



St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council

Climate Change and Plastic Free Policy

Single Use Plastic Policy

Plastic waste is one of the greatest environmental challenges facing the world today. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) estimates that there are currently between 75million – 199million tonnes of plastic in the world's oceans, and that some 100,000 sea mammals and one million birds die from eating or becoming tangled in plastic waste each year. 100% of baby sea turtles have plastic in their stomachs and 1 in 3 fish caught for human consumption now contains plastic.

What are single-use plastics?

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

What will St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council do?

St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council is committed to taking leadership on tackling the plastic waste problem by taking responsibility for its own impact on the environment and society. This Council will work with staff and volunteers to eliminate the use of single-use plastics across its own operations and services and by all staff and volunteers and pro-actively work with partners to find positive solutions for reducing unnecessary waste plastic.

The Council commits to:

- **Eliminate** all non-reusable or non-recyclable Single Use Plastics from all properties and activities / events related to St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council;
- **Reduce** use of plastics where possible; and
- **Recycle** plastics and other recyclable materials (such as composting) where possible.

In addition, we will seek to eliminate or reduce the use of harmful chemicals (for example, cleaning chemicals) and purchase materials from environmentally friendly or renewable sources (for example, printer paper, stationery and toilet rolls). St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council will:

- work with partners and those hiring the Parish Council premises to provide alternative solutions to single use plastics.

- promote positive initiatives and campaigns for reducing plastic waste across the parish; through a variety of events targeting many different audiences.
- through the Council's social media and communication channels, to share guidance and best practice about plastic free initiatives with residents, businesses, visitors and beyond. to assist others to become plastic free.
- work under the guidance of Telford and Wrekin Council's Sustainable Telford and Wrekin programme, to help our parish become plastic free and meet the requirements of Surfers Against Sewerage to gain the Plastic Free Communities accreditation.

Where the use of plastics is unavoidable, the Council will encourage the use of recycled plastics, where practicable, and support manufacturers that make products from locally sourced materials. St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council will work to embed these commitments into other key council strategies, policies and plans.

Climate Change Policy

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Such shifts can be natural, due to changes in the sun's activity or large volcanic eruptions. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

Burning fossil fuels generates greenhouse gas emissions that act like a blanket wrapped around the earth, trapping the sun's heat and raising temperatures.

The main greenhouse gases that are causing climate change include carbon dioxide and methane. These come from using gasoline for driving a car or coal for heating a building, for example. Clearing land and cutting down forests can also release carbon dioxide. Agriculture, oil and gas operations are major sources of methane emissions. Energy, industry, transport, buildings, agriculture and land use are among the main sectors causing greenhouse gases.

What can we do?

Waste management has a direct impact on climate change because the treatment and disposal of waste generates greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane:

- **Landfills** are a major source of methane, a greenhouse gas that's much more potent than carbon dioxide.
- **Organic waste**. When organic waste decomposes in a landfill, it creates carbon dioxide and methane.
- **Plastic waste** produces greenhouse gas emissions at every stage of its lifecycle, from extraction and transportation to production and disposal.

What will St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council do?

St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council is committed to dealing with the very real issue of waste by taking responsibility for its own impact on the environment and society. This

Council will work with staff and volunteers to be mindful what waste we create, and where our waste is deposited. We will look to introduce more in house composting of food waste as well as improving the amount of compostable waste that make it to the compost bin (currently this does not always happen).

The Council commits to:

Food waste – We will introduce in house food waste composting systems such as a wormery in order to deal with any surplus waste on site.

Compostable waste – tea bags, coffee grounds, fruit & veg peelings etc will be composted in a cold composter.

Surplus food – We will endeavour to make sure any surplus food is given away and made use of before its best before date. Normally these items are offered to user groups of the parish centre.

In addition, we will promote best practice in our community through education and events as well as highlighting the issues and simple wins that residents can make, such as using the Telford and Wrekin home food composting system. We will strive to bring attention to these positive changes staff, volunteers and residents in order to make a difference within our parish.

Something to think about - What are the 7 R's of waste management?

- 1. Rethink** - Become a more conscious consumer. Take a step back to think about your consumption & waste habits and their impacts on the environment.
- 2. Refuse** - Say “no” to products you don't need or won't use. Before purchasing things, consider the benefits and costs. Feel empowered to go against consumer culture and not buy anything at all. Start by refusing that bag at the supermarket you don't need for the two items you bought.
- 3. Reduce** - Lower the amount you buy & how often you buy. Borrow things when you can. Look for items that last longer and have many uses.
- 4. Reuse** - Upcycle items you would typically throw away. Get many uses out of the things you buy. Avoid single-use items, especially those made of plastic. Get creative using what you already own!
- 5. Repair** - Learn how to repair everyday items instead of buying new ones. Try to fix things before throwing them out. Get crafty and join the “Repair Movement”.
- 6. Regift** - Share in the wealth and pass on a gift you've received, but won't necessarily use, to someone else who could use it.
- 7. Recycle** - Give your products a new purpose by recycling them. Learn to properly sort recycling and rubbish. Look for items made of recycled goods when shopping.

Looking forward

Water refill – We will look to incorporate the water refill scheme once we are accessible from the high street in our new premises. This will help residents and visitors, user groups etc access free tap water using a reusable bottle, instead of purchasing a plastic bottle to have a drink. This can also be rolled out to include hot coffee etc depending on the location.

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