

Liberal Judaism Social Action

Sustainable Synagogues Audit

Upon creating the first human beings, God guided them around the Garden of Eden, saying: "Look at my creations! See how beautiful and perfect they are! For your sake I created them all. Make sure you don't ruin or devastate My world. If you do, there will be no-one else to repair it." Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13

When a group of people are sailing in a boat, none of them has a right to bore a hole under his own seat. Israel Meir ha-Kohen

Sustainable Synagogues

One definition of sustainability is to 'enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations.'

Getting Started

Form a small Sustainable Synagogue Audit group

Communicate – let all groups in the Synagogue know that you are planning to make an Environmental Audit and why.

Assess your practices by using the Checklist below.

Contact your Local Authority to see what support, advice and possibly grants and energy audits they can provide.

Identify and act on opportunities to improve.

Has this Audit been helpful? Please let us know.

Sustainable Synagogue Audit Action:

Community Action

Even if the land is full of all good things, still you must plant... even if you are old, you must plant. Just as you found trees planted by others, you must plant them for your children.

Midrash Tanchuma, Kodashim 8

Have done **Could consider**

- Advise building users of your environmental concerns and request that they use all your environmental facilities
- Take a part in local environmental initiatives or policy formation – Local Authorities can advise
- Campaign for stronger environmental laws and environmental justice.
- Draw on links that members have with environmental bodies e.g. Friends of the Earth, Wildlife Trust, RSPB.
- Support or initiate community schemes with a positive Environmental element
- Support the work of international conservation and Environmental agencies
- Participate in or organise environmental study events/ lectures

The Practical bit – What you use and changing habits.

Have done **Could consider**

Conserving Energy- heating and light

- Monitor energy consumption regularly (monthly) to check trends.
- Switch to 'green' electricity (electricity from renewable sources) Go to Swich and Give.com which gives £30 to charity when you use their free energy comparison website <http://www.switchandgive.com/>
- Regularly service boiler or heating appliances
- Check the Heating system has adequate timer and thermostatic controls
- Commission an energy/environmental consultation (this is particularly useful if considering a new heating system or refurbishment, or if any boiler is older than 15 years)

- Fit draft excluders around windows and doors to reduce heat loss
- Install appropriate levels of insulation where appropriate
- Monitor the heating level regularly. Overheating by 1C increases fuel use by 6 – 10%
- Choose appropriate sized rooms for activities
- Timetable meetings to minimise heating use
- Encourage building users to turn off all lights in empty rooms and not leave electrical items on stand-by (e.g. photocopier)
- Turn off lights if there is sufficient daylight.
- Clean the windows to maximise natural light!
- Install low-energy light bulbs where appropriate
- Replace cracked or broken windowpanes

Have done **Could consider**

Water

- Is general use hot water no warmer than 43C?
- Check water outlets – fix drips and leaks
A dripping hot water tap can leak as much as a person uses for showering every day
- Install water-saving devices e.g. dual flush toilets and low spray flow or auto turn-off taps, install hippo water savers (see below) designed to reduce extravagant water consumption.
- Collect rainfall from down pipes for use in the garden.
- We have become more aware of the need to save water and save energy in water heating over recent years. Encourage your members to adopt these measures in their own homes.

Transport

- Encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport as often as possible.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Encourage car sharing wherever possible. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have a cycle rack at the synagogue? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | When planning meetings do you consider public transport? Do you use teleconferencing to reduce travel? |

Animals

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have a general discussion/Oneg Shabbat about the relationship between human and non human animals in the light of Jewish teaching on the subject |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consider supporting the Hekhsher Tzedek campaign in America. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Choose organic meat, milk, eggs and other animal products. |

Building maintenance

- | Have done | Could consider | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Choose timber from sustainably managed forests, and use reclaimed materials where appropriate
<i>Those who chop beneficial trees will never be blessed in their work. Pesachim 50b</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reduce the use of toxic products that build up in the water supply. Use environmentally friendly cleaning materials and paint. Purchasing recycled and "environmentally-friendly" products does more than just reduce waste and pollution in your home or Synagogue, it helps create a market for these products and promotes research into other similar technologies. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use local suppliers where possible |

Synagogue management

- | Have done | Could consider | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Check the environmental policy of your bank and see if you are satisfied with it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have an ethical investment policy for any savings |

Have done **Could consider**

Office and administration

- Reduce, reuse and recycle in the office
- Purchase recycled paper and envelopes and reuse where possible.
- Recycle Ink cartridges and mobile phones through Environmental Business Products Limited who donate the proceeds to a choice of charities. <http://www.inkagain.co.uk/index.shtml>
- Avoid purchasing anything with unnecessary or non-recyclable packaging.
- Do you need to print so much? Can documents be shared?
- Make Collection facilities for recycling (e.g. paper, cans, spectacles, stamps, printer cartridges, clothes, shoes, mobile phones)
- Examine the energy rating of all new electrical products.
- Don't leave electrical equipment on standby.

