1. **Party Season**

Plan your party with the planet in mind by increasing your vegan and vegetarian food offerings! This simple switch is both good for your health and reducing your carbon footprint. Use this handy tool to calculate your food carbon footprint and help you make planet friendly food choices.

Reduce unnecessary waste by checking your attendance list before ordering and avoiding single-use items like paper plates and plastic cutlery and cups. Encourage guests to bring their own reusable containers for left-over food. Did you know that a third of food produced globally is wasted and 75% of that is edible!

When looking at catering options check out the vast range of sustainable choices, including local beers, fair trade wine and much more through the University of Bristol Catering. New to the offering is Fresh Range where you can purchase locally-made Christmas treats such as mince pies from Hobbs House bakery here in Bristol and brandy butter and chutneys from Rose Farm in Somerset. Fresh Range have also reduced their single use plastic as much as possible on items like biscuits.

If you’re planning a bigger event check out the Sustainable Event guidance and Plastic Action Plan.

2. **Christmas meal with the team**

If your team are having a Christmas meal, why not check out local sustainable restaurants, and make sure you and your colleagues get there using sustainable modes of transport, e.g. walking, cycling or public transport. You can take it a step further by asking the restaurant to cancel the Christmas crackers - and make your own instead!

3. **Trees**

Seven million Christmas trees enter landfill every year in the UK, and when they rot, they produce carbon dioxide. This produces over 100,000 tons of greenhouse gases after the festive period each year! So why not do your bit for our atmosphere and rent a tree instead?

If you decide to have a real departmental Christmas tree this year, protect our forests and make sure you chose FSC Certification - this is the only way to confirm that your tree has been sourced sustainably. It’s also worth checking for Soil Association approval to check if your tree is organic. If you do buy a real Christmas tree, please contact gardens & grounds to collect it once you’re done.

4. **Secret Santa**

We all love a bargain but be sure to shop mindfully this Christmas – and watch out for that Black Friday frenzy! Ask yourself if you really need the item and try to avoid panic buying.

If you’re doing a team Secret Santa opt for eco-friendly and fair trade or better still, enjoy some home-made goodies, donate to a team charity or buy a lovely office plant. Consider secondhand shopping in one of the many brilliant charity shops around the city and steer clear of novelty gifts. Also check out the staff Christmas Craft Fair on the 16th December in the Great Hall!
If you plan to send Christmas cards, go for those without microplastics and glitter and choose FSC sourced cards that support charity. Remember to make it fair - fair trade is an important part of climate emergency mitigation and helps support diversification of land use.

5. Plastic
Ditch the plastic this Christmas! Avoid cheap plastic decorations and use what you already have wherever you can.

Decorating doesn’t have to include glitter and tinsel – save money and be different by opting for natural foliage. If you have holly branches, berries or ivy growing in your garden you can use these or go out for a walk and collect some locally. This can then be composted after the Christmas period. You can also save old paper and make your own paper chains!

6. Support wellness with a declutter
Slow down and connect with the reason for the season... quiet periods can be used to relax and reorganise. Have a mini clear out of the office – use the Waste Management Guide to find how to responsibly reuse and recycle. Start to clear the staff fridge of food and drinks a week before you leave to avoid unnecessary waste- and remember to adjust milk deliveries!

7. Energy
Shut down any non-essential equipment. Do a walk-round of your office and see what other non-essential electrical items you might have overlooked.

A single monitor and computer left on 24 hours a day will cost around £45 a year. A photocopier left on overnight uses enough energy to make over 5,000 A4 copies. By switching laser printers off in the evenings and at weekends, energy consumption can be reduced by 75%! And when you get back in January remember that if a monitor is turned off when not being used (including lunchtimes, etc.), and the standby options are activated, energy consumption can be reduced by 90% per year! Fridges, kettles and microwaves can all be unplugged over Christmas if nobody is using them.

Check out the 12 carbons of Christmas for more tips on being carbon conscious.

8. Fashion
For Christmas Jumper Day (13th December) don’t buy a Christmas jumper! Decorate one you already have or borrow one from your friends and family. A quarter of Christmas jumpers were worn once and then discarded last year. And if you’re all wrapped up in your cosy jumper - maybe you can turn the heating down and save energy as well!

9. Transport
Walk, cycle or explore your public transport options this Christmas – giving you fresh air, more time with friends and family and you can enjoy your team Christmas meal without worrying about drink drive limits!

Travel to meetings can be tricky and unpredictable in winter conditions. Reduce the need to travel by teleconferencing or vide-conferencing. Host organisations for many conferences and other meetings now offer a remote participation option, so it is always worth enquiring before planning to attend in person. See our Business Travel webpages. For more information.

Choose the train to visit your relatives - a car journey from London to Liverpool (in an average petrol car) produces 62kg of CO2e whilst the train for the same journey is just 15kg per person. Try to avoid flights - a return trip London to New York is 1.8 tonnes of CO2e per person which is equivalent to around 1/5 of your yearly emissions.