

# A greener Christmas is the best present for the environment.

The festive period is a hotbed for food and packaging waste. Recycling charity, [WRAP](#) reports that each year UK households throw away enough gravy to accompany Christmas dinner for the whole country and last Christmas we consumed enough card packaging to cover Big Ben nearly 260,000 times.

The Christmas foods most thrown away in UK homes each year are potatoes (710,000 tonnes), poultry (100,000 tonnes), carrots (96,000 tonnes), and gravy. (Source: Household food waste: restated data for 2007-2015)

Small steps make a big difference and the government is recommending a series of tips to minimise waste this Christmas, including reusing items such as plastic carrier bags and envelopes, and buying items with less packaging or second-hand items.

This government is passionate about tackling food waste. In 2019 alone, Ben Elliot has taken up the mantle of Food Waste Champion, launched the [Step Up to the Plate](#) pledge which around 130 businesses have signed, and launched a £15 million scheme to help reduce food waste from all sources, including through tackling barriers to redistribution.

## **Tips for minimising waste over the festive period**

- Avoid wasting food. Overindulgence is as synonymous with Christmas as Santa but the more food we buy, the more likely it is to be wasted. Instead freeze your Christmas leftovers, plan your meals using WRAP's handy portion calculator and give loose apples and potatoes a go so you don't waste the rest of the pack.
- Contact your local Furniture Re-use Network – they distribute unwanted furniture and household goods to those in need.
- Think before you shop. For example, you could buy things with less packaging, or second-hand items. To avoid taking home more carrier bags, choose reusable shopping bags: keep them in the car boot or pop a folded cotton bag in your handbag or pocket so you always have one to hand.
- Recycle or re-plant your 'real' Christmas tree this year. 'Real' Christmas trees can be recycled and turned into chippings for parks. Some local authorities have special collections or organise drop-off points. Otherwise they can be taken to your household waste recycling centre.

- Unwanted decorations in good condition can be donated to charity shops for re-sale and re-use.

## Top statistics

- At Christmas we consume enough card packaging to cover Big Ben nearly 260,000 times.
- Last Christmas we consumed an estimated 289,171 tonnes of card packaging.
- One million tonnes of paper and card packaging were collected for recycling last year.
- Over 400,000 tonnes of card packaging were not collected for recycling last year.
- The amount of poultry thrown away each year in UK homes is enough to make 800 million Boxing Day curries.
- A herd of 636,000 reindeer weighs the same as the amount of carrots thrown away in UK homes each year.
- Defra awarded £1.9million in funding to [Fareshare](#) in May 2019, helping redistribute even more food around the UK. This included preventing 2,000 frozen turkeys from Gressingham Foods from going to waste this Christmas (already almost double the number of turkeys Fareshare redistributed last year).

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow, said:

Christmas is a time to enjoy indulging with the family, but that doesn't have to come at the expense of our environment.

Each year, UK households throw away enough gravy to accompany Christmas dinner for the whole country and last Christmas, we consumed enough card packaging to cover Big Ben nearly 260,000 times.

Without the support of people across the country, we simply cannot achieve our goal of reducing unnecessary waste and leaving the environment in a better state for future generations. By making a few small changes – buying items with less packaging, cooking up delicious dinners from your leftover turkey, reusing last year's

wrapping paper – we can all enjoy a greener Christmas to help us save money and the planet.

## **The Resources and Waste Strategy**

Our Resources and Waste Strategy sets out how we will preserve our stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy. At the same time we will minimise the damage caused to our natural environment by reducing and managing waste safely and carefully, and by tackling waste crime.

It combines actions we will take now with firm commitments for the coming years and gives a clear longer-term policy direction in line with our 25 Year Environment Plan. This is our blueprint for eliminating avoidable plastic waste over the lifetime of the 25 Year Plan, doubling resource productivity, and eliminating avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050.

Read the full [Resources and Waste Strategy](#)

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## **Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Christmas message: 24 December 2019**

Hi folks, Boris Johnson here, taking a moment to wish you all a merry little Christmas.

It's that special time of year when, whatever has gone before, we can take an opportunity to celebrate all that is good in the world and to spend time with our friends and family.

Christmas Day is, first and foremost, a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a day of inestimable importance to billions of Christians the world over.

