

# WATER USAGE AND CAPTURE

BUILDINGS

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AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT



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## BUILDINGS

# Water usage and capture

### WHY?

In the 1830s, the average person in the UK used just 18 litres of water per day; nowadays, we are using over 140 litres a day. Climate change will exacerbate this further: the warmer the weather, the more water we use, both domestically and in food production.

According to the UK National Geographic website, the UK is not as wet as we think; in fact, London receives only half the rainfall of Sydney, Australia. With its population increasing and hotter, drier summers more likely due to climate change, SE England risks running out of readily available water by 2050. Many industries use a lot of water; some is lost through leaking water pipes, but churches (and homes) can help too, by reducing their water consumption and wastage.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/environment-and-conservation/uks-looming-water-crisis>

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/why-we-should-all-be-saving-water/>

### HOW?

Churches can reduce consumption by turning off taps, repairing leaks, using low-water-use toilets or perhaps by capturing rainwater or reusing grey (used) water for the garden or to flush toilets.

**Toilets:** See our separate resource for more detailed information.

**Taps:** Consider installing motion sensor taps. The initial cost can be higher than standard taps but they save water and have fewer moving parts to go wrong.

**Check for leaks:** Think through where your church uses water and check for leaks regularly; dripping taps, overflowing cisterns and leaking radiators can usually be fairly easily fixed by a plumber.



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**Water meters:** These should save you money as you only get charged for what you use, not a flat rate. They will also tell you if you have a leak: if the meter is turning when the building is empty, there may be a problem worth investigating.

**Dishwashing:** If you have a dishwasher at church, (or at home!), aim to fill it for each use and you could save significant amounts of water compared to washing by hand.

**Rainwater:** Capturing water in water butts is an easy way to provide water for plants or perhaps to flush toilets too. For both human and plant health, it's important to keep the butts, and gutters that feed them, clean. Water butts are easy to fit to modern plastic downpipes. You can also buy cast iron downpipe diverter kits, but modifying such a downpipe is potentially quite a big job – and there may be an issue if your building is listed. The RHS offers advice on collecting and storing rainwater: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=313>

One of the UN Strategic Development Goals is to ensure access to water and sanitation for all: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>. Why not consider promoting this to your church community, alongside your own water-saving activities? It could form part of your Eco Church global engagement. Toilet twinning and tap twinning are easy ways to do so: <https://www.toilettwinning.org/tap-twinning/>

### LONGER READS & OTHER RESOURCES

Waterwise, a UK NGO, has advice on how to save water, including a pack for kids to get them interested and informed:

<https://www.waterwise.org.uk/save-water/>

<https://www.waterwise.org.uk/kids-pack/>





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You may be interested to read the water industry's own route map to net zero carbon by 2030: <https://www.water.org.uk/routemap2030/>

An alliance of 19 UK water boards is working together to re-imagine the water sector by 2050. They value consumer input in their consultations: <https://waterinnovation2050.org.uk/>

### STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Taking action on this topic will contribute to these UN Strategic Development Goals:

