

THE CIRCULAR CHALLENGE



# CHALLENGE PACK

Info sheets

REPAIR REHOME RELATE REFUSE RECYCLE REUSE



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## Playing the game

There are six areas of the circular economy that are fairly easy for us all to engage with from home, work or a community setting (or all three!). Your challenge is to complete six activities (one from each category) within a calendar month. They can be small, simple acts or bold, life changing ones.

This information pack has details on each category and ideas for the sorts of things you might do.

You can also print the Circular Challenge game card and stick it somewhere prominent to remind yourself and family/ companions of the challenges ahead.

You'll be able to keep track of your progress to encourage you to complete the circle. (Prints best A4 double-sided, folded down the centre line.)

## Celebrating your success

Once you have completed the challenge please let us know by completing the [Success Form](#). We'll maintain a Roll Of Honour on the website for all those that have succeeded with the Circular Challenge.

At the end of July 2016, all those that have completed the challenge within a calendar month will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 meal-for-two voucher for the fantastic gourmet, vegan pop-up [CurlyKaleCafé](#).

## Sharing your experience

We'd love to hear about what you get up to during the Circular Challenge. Your experiences could be an inspiration to others so please contribute to our [Facebook group](#) or [send a summary](#) (ideally with a photo). We'll add as many as possible to the Circular Cambridge website.

## Support

Everyone who signs up will receive a weekly Challenge Bulletin for the month of their challenge – it'll be full of ideas and inspiration to keep you refusing, reusing, repairing, rehoming, recycling and relating.

An online [Circular Cambridge Directory](#) will be available to help you find local circular businesses, charities, websites and initiatives.

If you have any queries before or during the challenge please email the team at [hello@circularcambridge.org](mailto:hello@circularcambridge.org). They'll be very happy to help.

# REPAIR *Breathe new life into your stuff*

It's tempting to replace old and or broken items with new ones because they are broken or need some TLC. Repairing is about breathing new life into something, as is upcycling. Upcycling is the act of taking something no longer in use and giving it a second life. In doing so, the finished product may become more practical, valuable and beautiful than it previously was. Upcycled items are very fashionable at the moment with reclaimed furniture and lighting gracing many bars and restaurants.

**Below are some tips on mending, repairing and upcycling:**

**1** Take the plunge and try fixing something yourself. The [iFixit](#) website is a global community of people helping each other to repair things. Their website provides expert advice on how to fix broken goods. Their motto – “Let's fix the world, one device at a time.”

**2** Take broken items along to your local Repair Café [Cambridge Carbon Footprint](#), [Transition Cambridge](#), [Royston](#) and [Cottenham Repair Cafes](#) run regular events. Experienced and skilled engineers and repairers donate their time to fix all sorts of broken items from phones, tablets and computers to lamps, bicycles, kitchen equipment, clothes and toys. Repairs are free!

**3** Use the new Circular Cambridge Directory to locate our repair businesses that can fix all sorts from computers to phones, vacuum cleaners, jewellery, clothes, furniture and bikes.

**4** Get a local craftsman to give your furniture a new lease of life or take a course that'll give you the skills. Chairs can be recanted, and sofas re-upholstered and re-stuffed.

**5** Repurpose items into gifts. Old but much loved baby clothes can be sewn into bedspreads; use vintage plates divided by old glasses to make gorgeous cake stands; buy some battery operated clock hands and put them into a wheel/picture; put ribbons and beads around jam jars and use as lanterns; greeting cards can be cut up and used as gift tags; old sheet music/maps make lovely Christmas tree decorations, cards and gift tags. Stick

a small toy figure onto a cork for a great, kitsch bottle-stopper, drill holes into the bottom of nicely labelled food tins and plant them up with herbs and flowers. Make a new dog/cat bed by removing the lid of a vintage suitcase and stuffing it with a large cushion. Use corks, shells, old buttons to decorate a picture frame. Old gemstones can be reset into more contemporary designs.

