy consumption. And if you turn it down by 3°C and wear a pullover?
- Programmer - Timer. I have seen office heating programmed to come on 3 hours before work. Reset to an hour and off 30 mins before cease work - no complaints.

Home

- Check that your programmer is set up so that it comes ON say 30 minutes before you normally rise, goes OFF 30 minutes before you close or depart if you house is unoccupied during the day. Back ON 30 minutes before your return and OFF again at night 30 minutes or more before bed.
- Programmer – Temperature. Many programmers permit different temperature settings for different times of the day. Consider a lower temperature in the morning whilst rushing around to leave, compared with the sit around evening temperature.

- Rooms. Only heat the rooms that you are occupying. Radiators OFF, (or minimum setting if TRV fitted) in hall, utility, bedrooms (unless being used for study/work), spare rooms etc.
- TRVs thermostatic radiator valves. Typically the thermostat for the central heating will be sited in the hall where the temperature has little bearing on that in the rooms that you are occupying! However TRVs permit you to select a setting normally - 0 to 5 - that will adjust the boiler water flow through the radiator to adjust to the temperature you require in that room.
- Upgrade. You can upgrade or install heating controls without replacing your boiler. You should consider new heating controls if you don't have a programmer, at least one room thermostat or TRVs on your radiators. Modern room thermostats, for example, have more accurate temperature sensors, and many smart controls include additional energy saving functions.

Hot Water

- Hot water tank - check thermostat set to 60° C
- Save hot water. Normally take a bath – take a shower?
- Spend 10 minutes in the shower? – in and out in 5 minutes?

If you have not already implemented these actions, typically there is around 25% + reduction in your energy expenditure to be had.

Finally switch to a renewable energy supplier when you can.

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Residents are welcome to join our Grimley Parish Council climate crisis working party.

The working party was set up by the parish council in late 2021 and consists of residents and parish councillors. The group works broadly within the remit of the climate declaration made by the parish council in 2008. The articles released by the group chair Cllr Dave Stanley are published at his own expense in the local parish magazine (and in the Worcester News (local newspaper)), are not voted upon by the councillors and are included on the parish council website in order to provoke thought and debate and encourage residents to educate themselves on the topics included.

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