

**PLASTIC FREE  
COMMUNITIES  
SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE**

**COMMUNITY TOOLKIT**

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Continuously working to be the positive change we want to see in the world. This toolkit has been designed by:

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THIS TOOLKIT BELONGS TO	
IF FOUND PLEASE RETURN TO	
ADDRESS :	
CONTACT NO :	
EMAIL :	
AREAS OF OPERATION	
START DATE	END DATE
/ /	/ /

# THE PROBLEM: AVOIDABLE SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

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Plastic pollution has sadly become synonymous with any coastal activity, from surfing to swimming, beach holidays to wildlife watching — it is simply an expected part of the experience. This is why marine plastic pollution, and specifically tackling society's throwaway, excessive or unnecessary plastic use is now Surfers Against Sewage's top priority.

Plastic pollution is an issue that connects the environment with all parts of society. It is something that we can take action on at every level. Only through concrete, collective, positive action will we be able to stop the flood of plastic pollution from overwhelming our world.

The ocean sustains us, our wellbeing and our planet. Hundreds of coastal and inland communities have already embraced the vision to create Plastic Free Coastlines. You are reading this toolkit because you are the resistance, the solution. You are joining a global coming-together of citizens, communities, businesses and government to create Plastic Free Communities and a cleaner future for our oceans.





#PLASTICFREECOASTLINES  
#PLASTICFREECOMMUNITIES  
#REFUSETOUSE

# CREATE PLASTIC FREE COMMUNITIES

Action is needed now, and through this toolkit you will learn how to create your own Plastic Free Community and help spread the revolution. The team of experts at SAS HQ have developed five objectives that serve as qualifying criteria. These include forming the backbone of your community group, getting local authorities on board, committing businesses to ditching single-use plastic and making a concerted effort to make alternatives readily available.

We want your journey towards Plastic Free Community status to be fun and rewarding. Remember that small changes can make a huge difference. Keep it simple and make change happen!



# CREATE COMMUNITY ACTION NOW!

Thank you for joining to help create a Plastic Free Community! Your passion and creativity will help us grow the movement. Share the message among your community, make it fun and see your local area awarded Plastic Free Community status.

## Here are some simple tips to get you off on the right track:

**Refill** – Encourage local cafes, pubs and public spaces to make sure drinking water is readily available and remember to carry a reusable water bottle with you.

**Reduce** – Discuss the use of single-use plastic in your favourite cafe and challenge them to reduce their use of it. Wooden stirrers and reusable coffee cups make immediate positive impact.

**Reuse** – Remember to take your reusable bag each time you go shopping. Save yourself money and the environment in one action – win-win!

**Recycle** – Make sure you recycle any single-use plastic bottles and containers you come into contact with. These can become new products! Don't waste plastic!

**Refuse** – Share the impact straws can have on local wildlife with friends and family and tell them to refuse a straw when ordering a drink. If it is a must, there are plenty of reusable versions available to take with them.

**Plastic Free Kit** – such as bamboo toothbrushes, or reusable travel cutlery – gift these to friends and family to inspire them to tackle their plastic footprint.

**Replace** – Get your restaurant or takeaway to replace single-use sachets with refillable and reusable containers.

**Plastic Free Picnic** – Don't let single-use plastics get in the way of fantastic food and company when out enjoying your favourite beach or park. Hold a **#PlasticFreePicnic** and invite friends to bring a dish (plastic-free of course!).

**Help fund SAS** – Support SAS financially and help fund the resistance. Just £5 helps support our Plastic Free Communities movement.

# REMEMBER YOUR INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS:



## Checkpoint Individual Action Plan:

- Remember your **refillable water bottle**
- Take a reusable coffee cup and **refuse single-use takeaway cups**
- Refuse** single-use packaging
- Resist a straw**; straws suck
- Refuse** a single-use plastic bag and take your own
- Take your own cutlery or use sustainable alternatives**
- Avoid** single-use plastics in the bathroom
- Refuse** single-use condiment sachets
- Do your own **#MiniBeachClean** or **#CommunityCleanUp**. Grab a handful of plastic pollution everytime you go out
- Fund the Resistance**—  
Donate to SAS today and help fund the resistance. Just £5 helps support the movement towards Plastic Free Communities