**6** Rejuvenate things. Give your bike a good maintenance session, or add new handles or respray/replace your cabinet doors to update a tired kitchen. Maintenance and cleaning are the less attractive sides to making the most of our stuff but they play an important part. Maybe if we had fewer things we'd have time to look after, use and cherish the things we do have.



# REHOME *Give away, sell, share or swap a much loved item*

We all have lots of things that we don't need but can't quite part with but there are great psychological benefits to clearing out stuff. A "spring clean" of your home that helps declutter and simplify your life is often a very positive move - with less stuff to tidy, clean and maintain you may find yourself with more time and many people are very time poor. A deep satisfaction can be found in giving away an item and seeing it being loved by another, in turning an unused sentimental item into a useful and used one.

In the new circular economy there is a strong drive towards sharing these items we don't use all the time - either through joint ownership or through swapping. The internet is quickly connecting millions of 'wants' with millions of 'haves', resulting in many people rethinking traditional concepts of ownership.

## Ideas to help you rehome surplus stuff? For instance:

**1** Give stuff away to friends, colleagues, or local groups. Is it finally time to let go of that old school hockey stick that hasn't been used for decades or give that 'must have' kitchen gadget to a charity shop? Take unwanted furniture to [Emmaus](#) or other furniture recyclers for refurbishment or sort out surplus clothes and give them to a charity in one of their door to door collection bags. The British Heart Foundation collects unwanted items from students in Cambridge at the end of the academic year.

**2** Rehome your belongings and make some money too. - Consider what you could rehome and advertise it on [StreetBank](#), find a car boot or yard sale, sell kids stuff at an NCT Nearly New Sale, or use [Craigslist](#), [eBay](#) and [Gumtree](#) for everyday clothes or [Vestiaire](#) for any designer clothes you may have. There are lots of auction house around Cambridge for antiques and other bulky goods.

**3** Swap stuff – Attend a "swish" event and swap some unwanted clothes for some new ones, [Cambridge Carbon Footprint](#) organise lots. Just bring nice, clean, clothes that are lurking unloved in your wardrobe and let others fall in love with them and give them a good home. You might bring a jumper and take home two pairs of shoes, or hang a party frock on the 'swishing rail' and take a pair of jeans.

**4** Share stuff – could you get together with your neighbours to establish a tool/toy/outdoor/kitchen/fitness/transport share group? It might be quite easy using something like Facebook. [The Library of Things](#) may come to Cambridge soon and [CAMLet's](#) exists to share items and skills.

**5** Export stuff - Donate your bike to a charity like [OWL](#) in Cambridgeshire or [Re-Cycle](#) who both send reconditioned bikes and spare parts to countries in Africa. Donate your old tools to [Tools For Self-Reliance](#), a charity that refurbishes tools.



# RELATE *Connect to someone*

Buying something gives us a momentary buzz, but this rarely lasts. Sometimes our urge to consume stuff is based on an underlying dissatisfaction, rather than a need. The next time you feel in need of some “retail therapy” maybe you could pick up the phone and arrange to meet up with some friends instead? Could relating to someone close to you be the tonic you need, rather than buying something that you don’t?

One of the key principles of the circular economy is that rather than living and working in isolation, we can develop thriving, sustainable communities by working together. This might include getting involved with community projects that support less advantaged people, undertaking conservation work or befriending. There are a huge range of volunteering opportunities on websites such as [Do-It](#) and [Time Credits](#) is active in Cambridge. Ask yourself what skills or time you have that might be shared. You may be doing yourself a favour... evidence shows that doing good

