



## Reduction of Single Use Plastic in Princes Risborough Town Council

### What are single-use plastics?

Single-use plastics can include any disposable plastic item which is designed to be used only once e.g. plastic bags, disposable utensils, beverage containers, coffee capsules, wet wipes, razor blades, plastic drinks bottles, food wrappers, bottle tops, straws, stirrers and plastic lids.

### Why is plastic problematic?

Plastic, in its current form, has only been around for the last 60-70 years, but in that time, it has transformed everything from clothing, cooking and catering, to product design, engineering and retailing. One of the great advantages of many types of plastic is that they are designed to last for a very long time. The hard-wearing qualities of most plastics means that some items can take hundreds of years to biodegrade.

- Every year an estimated 8 million tonnes of plastic enters the world's oceans, adding to the plastic debris which is endangering marine life and the environment.
- Media reports show that only a third of the plastic packaging in the UK is recycled, and there is a risk of plastic products ending up in the ocean through littering, from landfill sites, and disposal via waste water.
- Recent studies have found microplastic contamination in a third of fish caught in the English Channel, and in 72% of European tap water samples, and there is a growing understanding of the risks posed to human health by the toxic chemicals present in plastics.
- Social media and TV campaigns have succeeded in raising public awareness of the problems of single use plastic and our throwaway culture, prompting action by various Town Councils across the country, by individuals, organisations and businesses, for example the adoption of the Refill scheme to reduce use of disposable plastic bottles.

Local community groups like the Risborough Environmental Group and the Risborough Climate Action Now that organise regular litter picks in the area have reported that most of the waste from their litter picks is made up of single use plastic. It is time for Princes Risborough Town Council to take a lead on this issue on behalf of our parish.

### Motion

The Council resolves to:

1. Become a 'single use plastic free' authority as soon as possible by phasing out:
  - a. The purchase and procurement of single use plastics through the Council's supply chain (where appropriate) and finding sustainable alternatives by 2021.
  - b. The sale and provision of single use plastic products such as bottles, cups, cutlery and drinking straws at all council events by 2021.



2. Encourage the use of recycled plastics where the use of plastics is unavoidable, and support manufacturers that make products that are biodegradable or from locally sourced waste plastics.
3. Form a task and finish group which will report to the November 2019 Town Council meeting about the Strategy and Resources, setting out an action plan to deliver this commitment.
4. Encourage the Town's businesses and institutions to commit to reducing single use plastic waste in their organisation, for example, by taking the 'plastic free pledge'.
5. Investigate participation in national schemes such as the Refill campaign.
6. Encourage local shops, cafes, restaurants and market stall holders to:
  - a. Provide a discount to customers who purchase drinks or food in their own reusable containers and invite customers to bring their own.
  - b. Support the Refill initiative, and, where possible, offer free tap water refills.
7. Raise awareness of government legislation that regulates against the use of single-use plastics to support our efforts where we can.
8. Investigate the possibility of requiring pop-up food and drink vendors at large events in the Town to minimise single use plastic and look at sustainable alternatives as a condition of their contract.
9. Support communities and litter-pick initiatives to ensure our parks, and open spaces are free from plastic litter.
10. Share best practice and information about plastic free initiatives, to residents, businesses, visitors and beyond through the council's social media and communication channels.