# THE OFFENDERS

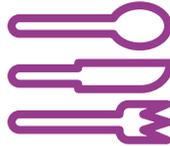
1. Plastic bottles



2. Coffee cups and lids



3. Plastic cutlery



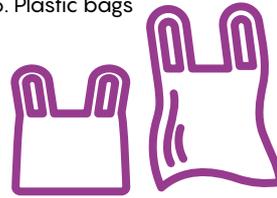
4. Straws & plastic stirrers



5. Plastic 'food-on-the-go' packaging



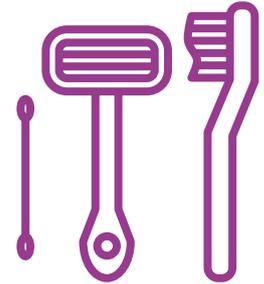
6. Plastic bags



8. Plastic drinking cups



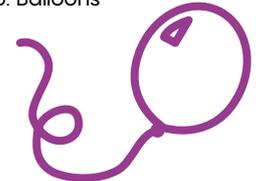
7. Bathroom plastics:  
Toothbrushes, disposable razors, plastic sanitary items, cotton buds, shower gel, shampoo & conditioner



9. Condiment sachets



10. Balloons



# REFUSE TO USE!

1. SAS beach cleans removed nearly 29,000 plastic bottles from our coastline in 2017.

2. In the UK, we use 7 million disposable coffee cups every day.

3. Food and drink-related plastic items now make up one in every five pieces of litter.

4. Plastic straws are in the top 10 items polluting the ocean and harming marine life.

5. 138 pieces of food and drink waste litter every 100 metres of beach.

6. Plastic bags can kill marine wildlife by unintentional digestion or inhalation.

7. A cotton bud stick can take 150 years to break down in the marine environment.

8. In the UK, 2.5bn plastic cups are thrown away each year.

9. Empty sachets are regularly found on SAS beach cleans.

10. Marine animals can be entangled and killed by balloons that end up in the sea.

# HOW TO USE YOUR TOOLKIT



On each page of this toolkit you will find an objective that needs to be met in order to achieve Plastic Free status.

The toolkit shows you the requirements for each objective and how to achieve them. It gives you a framework to follow and the practical advice and guidance to enable you to establish your own local plastic-free network in the best way suited to your local circumstances. Guidance on applying for Plastic Free Community status is found at the end of the toolkit and on the SAS website.

**Don't be daunted.**  
The movement is growing in strength every day.

## Toolkit Tips:

Develop a plan to meet each objective individually.

Keep it simple! Start with the easiest objective first. Get some movement – progress in a campaign is great to encourage others and keep Plastic-Free morale high.

Notify as many people as you can about your Plastic Free Community intention. The more people that know, the more support you'll gain.

Let your local authority know – approach a councillor or person responsible for the environment. Their support could prove invaluable!

Make sure to record evidence of meeting objectives – take pictures, media cuttings and share this info with SAS HQ. Evidence is needed to accomplish your award.



# OBJECTIVE 1: LOCAL GOVERNANCE

## Requirements:

Local council (Town, Parish, or Community) passes a resolution\* supporting the journey to Plastic Free Community status, committing to plastic-free alternatives and plastic-free initiatives within the constituency.

**Council must lead by example to remove single-use plastic items from their premises.**

**Council to encourage plastic-free initiatives, promoting the campaign and supporting events.**

**A representative of the council must be named on the Plastic Free Community steering group.**

## Why?

Local councils are in a unique position to lead change within local areas. They act as consumers, using single-use plastics in canteens, meetings, and during daily business. They are influencers, having direct access to the running of local schools, businesses and community organisations. And finally they work

as a political body, often with cross-party members, and by showing unity on an action can install confidence and determination to succeed.

\*A resolution is the decision taken when the outcome of a motion or proposal has been agreed.

## How?

Demonstrating local public support for Plastic Free Communities will encourage council members to take action.

You can do this in a number of ways. Here are just a few suggestions:

**Invite local councillors to a beach clean or community clean-up. Show the issue of plastic pollution first hand.**

**Write a letter to the council, asking them to support Plastic Free Communities.**

**Gain and show support from local groups, businesses and the general public. This can be done via a joint letter or even a petition.**

**Attend council meetings and get Plastic Free Communities on the agenda.**

**Involve the local press to raise awareness in the community.**

**This objective will be met when a resolution is passed.**

## TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY:

1.

GAIN BROAD SUPPORT FROM YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY FOR ALL PLASTIC FREE INITIATIVES IN YOUR AREA.



GET A LOCAL COUNCILLOR ON BOARD AND ASK THEM TO INTRODUCE THE MOTION AND GARNER SUPPORT.

2.



3.

LOBBY OTHER LOCAL COUNCILLORS OR ASK TO DO A PRESENTATION AT THE DECISION MEETING TO GIVE IT THE BEST CHANCE OF BEING PASSED.



## REFUSE



### SINGLE-USE PLASTIC CUTLERY

**100 billion** individual disposable plastic utensils are used every year.

Each utensil could last **centuries** in the natural environment.

**Many sustainable alternatives are available** including wooden versions, or why not take your own reusable kit.

## OBJECTIVE 2: RESISTANCE HUBS - LOCAL BUSINESSES

### Requirements:

At least three single-use plastic items removed from local businesses and retailers or replaced with sustainable alternatives.

