

Footprint TIPS to Reduce Your Eco Footprint

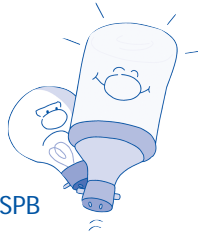
Travel

- Use public transport wherever possible or arrange to share car journeys with your friends, work colleagues and neighbours.
- Shop locally and either walk or cycle there.
- Holiday in the UK rather than overseas.



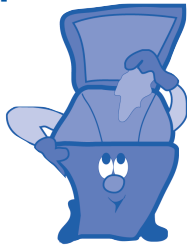
Energy

- Switch to energy efficient light bulbs - they last up to 10 times longer than ordinary ones.
- Don't leave TV's, videos and sound systems on standby - switch them off at the set.
- Buy your electricity from renewable sources such as Ecotricity, RSPB Energy, Juice, Green Energy or Unit(e).
- Turning down your thermostat by 1oC could save 10%on your energy bill.



Shopping

- Shop locally and buy local produce when it's in season - take your own bag and reduce waste at the same time.
- Avoid over-packaged food and products.



Waste

- Reduce, Reuse and Recycle as much as possible - this includes recycling metal cans and plastic bottles.



Best Foot Forward

bringing sustainability down to earth

The Future Centre, 115 Magdalen Rd, Oxford OX4 1RO UK.
Telephone: +44(0)1865 250818 Fax: +44(0)1865 794586



CITY LIMITS

Brechin & District Eco-Footprint

About the project

Angus Council commissioned a survey to determine the size of the average Brechin household's "eco footprint. Brechin residents were asked during March and April this year to complete a questionnaire on their current lifestyles. Questions attempted to get at key aspects of personal consumption and behaviour which impact on the environment, e.g. personal travel, household waste, energy use, etc. All schools in Brechin and the surrounding area took part in the project and members of the public collected questionnaires from the library, the Damacre Centre and the Access Office. Response to the project was very good with nearly 300 completed questionnaires being returned. This leaflet presents a summary of the results of the survey.

What is an "Eco Footprint"?

An 'eco-footprint' (short for ecological footprint) is an estimate of the area of land and sea needed to provide all the energy, water, food and other materials we consume and absorb all the wastes we produce - how much nature do we have and how much are we using up? This is a way of showing whether we are living within the earth's resource limits. For example, it has been calculated that if all the useable land in the world was divided equally amongst the present population then there is only 1.9 global hectares (gha) available for each person on earth.

Therefore, if this figure is exceeded then we are living beyond what the earth can sustainably provide.



How Big is Brechin's Eco Footprint?



The average household's ecological footprint in Brechin is 13.7 gha or 4.4 gha per person.

If everyone lived like the average Brechin resident we would need 2.3 planets to sustainably support the global population.

Although slightly less than the Angus eco footprint of 4.78 gha per person and the UK average of 5.45 gha per person, Brechin's footprint still greatly exceeds the average sustainable 'earthshare' of 1.9 gha.

How heavy do we tread?

The footprint questionnaire contained a number of different sections which when totted up give the overall footprint figure:

Mobility

- Most people travel by car in Brechin an average of 268 km per household week. However, Brechin residents walked and cycled an average of 19 km per household per week.

Energy Use

- Brechin households watch television for an average 31 hours per week (or just over 4 hours per day) with 59% of televisions being left on standby - consuming electricity when they are not being viewed. Also, computer and music equipment were on an average of 12 hours a week with two-thirds of responders (69%) admitting to these devices always being on standby.
- Households had an average of 3 energy efficient light bulbs fitted but 91 households revealed that they had no energy efficient bulbs fitted at all.
- 92% of those surveyed do not purchase renewable electricity.

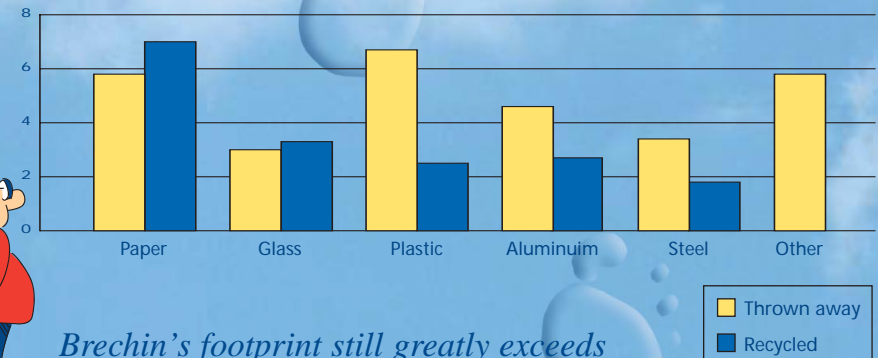
Global or Local Food?

- Average consumption of food of UK origin is 5 kg per household per week. Consumption of food from Overseas is double this - 10 kg per week with average meat consumption of 2 kg per week.
- The average reported size of garden area per household was 2932m yet almost half (48%) of households gave none of their garden over to food production or wildlife.

Waste Not, Want Not

People were asked to provide a count of the number of items, of various materials thrown away or recycled in their house each week.

Average number of items thrown away/recycled per week



Brechin's footprint still greatly exceeds the average sustainable 'earthshare'

The graph shows that Brechin households are keen on recycling paper and glass but are not so hot with other items such as plastic bottles and metal cans with more being thrown away than recycled.

From Here to Eternity

Brechin household footprints varied enormously from 0.5 to 37.4 gha. Individual footprints reflected this wide variation from a very improbable 0.3 gha to a high of 20.3 gha. This demonstrates the capacity for change - if some people can live a very low impact lifestyle then there is room for us all to change and secure the future for our children.