



Sustainable Wootton Courtenay Newsletter No 4 April 2021



Congratulations John and Jane Bradley



*Left: James Wilmoth, Chair of the Parish Council;
Centre: John & Jane Bradley, hotel owners;
Right: Ruth Walker, Plastic Free Porlock Vale*

Dunkery Beacon Country House Hotel has been named as the first business in Porlock Vale to achieve plastic free approved status. The award was presented to the hotel by the community-based Plastic Free Porlock Vale group, which is focused on reducing single use plastic and plastic waste, supported by Surfers Against Sewage (SAS). The announcement made the front page of the County Gazette and John was interviewed by BBC Somerset Radio!

John explained, "We're delighted to announce that we've become the first business in Porlock Vale to be awarded plastic free approved status. We're very proud to have achieved this accolade as it's not about us but is for looking after our environment and the beautiful countryside we live in. Our staff are trained and our guests are guided through our recycling practices. Products are separated on a day-to-day basis from

our general waste. Our visitors are also provided with fresh milk in thermos flasks in their rooms, as well as chilled spring water in re-usable glass bottles. This avoids single use plastic milk jiggers and water bottles".

"We supply any walkers who stay with us with sports bottles instead of them buying pre-bottled water. We avoid using disposable toiletries/bathroom items and in all areas have reduced supplier packaging. We have also never used wasteful guest bedroom consumables like coffee sachets and pre-wrapped biscuits, opting instead for cannisters of loose products or compostable pods and homemade biscuits. In our restaurant and bar sauce sachets and plastic straws/stirrers are never used. When shopping, we carry our bags for life and we buy loose fresh produce wherever possible. For our Gourmet to Go food and drink service we also use biodegradable takeaway packaging."

The Plastic Free Porlock Vale initiative is being supported by Wootton Courtenay Parish Council, which is helping to promote environmental issues within the parish.



****Breaking News: Congratulations Andy****

We've just heard that the village shop has also achieved Plastic Free status and will become our 2nd Plastic Free Business Champion. Andy said, "I'm delighted to hear that the Villagers' Stores is to become a Plastic Free Business Champion. It's a really worthwhile environmental campaign and I'm pleased the shop is able to make a contribution to ridding the Vale of single use plastic."

The award will be presented soon and displayed in the shop for villagers and visitors to see.

REMOVING BATHROOM PLASTIC



It can be difficult to remove plastic items from the bathroom. One suggestion for removing shampoo and hair conditioner bottles is to replace them with shampoo and conditioner bars. If you'd like to try a shampoo bar, a company called "gruum" is currently offering a free bar but you do need to pay the postage of £3.95. Interested? Go online to www.gruum.com/free-gift

FOCUS OF THE MONTH: TEA BAGS

Which Bags are Plastic Free?

Tea Bag Update by the "Drink Tea Hub" February 2021



In 2019, around 96% of the tea bags used in the UK contained **non-biodegradable polypropylene fibres** to enable them to be sealed by heat. Polypropylene is a **highly persistent plastic** that does not break down so **shouldn't be put on home compost heaps** unless you plan to sieve the compost before use. Unfortunately, this meant that an increasing amount of these fibres were ending up in the agricultural compost in which our food is grown.

As a result of this report the sales of loose tea increased and many tea bag manufacturers began to address the issue. However, some companies use terminology on their packaging which can be misunderstood. The "Drink Tea Hub" has cast some light on the subject:-

Biodegradable - the material will break down under certain conditions but **can take decades to do so**. It will break down more quickly than "ordinary" plastics but in many conditions won't break down at all so, from the point of view of our wild and marine life, that's really not good news. Don't expect something that says "biodegradable" to be broken down on your home compost heap.

Compostable - many products labelled "compostable" refer to **industrial conditions** that operate with huge volumes and at high temperatures to achieve a relatively quick breakdown of the material into its natural components. If your council operates a food waste bin collection system, this is what happens to it.

Home compostable means that you can safely put it on your home compost heap and expect it to break down after around 90 days, depending on what else you put on your compost heap, weather conditions, whether it's covered or open, and so on.

Soilon – a mesh made from corn starch

Nature-flex – a mesh made from wood pulp from managed forests

Forest Stewardship Council-certified paper – paper products produced from responsibly managed woodlands.

Vegware – plant based compostable food service packaging.

Some brands of loose tea and even plastic-free tea bags come **packaged in plastic**, which is often not even recyclable and has to go to **landfill**. Our locally produced **Miles tea has removed its external plastic packaging but its tea bags are not yet plastic free**.