Your target number of businesses are determined by population size (the following 'Checkpoint' page has a breakdown).

### Why?

Removing the option to purchase and/or use single-use plastics is the easiest way to avoid them. Making suitable, sustainable alternatives readily available to customers will bring about a change in behaviour and reduce the amount of throwaway plastic in our society.

### How?

Identify at least three single-use plastic items being used in local businesses and find suitable alternatives.

Lots of suggestions are available on the SAS website [www.sas.org.uk](http://www.sas.org.uk)

### Engage and Inform

Approach local businesses and discuss the importance of Plastic Free Communities. Use your Business Toolkit to help them find ways to reduce single-use plastics. Provide supportive businesses with Plastic Free Champion window stickers. Once you have achieved full status — so do they! This creates a buzz around the movement locally and will drive custom from members of the public who want to support plastic-free businesses. Encourage businesses to 'not give a fork' and allow customers to 'opt-in' to single-use plastics, rather than distributing them as a matter of course.

Businesses will be surprised by how much they save in costs as well as dramatically reducing waste. In recognition of their contribution to the community achieving its status, we will provide certificates and window stickers for businesses to display.



## Checkpoint

Tally of businesses committed to Plastic Free Community	Business name	Number	Sector/ Type	Contact details
Population	Business Target			
0 > 2,500 2,500 > 5,000 5,000 > 10,000 10,000 > 20,000 20,000 > 50,000 50,000 > 75,000 75,000 > 100,000 100,000 > 125,000 125,000 > 150,000 150,000 > 200,000 200,000 > 250,000 250,000 > 300,000 300,000 > 400,000 400,000 > 500,000 500,000 +	2 3 5 6 12 24 30 34 38 42 46 50 55 60 60 70			



## TIPS FOR WORKING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES:

1.

POP IN AND HAVE A CHAT. SIGN THEM UP AND GIVE THEM A COPY OF THE SAS BUSINESS TOOLKIT.



KEEP IN TOUCH, ENCOURAGE THEM AND CHAMPION WHAT THEY ARE DOING ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

2.



3.

MAKE IT EASY! GET THEM TO TACKLE THE THREE EASIEST ITEMS FIRST AND DRAW UP A PLAN FOR THE REST.

## REFUSE



### SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BOTTLES

In 2016, **200 plastic bottles** were found **per mile of UK coastline**.

Single-use plastic bottles, cans and glass account for **40% of all litter** (by volume).

Refillable water bottles come in all shapes and sizes, they can keep water hot as well as cold and **can be reused time and time again**.



## OBJECTIVE 3: PLASTIC FREE ALLIES

### Requirements:

This objective is about widespread community engagement. It is about spreading the plastic-free message to a diverse audience and making sure community groups and organisations are involved in the fight against avoidable single-use plastics.

We have suggested some targets on the next page. The more evidence provided of groups and organisations getting involved and wanting to be part of change in their community, the easier it is to meet this objective.



### Suggested targets

Half of community spaces going plastic free. These can include; beaches, community centres, village halls, places of worship, libraries etc.

One third of schools in the local area.

Half of universities and colleges.

At least one community organisation. These can include: Scouts, Girl Guides, Women's Institute, Surf Lifesaving Clubs etc.

For populations of over 100,000, a flagship employer for the area must be included (such as a university, hospital or large business with over 100 staff).

### Why?

Community action is the pathway to success for Plastic Free Communities. Ensuring as many people as possible are aware of the campaign and issue of single-use plastics, offers the best chance for change, reducing the amount of plastic pollution in our environment.

## How?

Increasing awareness of plastic pollution and its solutions will empower more people to make positive behavioural changes. Try removing at least three single-use plastic items from your workplace or organisation. Empower your colleagues to join the resistance and make your workplace part of your Plastic Free Community.

Running education talks and presentations will inform a wide selection of the public to what they can do to support Plastic Free Communities. Recruiting and recording those who support the campaign can be used to support your application.

## Checkpoint

Number of allies committed to supporting Plastic Free Communities.

Name	Type e.g. school	Contact details

## TIPS FOR COMMUNITY ACTION:

1.

LINK UP WITH OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS SO THAT YOU'RE ALL WORKING TOGETHER.



RUN TALKS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS.

2.



3.

INVITE SCHOOLS TO RUN THE SAS PLASTIC FREE SCHOOLS PROGRAMME.



## REFUSE



### SINGLE-USE BATHROOM PLASTICS

**260 million** plastic toothbrushes are thrown away **every year** in the UK.

Plastic cotton bud sticks are the **6th most common** item found on our beaches - finding their way there via our toilets and sewers!

