

Statement from Fiona Edwards

Single use, disposable plastics such as polystyrene takeaway containers and plastic cups are a cause of litter, a waste of resources, and a problem for future generations. They waste fossil fuels and create unsightly streets, and their persistence causes untold harm for wildlife on land and at sea. Over the last 6 years the Wombles have picked up plastic litter from Keynsham's streets, and for 8 months Keynsham Plastic Re-Action has protested at supermarket's overuse of unnecessary plastic. But unnecessary plastic is everywhere, in such places as our stationary, takeaway packaging, cups, plates and eating utensils.

The need to act locally is especially important following the recent budget which had promised further action on single use plastic, but in fact didn't deliver any significant lead from central Government.

We all need to play our part in resolving this situation, but we believe Bath and NE Somerset Council should play a leading role as champion, active supporter, and regulator within its area of jurisdiction, in ending the prevalence of single use, disposable plastics. We would also welcome your support in our working towards the national Plastic Free Community status, as devised and promoted by Surfers Against Sewage.

We are aware that you are currently reviewing the single use plastic that you are directly responsible for, and are aiming to reduce your single use plastic consumption. We would urge you to complete this thoroughly and as soon as possible.

We welcome moves in the area of changing events and hire rules, specifying how the council's own facilities are run, and improved anti-littering enforcement.

But we would also like to highlight the following opportunities for improvements - procurement choices that specify alternatives to plastics, better promotion of recycling and composting in Curo housing, looking at changing the leases of council owned shops especially takeaways, and working with schools to reduce their kitchen plastic waste. Would the council be able to support businesses in changing to plastic free by the bulk buying of packaging to reduce costs, maybe through the Bath Improvement District organisation? We also call on you to promote your plastic free stance through the communications team and lobby the government for better powers to control waste.

There has been overwhelming public support for this call, as shown in the 1137 signature petition that we have collected on paper only, over a very few hours this summer. It represents a snapshot of the will of many who live, work or visit Keynsham.

I am now presenting the petition to you.