

# Becoming Sustainable Vets: 30 Days Greener

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**Our aim is to make Paragon carbon neutral by 2030, or hopefully sooner.**

We've already done a lot of work towards this goal across our Farm, Advanced Breeding, Small Animal and Equine divisions.

Last month, November 2021, we decided to carry out, commit to or begin a new different change each day in a drive called 30 Days Greener which we ran on our social media.

I didn't want this to become a list of things we've already done but wanted to see if we could come up with even more ideas, no matter how small.

Our staff were great and emailed me loads of great ideas. As you can imagine it's not that easy to change one thing a day for a whole month. But we managed it and it's something we are proud of.

Someone once told me that sustainability isn't about a few people doing something big, it's about a lot of people doing what they can to make a difference.

I hope you are inspired by our 30 Days Greener project. If you have any other ideas to share with us and colleagues across the profession, we'd love to hear them.

## 30 Days Greener

- 1** We set up confectionery recycling collection points at our Dalston and Newbiggin branches. We are taking hard-to-recycle wrappers to Terracycle to turn into new products.
- 2** We planted 200 crocus bulbs in our well-being garden. Crocus are fantastic for the bees emerging early from their hibernation.
- 3** We installed water savers into all toilets. Instead of buying new plastic purpose-made water savers we used house bricks. This saves about 2L of water per flush.
- 4** We ditched the tumble dryer, and we are hanging out our washing when the weather allows.



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**5** We suggested our staff make the switch to the Ecosia search engine. Ecosia plants trees based on how many searches you perform.

**6** We invited our staff to bring in their pumpkins from Halloween which we turned into bird feeders in our well-being garden. Then we composted them.

**7** We started collecting all our clean-just-damp hand towels to add to our work compost bins, reducing the waste that goes into landfill.

**8** We organised an IT kit amnesty for staff to bring in all their old and unwanted computer kit for disposal. It will be broken down into reusable parts or sustainably recycled.



**9** We started using our shredded paper waste as bedding for our small furry inpatients. It's warm, clean and compostable.

**10** We switched our cleaning products to eco-friendly ones.

**11** We turned down the thermostat a couple of degrees, and our small animal team are reusing bubble wrap packaging to keep themselves warm.



**12** We added the left-over cake crumbs from our charity bake sale to the bird feeders in the well-being garden.

**13** We changed our farm visit disinfection method - drastically reducing the amount of disinfectant our vets use to clean up when leaving farms after TB testing by switching to a spray bottle, rather than splashing around large volumes of potentially harmful chemicals.

**14** We started adding the horse manure from our mares and foals to our well-being garden and orchard to help the plants grow.

**15** We switched to using compostable coffee pods instead of aluminium.

**16** We set up collections for key recycling, stamp recycling, battery recycling and pen recycling.

**17** We began stocking bamboo toothbrushes for clients to brush their pets' teeth with instead of plastic ones.

**18** We asked our staff if they would like to commit to walking or riding a bike to work when the weather allows it.

**19** We started on our plans to create a woodland at our Newbiggin branch near Penrith to lock in carbon and reduce our footprint.

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**20** We committed to include areas in the woodland which will be designed to encourage wildlife and biodiversity.

**21** Our wholesaler is now collecting all the packaging from our deliveries so they can reuse it.

**22** We began purchasing biodegradable recycled paper cat litter to use with our inpatients, and also available for our clients to buy.

**23** We officially started working towards our bronze accreditation for our Investors in the Environment award [www.iie.uk.com](http://www.iie.uk.com)

**24** We collected one week of needle caps to show just how much plastic that is. Good news is they can be recycled and that's what we're now doing.

**25** We began composting the clipped pet fur we collect from our small animal patients. It can be a great source of slow releasing nitrogen in a compost heap.

**26** We committed to switch from using single-use plastic packaging for our instrument kits to reusable aluminium ones.

**27** We celebrated our switch to using 100 per cent renewable energy at our practices.

**28** We began trying reusable velcro tail straps for our ET cows instead of tying their tails with plastic arm-length gloves.

**29** We announced that our pension provider has the greenest credentials of all the providers.

**30** On the final day we thanked all our Paragon employees for their amazing suggestions and support over the last 30 days, and always. They are hugely important on the journey for a greener future for all.

Please take a look at our website [www.paragonvet.com/about-us/sustainability](http://www.paragonvet.com/about-us/sustainability) to see some of the other changes we've made.

**Paragon Veterinary Group** is an independent practice with centres in Dalston and Wetheral near Carlisle, and in Newbiggin near Penrith in Cumbria. It has 65 staff including 25 vets and Farm, Advanced Breeding, Equine and Small Animal divisions.