## Next time you’re lost for something to do, instead of heading for the shops, you could:

- 1 Rediscover some forgotten pastime that doesn’t involve buying. You could head for the kitchen and cook your favourite childhood recipe, go for a walk and rediscover the joys of nature, listen to some music from your past or write a letter to an old friend.
- 2 Take up a new hobby – join a local sports/ dance/arts and performance/campaign/ special interest group and meet fellow enthusiasts.
- 3 Get involved in promoting the circular economy locally by organising a toy/book/ clothing swap, an upcycling sewing evening, yard sale, repair café or give and take corner. Or why not help at a recycling or reuse project or organise for an environmental film to be screened?
- 4 Reconnect with your local community in some way. Could you offer people a lift to hospital or befriend someone in a nursing home? Could you join the Parish Council, help maintain people’s gardens with tools sitting in your shed or get involved in a local support group?
- 5 Set up a green initiative at your local school - where better to engage with the circular economy than in schools, encouraging the younger generation to take responsibility for the environment? For ideas, see the [Green Ambassador scheme](#).
- 6 Raise money for something you care about by training/networking/letter writing/event organising.



# REFUSE *Think twice before buying*

It's estimated that up to 40% of our personal carbon emissions come from the things we buy! It sounds obvious, but one of the most effective ways to reduce your consumption is to refuse to buy new stuff unless you really need it.

Loads of research shows that sometimes shopping and an urge to buy are driven by habit rather than need or pleasure. Next time you feel tempted to rush out to the shops, maybe you could think twice – delay your decision for a day or two and consider whether you could satisfy your needs/impulse in some other way. Could you rent, share, borrow or purchase something pre-loved? Is it time with friends, companionship, and urge to be creative or do something fun and active that you actually crave?

## There are many ways of refusing stuff:

**1** Refuse to follow the latest fads – opt instead for goods that are high quality, more durable and less likely to be thrown away. The [Buy Me Once](#) website and [Which?](#) provide great product reviews. Electronic items can be very alluring, but ask yourself; do you really need the latest and greatest phone or gadget? If you need a change, could you buy a long lasting and easily repairable modular phone like the [Fairphone](#)?

**2** Don't BOGOF (Buy One Get One Free) – although superficially these may look like bargains, ask yourself whether you really need the extra one or whether it is destined for the bin.

**3** Avoid poor quality products where possible. Over its lifetime a cheap washing machine may well cost you more per cycle than a quality one. Read up on products before buying, looking particularly at ease of repair, maintenance and upgrades. Poorly designed products can become obsolete when one small part breaks. Choose products and shops that give longer guarantees and warranties. Refuse to buy products without replacement parts like lamps with integrated LED bulbs that can't be replaced.

**4** Avoid disposables like razors, cameras, cutlery and nappies that are used once and then thrown away. This fantastic short video '[The Story of a Spoon](#)' highlights the absurdity of using disposable plastic spoons. We should be treating plastic as a luxury item – indeed in 2016 many people gave it up

for Lent! The German city of Hamburg has recently said **no** to plastic water bottles, trendy coffee capsules and plastic cutlery.

**5** Refuse plastic packaging when possible. Select goods with no or minimal packaging, buy in bulk or choose larger bottles/containers and buy goods that are dispensed from refillable containers. Markets, farmers markets, [Daily Bread Co-operative](#) warehouse and [Arjuna Wholefoods](#) are great choices if you want to reduce your plastic. Or maybe we should all start routinely [removing excess packaging](#) at the checkout and leave it for the shop to sort out!

**6** Refuse to get your electricity from fossil fuels. The Climate Coalition has negotiated a good deal if you'd like to switch to a cleaner energy provider, see [the big deal](#) for details.



# RECYCLE *Taking care of and making the most of your waste*

The circular economy is all about trying to make the most of stuff we already have, rather than discarding it. You could think of it as mining our existing products and materials rather than extracting and using virgin resources. Sometimes however, if you have tried refusing, reusing, rehomeing, and repairing there comes a point when you still need to get rid of certain items, preferably by recycling them. Good recycling allows us to dispose of items things in a way that maximises its reuse value and limits pollution.

**Cambridgeshire has a good recycling record. Below are tips on recycling well:**

**1** Refresh your memory. Recycling services in Cambridge have expanded in recent years. Did you know that you can now recycle plastic wrap, plastic bags, aerosol cans and coffee pods? The City Council website has a full list online of [what goes in which bin](#) (there are some surprises!) and [posters](#) to print out and pop next to the bin to help everyone remember.

