

# Cambridge

## Independent

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Cambridge Carbon Footprint

### Sharing, repairing and reusing

The IPCC's stark warning last November, giving us just 10 years to pull back from a catastrophic climate crisis left me clinging by my fingertips from falling into despair. Sharing my sadness with others (many of whom I discovered felt just the same, despite their outwardly cheery demeanour) helped and it was while reading clickbait-type articles about the supposed bleakest day of the year (January 6) that I realised that my cloud had passed. Relief.

Below are some of the things that helped me feel positive again and I am sharing them with you in case they ignite some new year cheer:

■ Christmas: My wider family were finally brave enough to stick to the ambition 'no presents for the adults'. We spent less time shopping, saved money, it was better for the environment and we still had a lovely Christmas. In addition, I resisted tempting glittery cards and metallic wrapping paper that

can't be recycled and got around to making my own gift wrap from magazine and newspaper articles that I'd collected throughout the year. The wrappings covered stories and pictures of interest to the recipients and I'm fairly certain they enjoyed the bespoke and thoughtful wrapping more than the contents. Themes included rowing for one daughter, and anything Danish for my mum.

■ Cambridge's efforts to reduce plastic have been boosted with

new drinking fountains on Parker's Piece, a new zero waste 'Full Circle' stall in Market Square on Mondays and plans for packaging free shopping at Daily Bread. Local businesswoman, Kath Austin won Entrepreneur of the Year for her company BeeBee Wraps whose reusable food coverings are estimated to have saved the use of 1.8million sheets of single use cling film.

■ Barrington held its first Repair Café, cementing the

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### are reasons to be positive

region as a hub for a global movement of repairers. This grassroots backlash against waste and poor products has been further boosted by recent votes on some appliances, including fridges and washing machines by EU Ministers as part of the EcoDesign Directive. It's not perfect but it does mean that many appliances must be more repairable – so not welded or glued shut – and spares must be available for up to 10 years.

■ South Cambridgeshire District

Council unanimously backed a motion proposing that 'South Cambridgeshire shows responsible climate leadership by supporting the transition to zero carbon by 2050 in the next Local Plan.' Simultaneously, hundreds of local Extinction Rebellion supporters called for more ambitious targets and an urgent transition away from fossil fuels and organised well attended and thought-provoking actions around the city.

All of the above gives me hope,

but it's a tiny balloon sharing initiative in my village that's made me smile and makes me think that maybe attitudes are changing. Post birthday party, a lady was inundated when she asked on social media whether anybody wanted her huge string of helium balloons spelling 'Happy Birthday'. Over a month later, it hasn't deflated, is still doing the party rounds and there's a huge waiting list for it.

On the sharing theme, a new clothes sharing scheme has just

launched in Cambridge called The Nu Wardrobe, check it out.

Could we be seeing signs that we've reached peak stuff and that it's not ownership of things we want, but the utility of and access to the things we want and need? Do you want to buy and own a dress for a party, or do you just want to look fabulous in something different? Is it the drill you want, or is it actually just the hole?

Important questions if we are to live well with less stuff.