I hope you are all enjoying a wonderful break with your loved ones, sharing gifts and tucking into some delicious food.

Of course, as many of us are enjoying a break at this time of year, let's not forget all those who have selflessly put their celebrations on hold.

On behalf of the whole country I want to say a huge thank you to our amazing NHS staff, many of whom will be working throughout the holidays to take care of us. Thank you also to our police, and all those public servants working tirelessly this Christmas.

I also want to express my personal gratitude to the wonderful members of our

Armed Forces currently on deployment – and therefore to their friends, family and children back home who will have an empty chair at the table when they tuck in to their Christmas dinner.

Today of all days, I want us to remember those Christians around the world who are facing persecution. For them, Christmas Day will be marked in private, in secret, perhaps even in a prison cell.

As Prime Minister, that's something I want to change. We stand with Christians everywhere, in solidarity, and will defend your right to practice your faith. So as a country let us reflect on the year, and celebrate the good that is to come.

Folks, I hope you enjoy the next few days.

Try not to have too many arguments with the in-laws, or anyone else.

And whoever you are, wherever you are, and however you're celebrating, have a very happy Christmas, and I'll see you all again in the New Year.

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## [Highways England helps fans with festive football fixtures](#)

To help journeys flow more smoothly and to keep disruption to a minimum, almost 98 per cent of motorways and major A-roads will be roadworks-free in time for Christmas, meaning sports lovers and shoppers can get to their destination as smoothly as possible.

Where it is safe to do so, more than 800 miles of roadworks have been lifted or suspended on England's motorways and major A-roads by 6am on Friday 20 December until 12.01am on Thursday 2 January.

The decision to lift roadworks has been welcomed by the English Football League (EFL) with football fixtures taking place across the length of the country on 26 December.

Director of communications at the EFL Mark Rowan said:

The EFL welcomes the decision taken to lift or suspend roadworks on England's motorways and A-roads over the Christmas and New Year period, one which remains an important part of the footballing calendar for thousands of fans up and down the country.

Every year, EFL Clubs play their part in bringing together friends and families as they travel to festive fixtures, so we hope this will make their journeys that little bit easier.

Highways England's customer service director Melanie Clarke said:

We know that the festive period is a busy time for football supporters and that's why we're doing everything we can to make journeys as smooth as possible by keeping around 98 per cent of the road network we manage free from roadworks.

And we're asking drivers to be prepared too before setting off so they don't miss the big match. We know from experience that almost half of breakdowns can easily be avoided if motorists carry out simple vehicle checks before their journeys.

So, before you set off, check traffic conditions, check your vehicle, and make sure you're aware of the signs and signals on motorway.

Highways England is urging motorists to check the following before they set off:

- Check fuel: Make sure you have enough to get to your destination
- Check tyres: Check your tyre pressure and the condition of your tyres, including the spare. Look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit
- Check engine oil: Use your dipstick to check oil before any long journey, and top up if needed – take your car back to the garage if you're topping up more than usual
- Check water: To ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screen wash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen
- Check your lights: If your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself at risk. In addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MOT

And with more wet weather forecast over the coming days, Highways England is also calling on those travelling over the festive period to make sure they drive to the conditions.

Richard Leonard, Head of Road Safety at Highways England, said:

Most of us already slowdown in snow, ice or fog but when it rains we consider it normal so don't adapt our driving.

Rain makes it harder for tyres to grip the road and harder for drivers to see ahead – significantly increasing the chances of being involved in a collision.

We're encouraging drivers to check the latest weather and travel

conditions before setting off on journeys, with heavy rain expected for much of today and more wet weather over the weekend.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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# **[Prime Minister formally appoints new Grenfell Inquiry panel members for Phase 2](#)**



The Prime Minister has today appointed Thouria Istephan and Benita Mehra to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry panel. The appointment of the panel members comes ahead of the commencement of Phase 2 hearings on 27 January.

Ms Istephan, a widely respected partner at Foster + Partners architectural practice, and Ms Mehra, a highly experienced chartered engineer, will start work immediately.

They will sit for the duration of the Inquiry alongside the Chair Sir Martin Moore-Bick.

## **The Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:**

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry is now entering a pivotal stage, expanding its focus from the night of the tragedy to consider important wider issues around the refurbishment and management of

the Tower.

