

Smart Money Tips

Whilst we all know that we should stick to a budget, sometimes it can be difficult so here are some smart money tips which will hopefully help you keep your spending on track.....

General Tips

- Get everyone in the household putting their small change into a jar, if you empty what's in your pockets every evening, you'll be surprised by how quickly it fills!
- Stay active and walk or cycle to work. For example, if you live either side of Portsmouth Harbour, commuting by train or car can cost a lot. Take your bike, brave the weather and keep fit in the bargain!
- Sell your clutter on e-bay. The online auction house has opened individual sellers to a world of buyers. . . are any of your unwanted birthday or Christmas presents taking up too much space?
- Use your local library; renting DVD's can be expensive so why not join your local library where you can loan books and often CD's and DVD's at little or no extra cost than your membership!
- Check out other websites which provide you with money saving tips, vouchers and shop discounts. Try visiting sites such as www.monersavingexpert.co.uk or www.discountvouchers.co.uk



Groceries/Shopping

- When you go shopping, try and plan your menu for the week before you get there and remember to take a list; it has been suggested that we throw away almost a third of what we buy, so only purchase BOGOFs that you can freeze and will eat – otherwise they'll end up in the bin. Also remember not to go shopping peckish – all of those treats will seem even more tempting!
- When you are shopping – don't be shy, head straight for the discount shelves to see if there is anything you can purchase (often these goods are freezable).
- It might sound boring but packed lunches are much cheaper than buying shop made sandwiches or eating out each day.
- Don't be afraid to haggle! If you are purchasing larger items and paying cash, why not give it a go, the worst they can say is no.



Utility Bills

- Don't waste money on utility bills; turn off lights and appliances if you are not using them – do not leave them on standby.
- Look into whether it is cheaper for you to pay utility bills monthly by Direct Debit; some utility companies give discounts when you set up regular Direct Debit payments.
- If you are behind with payments – contact your supplier and discuss the issue, they will often be able to come to an agreement with you if you offer a nominal payment that you will make each month to clear any outstanding bills.
- Fit energy saving light bulbs; these can use about one quarter of the energy of conventional light bulbs and will produce the same amount of light. They are now available in a wide range of styles and they can last up to 10 times longer than a conventional bulb.
- Check your water thermostat, your hot water shouldn't need to be more than 60°C (140°F). Check the thermostat on your hot water tank and turn it down if necessary.
- Fill up the machine; fill up your washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher before turning it on or, if you can't, make sure you use the half-load or economy programme facility to save energy. Ideally, dry your washing on a line outside – of course this does depend on the British weather being kind!