Have done **Could consider**

Fairtrade Synagogue purchasing policy

- Purchase fairly-traded products (e.g. tea , coffee, sugar)
- Encourage members to use Fairtrade products in their own homes.

Have done **Could consider**

Catering and Kitchen

- When hiring out the synagogue hall for catered events include a notice that you prefer Fairtrade products to be used.
- Use crockery and glasses rather than disposable cups and plates
- Avoid over filling kettles and urns so as not to waste water and energy.
- Designate separate bins for recycling waste packaging.
- Examine the energy rating of new electrical products.

- Use farmers markets and other local suppliers (to promote local economy and reduce food miles)
- Only use environmentally friendly cleaning materials and look for the Eco label

QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.

- Encourage your members to adopt these measures in their own homes.

Waste minimisation

Whoever destroys anything that could be useful to others breaks the law of Bal Tashchit - Do not Waste. Babylonian Talmud, Kodashim 32a

Have done **Could consider**

- Collection facilities for (e.g. paper, cans, spectacles, stamps, printer cartridges, clothes, shoes, mobile phones) *One recycled aluminium can saves enough energy to run a TV for three hours.*
- Hold 'clutter exchange' events to raise funds and recycle goods.

Synagogue land

Have done **Could consider**

Use this section to assess the ecological value, value to the community and attractiveness of your synagogue plot and the potential to develop it:

Present **Potential to develop**

- Management that is wildlife-friendly (e.g. minimal use of weedkillers and pesticides, leaving some areas unmown, valuing old trees, hedges, walls and stones)
- Native plant species and plants that benefit wildlife (e.g. flowers used by moths and butterflies, berry-bearing trees for birds, hawthorn and blackthorn)

- Other features to benefit wildlife (e.g. bird feeding station, bird nest boxes, bat boxes, piles of leaves and rotting logs for insects and hedgehogs)
- Visually attractive planting/features
- Area for prayer/contemplation/outdoor worship
- Area for recreation

How can your community make a difference?

The Energy Saving Trust report Habits of a Lifetime in October 2006 found the UK to be the most wasteful people in Europe – and a high degree of guilt about the problem!

- Suggest that everyone check their carbon footprint (give site)
- Encourage people to walk or cycle short distances.
- Consider an environmental travelling policy for longer journeys.
- Encourage everyone to look at the energy efficiency of their car
- Share car journeys.
- Suggest recycling of mobile phones (e.g. through Greener Solutions)
- Help to Break bad habits: Add this site to the Synagogue webpage:
<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/commit/>

! Not leaving electrical appliances on standby would save enough electricity to power about 1.2 million homes every year

! A charger left plugged in uses nearly the same amount of electricity as when it is in use. Forgotten chargers probably use enough electricity in a year to power over 100,000 UK homes.

- Add environmental resources to your library and website and discuss environmental concerns and Jewish teachings on them in Religion School and discussion groups.
- Order excellent, strong and roomy LJY Netzer shopping bags, from Liberal Judaism at the Montagu Centre.

Links

Liberal Jewish Values Leaflets:

Animal Welfare, The Environment, Ethical Eating

http://www.liberaljudaism.org/lj_wherewestand.htm

The Big Green Jewish Website

<http://www.biggreenjewish.org/>

COEJL Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
American website.

<http://www.coejl.org/index.php>

The Energy Saving Trust

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

The Carbon Trust

<http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/default.htm>

DEFRA Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/>

Their Act on CO2 Campaign has a Carbon Footprint calculator.

Bustan : A partnership of Jewish and Arab eco builders, architects, academics and farmers promoting social and environmental justice in Israel and Palestine.

<http://www.bustan.org/>

Water Aid

<http://www.wateraid.org/uk/default.asp>

Hippo water saver

<http://www.hippo-the-watersaver.co.uk/>