Today's appointments will bring a rich diversity of expertise and the relevant experience required given the breadth and complexity of the next phase of the Inquiry.

It is important the Inquiry thoroughly investigate what happened that awful night and ensure lessons are learned so that such a terrible tragedy never happens again.

This Government's commitment to uncovering the truth is absolute.

The letters exchanged between the Prime Minister and the Chair of the Inquiry about the appointments have been published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Further information about the inquiry can be found on the [inquiry's website](#).

**Notes to editors:**

1. Thouria Istephan is partner and Construction Design Management Manager at Foster + Partners, with responsibility for the application of Construction (Design and Management) Regulations – strategically and operationally – as well as global health and safety compliance. She is also the Technical Design Deputy of the practice's Construction Review Group, advising on buildability. Thouria worked for several UK architectural practices before joining the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as an HM Inspector of Health and Safety, then acting as advisor on Construction (Design and Management) Regulations. Thouria joined Foster + Partners in June 1997. She was made a partner in 2007 and Technical Design Deputy in 2015. Her knowledge and experience of safety standards and the regulatory environment has direct relevance to the issues to be considered by Phase 2 of the Inquiry's work.
2. Benita Mehra is a chartered engineer, formerly Director of Strategic Assets and Property at the London Ambulance Service, a position she took up in January 2018, where she was accountable for their fleet, estate and logistics, including technical engineering governance and assurance. Benita has operated in the aviation, housing and health sectors with roles including design and construction of major terminal buildings. From 1990 – 2006, Benita worked for the British Airports Authority, during which time she was responsible for project managing large construction projects, and also had the responsibility for the maintenance of business critical areas such as the runways at Heathrow airport and their fleet of vehicles including fire tenders. In 2015 she became a Fellow of the Institute of Healthcare Engineering and Estate Management, and in 2016, was recognised by her professional institution, attaining a fellowship of the Institution of Engineering and Technology. In 2016, Benita became President of the Women's Engineering Society. Benita's experience of property and asset management in high-risk organisations where health and safety considerations are paramount, is

directly relevant to Phase 2 of the Inquiry's work. Benita also brings broader skills that will be particularly relevant to Phase 2, such as risk assessment and property and facilities management.

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## [Plastics Pact Initiative workshops delivered in Chile](#)

The British Embassy and the Chilean organisation [Fundación Chile](#), in conjunction with [WRAP](#), a UK not for profit organisation working with governments, businesses and communities to deliver practical solutions to improve resource efficiency, organised a series of workshops on 18-20 November to assist the Fundación in the development of the Chilean Plastics Pact initiative. On the occasion, WRAP experts provided Technical Consultancy support to Fundación Chile, who, through a series of workshops and seminars, are seeking assistance to grow the Plastics Pact membership base and helping to secure more business sign up.

In Chile, Fundación Chile have been developing the [Chilean Plastics Pact](#) (El Pacto Chileno de los Plásticos) in alignment with [Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Global Commitment](#) and along with additional support from the Chilean Ministry of Environment. Fundación Chile launched the Pact in July 2019 in Santiago, with a core group of founding business members.

During their stay in the country, Peter Skelton and Norah Lewis, the experts from WRAP Global, [delivered two workshops and held a series of meetings](#) with local and regional stakeholders aimed at sharing technical and practical expertise on topics relating to the mobilisation of the Pact. Some of the topics addressed included designing for recyclability, citizen engagement, recycled content in packaging, as well as helping to articulate the business case for signing the Pact and the experience from the UK Plastics Pact.

### **GREAT Campaign**

In addition to the workshops held at Fundación Chile, the Embassy organised a networking event at the British Residence in Santiago.

The activities to support the promotion of the Plastics Pact in Chile have received backing from the GREAT campaign, a cross-Government initiative aimed to display the best of the UK and encourage people to visit, do business, invest and study in the UK. It is the Government's most ambitious



international promotional campaign ever, uniting the efforts of the private and public sectors to generate jobs and growth for Britain.

## **Further information**

If you would like to find out more about the Plastics Pact Initiative please contact: [Christopher.Hope@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Christopher.Hope@fco.gov.uk), Head of Economic Affairs and Sustainable Development, British Embassy, Santiago.

For more information about the events and activities of the British Embassy in Santiago, follow us on: