

DECEMBER 2021 •



Green Living

YOUR CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER
FROM THE GREEN TEAM AT
VARCITY LIVING

WHAT'S ON

Christmas celebrations
in Gwynedd

THE XMAS JUMPER

To buy or not to buy?
To wear or not to wear

...

It's Christmas!

THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR



WHAT'S INSIDE

Solutions to your Christmas jumper concerns

Our most recent work in making properties more green

Some decoration inspiration to keep you eco-friendly

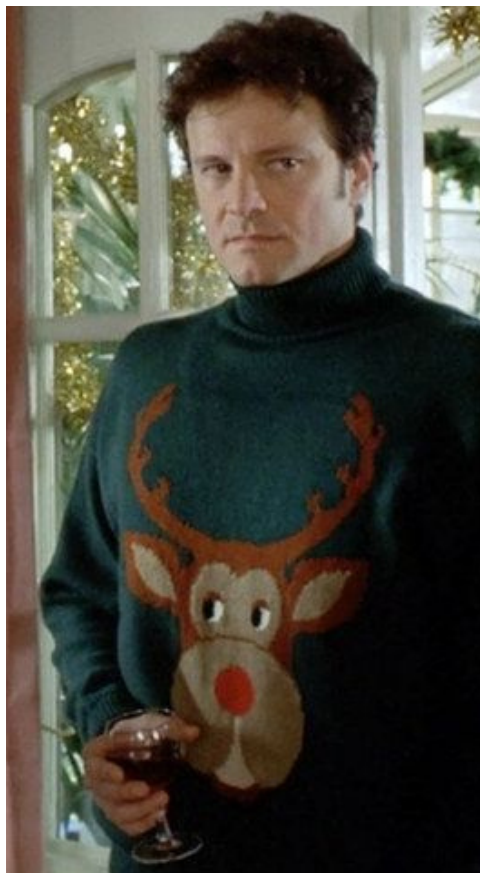
Updates from local charity Crest

Festive fun in North Wales - Dates for your December diary

A GREEN CHRISTMAS

Ho ho ho it's time for Christmas! It's one of the most loved times of the year, when family and friends come together, when our homes become extra cosy and when we exchange gifts with those we love. However, there's a lot about this season that isn't exactly green – despite all the Christmas trees and mistletoe! – which is why we've put together some info to help you prepare in a more sustainable way this year.

THE CHRISTMAS JUMPER



If you say bah humbug to cosy novelty knitwear then perhaps this isn't the season for you, however we can help you to reach a compromise if your issue is that you don't want to purchase something that will only get worn once a year.

We all know just how important it is that we move away from fast-fashion and start (or continue!) to purchase only clothes, shoes and accessories that are made sustainably and that we can envision wearing and caring for for many years to come.

Christmas jumper day can throw a bit of a spanner in the works then, but we're here to help! And you're not stuck with jumpers; t-shirts, waistcoats, dresses ties, and cardigans are all great alternatives.



YOUR CHRISTMAS JUMPER SOLUTIONS



The DIY cheat

Safety pin some Christmas decs to your jumper and call it a day.

Sew buttons into the shape of a tree, attach tinsel to the wrists and waist or you could even sew a Christmas stocking to the front. Look to Pinterest for inspiration and try your best to recycle old materials where you can!

1 Buy one that will last. There's no rule that says having a Christmas jumper means you have to buy a new one every year. Buy a good-quality one that you bring out every year, that's made well and constructed from planet-friendly materials.

2 Purchase one from a charity shop. Not only will you be extending the life-cycle of the jumper in question, you'll also be making a donation to the charity in the process – win win!

3 Make your own. You can lean into the DIY theme with Xmas jumpers, using fabric scraps, paper and even tinsel to create a festive design.

MODERN AND SUSTAINABLE PROPERTIES





We encourage all of our landlords to update their properties on a regular basis and we're old-hands at providing these improvements. However, what many people may not know is that we also provide large-scale property renovations and have done so for a number of the properties that we let.

Just this year we completed a renovation at Henllys, a worn-down four bed Victorian terraced house which was in dire need of attention. The property has now been transformed into a modern student property, with each bedroom boasting an en-suite.

What's most important about this renovation is that the landlord shared our vision for creating a more eco-friendly property, one that would benefit them by ensuring utility bills were cheaper in the future, and one that benefited the environment by ensuring less energy was needed to heat the home.



We renovated the main body of the property, then we continued upwards in order to improve it even further. On the roof we installed a 4kw solar PV system, to aid in reducing energy bills. All exterior walls in the property were insulated, which in the future will not only help to eradicate the chances of condensation and mould growth, but will also help to cut down on heat loss, thereby cutting down on future energy bills. Of course, not only does this benefit tenants and landlord by making future utilities bills smaller, but it also means they will use less energy to heat the property overall.

Last but not least, the installation of an electric water heating system ensures the property makes the most of the sun's rays, with a modern thermostat able to deliver performance results to the landlord's smart phone so that they can ensure there is no energy wastage.

We're proud of the work we've conducted on Henllys and will only continue to develop our methods for creating energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly homes throughout Bangor.



GREEN XMAS DECORATIONS

It's time to embrace the Christmas spirit, including ambling through Christmas Markets, wrapping presents and, importantly, putting up decorations! But where do you begin if you want to make sure they're eco-friendly?