**2** Find your nearest recycling point. Do you have clothes that are only good for rags? Or small non-repairable electrical goods? Cambridge City Council have produced [a map](#) showing collection points throughout the city for all sorts of different things.

**3** If you find yourself unable to repair an electrical item, then Milton recycling centre will sort and sends electrical equipment to be reconditioned and resold, or shredded and the components extracted. There are also free [eWaste collection days](#) during the year.

**4** Small domestic batteries can be recycled by dropping them at an appropriate collection point, or tied in a designated battery bag (collect them from any council reception) or any other small plastic bag tied to the handle of your recycling bin.

**5** A list of [what can be recycled](#) at Milton Household Recycling Centre lets you know what can and can't be recycled. Many items are what you'd expect but some that are not so obvious, including

carpet, cooking oil, lightbulbs and fluorescent tubes, gas bottles, hard plastics, mobile phones, car parts, all batteries and paint.

**6** [Cambridgeshire Community Repaint](#) is a national project sponsored by Dulux that aims to prevent surplus, usable paint from entering the waste stream by diverting it to those who need it most such as charities, community groups, schools, organisations and individuals. Cambridgeshire's other great community initiative to reduce waste are the [Recycling Champions](#), maybe you'd consider becoming one?



# REUSE *Make the most of stuff that is still useful*

There are obviously times when you genuinely need to things like clothes, equipment and furniture. That's okay! There are lots of ways to get what you want and need within the circular economy. Rather than purchasing new you could tread the second hand, vintage, auction and car boot route. Or perhaps you could explore the thousands of online resale and renting websites, or find your local community based share/swap scheme? The internet now allows us to align millions of haves and wants.... allows all of us to access to millions of high quality goods that we can reuse.

Is ownership always necessary? Many people for example, don't want the expense of buying and hassle of storing and maintaining a tool, they just want the job done. They want the hole in the wall, not the drill. This could apply to lots of things. Could we rent and share more rather than adding to the dozens of items lying idle around our homes? Could there be cheaper, more clutter free and environmentally friendly options to getting what we need?

**There are plenty of ways to source things that you need without buying new. You could:**

**1** Buy refurbished and used furniture from [Emmaus](#) and the [British Heart Foundation](#), while [Cambridge Reuse](#) provides household items for people on lower incomes.

**2** Visit one of Cambridge's many second-hand clothing shops. We have a huge variety, with some shops specialising in evening wear, vintage clothes, and upcycling - details available in the [Circular Cambridge Directory](#). Rather than buying a new electronic gadget, you might look for a second hand one that is still in good working order from [eBay](#), [Gumtree](#), [Freecycle](#) or other online outlets.

**3** Trade skills, services or goods with a Local Exchange Trading System without needing or using real money. [CamLETS](#) in Cambridge, has run a LET's scheme since 1993. You can offer your time or goods in exchange for things that you need. Or you could check out [Streetbank](#) to see what you might be able to borrow in your area.

**4** Rent stuff rather than buying it new. If you only need something for a period of time, why not hire it, rather than having to store it, repair it and eventually dispose of it. There are lots of options. [HSS](#) are a big national hire outlet for machinery, [reLike](#) allows you to hire bundles of baby and children's clothes bundles, while [girlmeetsdress](#) rent really fancy gear

for one off occasions. If you need a car, then [Zipcar](#) good rental options.

**5** Borrow tools from a friend who doesn't need them at the moment (and then lend them some of yours in return). Sharing your stuff not only avoids the need to buy duplicate goods that are not in use most of the time, they also help build friendships and community.

**6** Next time you are looking for something to read, remember your local library (use it or lose it!) or hop along to the [Oxfam Bookshop](#) on Sidney Street or [G David Bookseller](#) in St Edward's Passage.