The “Drink Tea Hub” List of Plastic Free Tea Bags Made In the UK

 <p>HAMPSTEAD TEA BAGS Organic: yes Ethical tea partnership member: Yes Tea bag: made from unbleached cornstarch; home compostable Inner packaging: Nature-flex; home compostable Outer packaging: recyclable cardboard</p>	<p>GOOD AND PROPER TEA BAGS: Brockley Breakfast Organic: some Ethical tea partnership member: Yes Tea bag: unbleached Vegware; industrial compostable Inner packaging: Nature-flex; home compostable Outer packaging: Nature-flex; home compostable</p> 
 <p>ABEL & COLE: English Breakfast Organic: yes Ethical tea partnership member: Yes Tea bag: unbleached soilon; industrial compostable Inner packaging: Nature-flex; home compostable Outer packaging: recyclable cardboard</p>	<p>ROQBERRY TEA BAGS Organic: no Ethical tea partnership member: Yes Tea bag: unbleached soilon; Industrial compostable Inner packaging: Nature-flex; home compostable Outer packaging: : Nature-flex; home compostable</p> 
 <p>WE ARE TEA: English Breakfast Organic: no Ethical tea partnership member: Yes Tea bag: unbleached soilon; industrial compostable Inner packaging: Nature-flex; home compostable Outer packaging: recyclable cardboard</p>	<p>TWIST TEAS TEA BAGS Organic: some Ethical tea partnership member: Yes Tea bag: cornsilk; home compostable Inner packaging: Forest Stewardship Council-certified paper Outer packaging: as for inner packaging for boxes; caddies from recyclable tinplate and aluminium</p> 
 <p>BREW TEA COMPANY: English Breakfast Organic: no Ethical tea partnership member: Yes Tea bag: unbleached soilon; industrial compostable Inner packaging: Nature-flex; home compostable Outer packaging: recyclable cardboard</p>	<p>NO 9 PG TIPS TEA BAGS Organic: no Ethical tea partnership member: Yes Tea bag: plant based from corn; home compostable Inner packaging: recyclable cardboard Outer packaging: plant based from corn; home compostable</p> 
 <p>NO 5 NEMI: English Breakfast Organic: no Ethical tea partnership member: Yes Tea bag: unbleached soilon; industrial compostable Inner packaging: Nature-flex; home compostable Outer packaging: home compostable</p>	<p>BRANDS THAT ARE CLOSE TO JOINING THE LIST</p> <p> YORKSHIRE TEA – currently switching to plastic free. The 240 box is already plastic free.</p> <p> NUMI Tea – 100% organic; plastic free tea bags. Working to develop plastic outer packaging.</p> <p> CLIPPER Organic Everyday Tea – fair trade, 100% organic. Working to develop plastic free outer packaging.</p> <p> TWININGS: Full English Pyramid Bags– plastic free tea bags but working to remove plastic from the attached tag</p> <p> PUKKA HERBS Elegant English Breakfast - Fair Trade; certified carbon neutral. Bags are individually wrapped in a paper envelope coated in a thin layer of PVC and BPA free plastic to ensure freshness.</p>

GREENPEACE PUBLISHES ITS 3RD SUPERMARKETS' PLASTIC SURVEY 2020

		Overall % score	Progress on reducing plastic footprint	Increased reusables	Commitments (reductions)	Commitments (reuse)	Recyclability & recycled content	Supply chain/ stakeholder engagement	Transparency
1	Waitrose	66.2%	60%	60%	78%	48%	29%	76%	91%
2	ALDI	54.3%	42%	40%	71%	41%	40%	59%	81%
3	M&S	51.6%	67%	30%	22%	24%	43%	46%	77%
4	LIDL	51.3%	40%	30%	46%	35%	54%	63%	98%
5	Sainsbury's	51%	33%	50%	72%	22%	67%	56%	91%
6	TESCO	45.6%	11%	70%	63%	63%	47%	76%	89%
7	ASDA	42.1%	29%	70%	30%	59%	26%	46%	80%
8	coop	39.9%	22%	50%	57%	11%	43%	59%	80%
9	Morrisons	38%	9%	40%	46%	48%	49%	54%	91%
10	Iceland	35.1%	22%	60%	63%	19%	11%	22%	57%

Key findings:

- Overall, supermarkets still aren't doing enough to reduce plastic. In 2019 UK supermarkets produced 896,853 tonnes of plastic packaging. This is a slight [decrease from 2018](#) (less than 2%), but it's way off the progress that our planet really needs, and is certainly nothing to shout about.
- Aldi climbed from last place to second. They reduced their overall plastic footprint, removed single-use plastic carrier bags and committed to halve their plastic footprint by 2025.
- Morrison's slipped down to ninth place as their plastic use increased.** A significant rise in plastic bags and water bottles is a particular area for concern.
- Waitrose have remained top of the league table for the second year in a row. They reported a big reduction in plastic use (in relation to their size), showed good engagement with brands and suppliers and have committed to increasing reusable packaging and unpacked ranges.

★ ACTION POINT

Almost 2.5 million people have signed the Greenpeace petition telling supermarkets to ditch throwaway packaging. If you haven't already signed the petition and would like to do so, go online to greenpeace.org.uk/plastic-league-table and scroll down to the green "take action" box.

The Great British Million Mile Clean: 28th May- 13th June 2021



Created in response to the pandemic, the Million Mile Clean connects your beach, street, river and mountain cleaning action. Running throughout the year, we aim to inspire, empower and support 100,000 volunteers walking 10 miles whilst cleaning the places they love. It will be the biggest and most impactful clean up event ever!

100,000 volunteers x 10 miles each = 1 million miles.

A NUMBER OF VILLAGERS ARE PLANNING TO TAKE PART. If you'd like to join us and spring clean our lovely village and coastline one mile at a time, please send an email to:
sustainablewoottoncourtenay2@btinternet.com

Many thanks for the emails and supportive comments we've received about the last issue and for all you are doing to combat climate change and improve biodiversity.

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Our email sustainablewoottoncourtenay2@btinternet.com