FANS AND STARS

You will need:

- Newspaper, wallpaper offcuts or recycled wrapping paper
- Double-sided sticky tape, glue dots or a glue gun if you have one
- Twine, old ribbon or shoelaces
- Paperclips or small house pegs
- Scissors

1. Take a long rectangle of paper that is doubly as long as it is wide and fold concertina style backwards and forwards until you reach the end
2. Snip each end at an angle if you would like a star, rather than a round fan
3. Take your string and tie it in the middle of the paper. Move the string to one edge of the paper then glue this end and fold the glued section in half, back on itself
4. Either glue the other side for a permanent decoration or secure with a paperclip so that you can fold the fan away and reuse next year!



FESTIVE GARLAND

You will need:

- White paint
- Cardboard offcuts
- Twine, old ribbon or shoelaces and a needle with an eye large enough for these
- Scissors

1. Create a stencil in the shape you would like to make. Doves and angels look great!
2. Use the stencil to trace over your cardboard until you have as many cutouts as you need.
3. Use the white paint to create patterns on your creations - look to Scandinavian folk patterns for some stylish inspiration!
4. Finally, string and mount your garland!

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS TREE

If you don't know where you stand on the whole Christmas tree debate, or simply don't have the space or the funds to have a tree then these DIY's will provide you with a simple and cheap (or even free!) solution.

You will need *either*:

- Twigs and sticks
- Twine, old ribbon or shoelaces
- Scissors

Or:

- Fairy lights
- A tape that won't damage your walls, such as washi tape

Or:

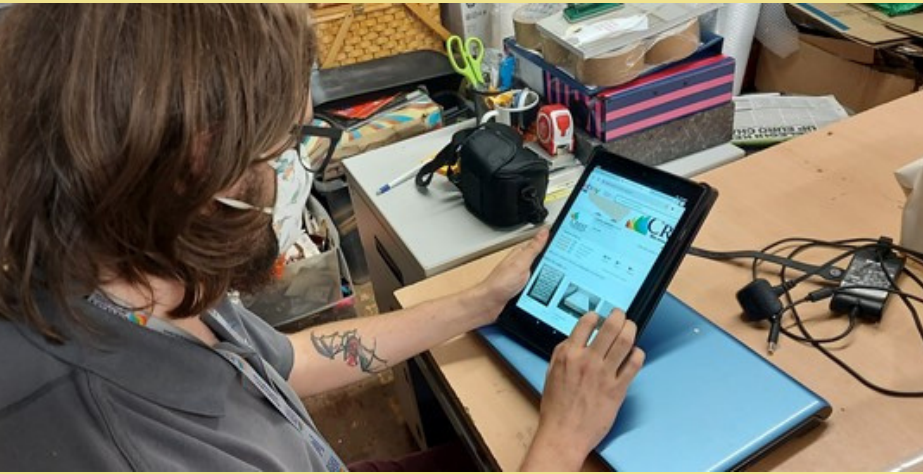
- Plenty of books

For the first option use twigs you've collected on wintery walks and arrange them in order of length, from shortest to longest. Tie them together, making sure that each twig is tied at each end with a good amount of string in between each twig, so that they will hang freely. Continue until all twigs are accounted for and hang from either a coat hook over a door, or a nail in the wall. You can even decorate it with lights and baubles.

For the second option simply attach fairy lights in a Christmas tree shape with the tape until you have used up all your lights. You may have to unstick and rejig as you go but this DIY will take you no time at all!

The final DIY is great if you've got an impressive book collection; arrange your books on top of one another in a circle as wide as you like and simply continue to stack up, making the stack narrower as you go so that you end with only one book on top. Stand one book on it's side, spine up for that typical triangular 'tree-top'!





SOME MESSAGES FROM CREST

*'Big enough to deliver,
small enough to care'*

In our last newsletter we introduced you to Crest, who help the disabled and unemployed and promote recycling and repurposing through their community retail stores.

They do a lot of good in our local community, including running the Kickstart program which Tristan, pictured above, is a participant in.

Kickstart offers 16-24 year olds on Universal Credit the chance to learn new skills in a paid position for 6 months.

Of the program Tristan says:

"The Kickstart program keeps me busy. I finished my Masters last year and there were no jobs during the pandemic. Being at Crest is lots of fun and I enjoy the challenge of unlocking the value in our donations, which then helps our local community".

In addition to this, the charity also have two textile banks located in the car park of the main student accommodation

at Bangor University. This is where you can recycle clothes, paired shoes, handbags and belts.

All the textiles are then sorted by the team at Crest, consisting of adults with learning disabilities, staff and volunteers. Textiles suitable for re-use are sold into their community store while textiles less suitable are sold externally to further help your local community.

DATES FOR YOUR DECEMBER DIARY

We'd like to think that the snippets in this newsletter just go to show that Christmas doesn't have to get in the way of caring for the planet. Which means you can enjoy all the fun events on offer nearby. Concerned about the environmental impact of travelling to events? There's no need to worry; many of these things are right on our doorstep.



19th Nov - 19th Dec
Welsh Farmers Market
Abergwyngregyn



29th Nov - 24th Dec
Zipmas
Blaenau Ffestiniog



3rd Dec
Bangor Cathedral
Christmas Concert

4th Dec - 9am
5k Santa Fun Run
Llandudno

4th Dec - 4pm
Christmas Parade
Llandudno

4th Dec
Bangor Uni String Orchestra
Christmas Showcase



4th - 5th Dec
Snowdonia & Local
Christmas Market
Y Stablau, Betws y Coed



10th Dec
6pm - 9pm
Light Up Christmas
Garth Pier, Bangor



11th Dec
7pm - 11pm
Bangor Uni Music Society
Christmas Concert

11th Dec onwards
Welsh Highland Railway
Santa Train

12th Dec
Christmas Fayre
Adventure Parc Snowdonia

GREEN EVENT!



12th Dec
Swap Don't Shop
Treborth Botanic Garden
Swap your old gladrags
for new (to you) ones!