

What do we do about plastic?

SOME ADVICE FROM STRETTON CLIMATE CARE

Plastic, derived from oil, is a wonderful product. It is long lasting, easy to manufacture in a bewildering variety of forms and colours and is cheap to make...BUT... pollution from plastic has been a problem for many years. In recent months the world has woken up to the urgency to do something about the damage it is causing to the environment ... thank you Sir David Attenborough!

Here are some ideas to help you make a difference

- 1 Our tap water is of the highest quality ... don't buy bottled water ... use a reusable bottle and refill it. Increasingly cafes and public places are offering a free refill service. Down load the refill app.



- 2  Want a take- a -way coffee? Use a reusable cup / mug. Plastic take-a-way cups are very difficult to recycle. Fast food outlets are getting the message and many will even give a discount if you offer your own mug to refill. A few coffee shops are now using a paper based take-a-way cup but what's wrong with carrying your own beautiful china or pottery mug around with you or better still a bamboo reusable coffee mug.

- 3 Use your own container for take-a-way food, the store will probably use a Styrofoam tray or container. They cannot be recycled.

say no



- 4 Use towelling nappies rather than disposable ones.
- 5 Avoid excessive food packaging, especially on vegetables. Try and buy loose from a fresh vegetable stall. A lot of this food wrap is NOT recyclable.
- 6 Use a refill station for liquid detergents, washing up liquid etc. Plastic bottles with a screw cap can be reused many, many times. One of our local shops is such a refill station for a well-known brand of eco washing products.

- 7 Say NO to plastic disposable cutlery – why not carry your own fork!



- 8 Increasingly there are local milk deliveries which come in a glass bottle.

- 9 Avoid products containing microbeads. They are so small they get through sewage works filtration systems and end up in the sea. They can then get into the food chain as they get mistaken for plankton which many sea creatures eat. Some face wash and toothpaste contains micro beads. Polymer based clothing sheds micro fibres when washed which eventually end up in water courses and then the ocean. Natural fibres such as wool and cotton don't have this problem.

- 10 Always carry a shopping bag and refuse a single use plastic bag if offered. There are a few exceptions here, especially fresh meat as “health and hygiene” regulations insist it should be wrapped in plastic or greaseproof paper. Alternatively take your own washable plastic box
- 11 Loose tea and coffee can be bought locally to go direct into your own reusable container to keep it fresh. If you do buy tea bags, make sure they are a make that don't contain plastic
- 12 Where there is an alternative, buy products that come in cardboard rather than plastic packaging
- 13 Use a razor with replaceable blades instead of a disposable razor.



Plastic is a wonderful product but we are getting careless how we dispose of it. If we use less there will be less to recycle and less to pollute.

These links may be useful

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| https://www.refill.org.uk | an app to show where free drinking water is available |
| https://zerowastehome.com/app/ | will help find the nearest bulk buying store |
| www.findmeamilkman.net/ | your nearest dairy with a delivery service, they may use glass bottles |
| https://www.treehugger.com | for ideas to make your own cosmetics etc. from natural products |

CONSUMER PRESSURE IS A VERY POWERFUL INFLUENCE. A simple internet search will help identify products which are not from sustainable sources or are harmful to the environment.

for example

- some tea bags still contain plastic, manufacturers are getting the message as their sales drop
- Some toothpastes still contain micro beads
- liquid hand washes use palm oil which may not come from sustainable sources
- clothing made in 3rd world sweat shops

Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot (and only in that order)

A recent survey in the Stretton's has shown us that many local traders are very aware of the problems plastic is causing. Many offer a paper bag alternative and willingness to let you use your own containers. Loose fruit and vegetables can be bought at the Thursday Market and loose tea, coffee and washing liquids are available from at least one outlet.

Items wrapped in plastic are sometimes cheaper BUT the environmental cost is greater.