Seek **sustainable alternatives** - cardboard cotton bud sticks and bamboo toothbrushes and many more are readily available.



## OBJECTIVE 4: PLASTIC FREE RALLIES

### Requirements:

At least two local community events arranged and made open for all to attend, in one calendar year.

### Suggested targets:

Two beach cleans or community clean-ups. You can do this by taking part in SAS's nationwide Beach Clean Series each Spring and Autumn.

One fundraising event for SAS to support Plastic Free Communities

One 'Mass Unwrap' at a supermarket of your choice.

**A SINGLE  
SAS BEACH  
CLEAN CAN  
REMOVE  
OVER 5  
TONNES  
OF LITTER  
IN JUST  
ONE DAY!**

### Why?

The more people participating in Plastic Free Communities, the greater success we will achieve. Events are a great way to spread the message and engage a wide audience, growing your plastic-free movement locally.

By participating in an SAS beach clean series, you know that you will be joined by an army of thousands of volunteers from all over the country, working together to improve your local environment and make our coastlines, plastic-free. If you're not near the coast, organise your own community clean-up at a location of your choice.

### How?

Guidance on organising an SAS Beach Clean can be found on the SAS website ([sas.org.uk](https://sas.org.uk)). Spreading awareness of the event and recruiting volunteers is up to you. Contact local press, place posters in prominent locations and set up social media events. The more people you can tell about the event,

the more people will attend. See this as your 'call to arms', your local recruitment drive. This objective allows you to be individual and imaginative, use your skills, connections and ideas to create events you feel will raise awareness and make a positive impact on the local environment.

# Checkpoint

Attendance	
Location	
Event type	
Tally of plastic-free events planned / already taken place	

## TIPS FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS:

**1.** SIGN UP TO RUN AN SAS BEACH CLEAN OR COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP EVENT.

HOLD AN SAS FUNDRAISING EVENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

**2.**

**3.** CREATE A PRESENCE AT LOCAL FESTIVALS AND ENCOURAGE ORGANISERS TO GO PLASTIC FREE.



## REFUSE



### SINGLE-USE PLASTIC CUPS

**2.5 billion** throwaway coffee cups are used in the UK every year.

**Coffee cups are often non-recyclable** due to a thin plastic film lining the inside.

Many cafes and coffee chains offer a **discount to those bringing their own reusable cup!** Take advantage of a cheaper coffee!

## OBJECTIVE 5: LOCAL RESISTANCE 'STEERING' GROUP

### Requirements:

Local group of stakeholders (must include a council representative and a flagship business employee) to meet at least twice per year to discuss the progress of Plastic Free Communities locally; agreeing and setting direction, meeting objectives, and completing the application for official Plastic Free Community status. For populations over 100,000, a flagship business employee must be a member of the group.

### Why?

Your 'steering' group will amplify the work of the application and ensure that the effort truly becomes a whole community action. An agreed strategy will keep the operation on track and ensure objectives are successfully met.



### How?

You are reading this because you want to make your local area a Plastic Free Community. Start by asking members of local businesses and community organisations to join you in forming a steering group for your area. There may already be a local group in place, in which case, you can

join! Ask SAS if you are not aware of one in your local area, or for more advice about how to start the group. A group needn't be formal, but at least two meetings a year should take place in order to meet this objective and for your area to be awarded Plastic Free Community Status.

### Checkpoint

- Local Resistance Strategic Group established.
- Group includes 1 member of local council.
- For populations over 100,000, a flagship business employee is named on the group.
- Plan to submit evidence to SAS.

## TIPS FOR CREATING YOUR STEERING GROUP:

**1. PICK KEY LOCAL DECISION-MAKERS AND INFLUENCERS TO BE ON YOUR STEERING GROUP.**



**2.**

**KEEP IT SMALL (MAX. 10 PEOPLE).**



**3. SET-UP SEPARATE MEETINGS FOR VOLUNTEERS.**



## REFUSE



## SINGLE-USE STRAWS & PLASTIC STIRRERS

Plastic straws are in the top 10 items polluting the ocean and harming marine life.

Plastic straws are not recycled. They are used for minutes at best and many find their way into the marine environment, where they can linger for hundreds of years!

# HOW TO APPLY FOR PLASTIC FREE COMMUNITY STATUS FOR YOUR AREA!

Now you have gathered evidence of how your local area has met its objectives, it's time to apply for Official Plastic Free Community status.

When you have completed all five objectives, fill-in and send your Mission Report form (along with all required evidence) to:

[plasticfreecoastlines@sas.org.uk](mailto:plasticfreecoastlines@sas.org.uk)

**Official Plastic Free Community locations will receive:**

| **Plastic Free Certificate**

| **The Plastic Free 'stamp of approval'**

| **A locator and feature on the SAS Plastic Free Communities website**

| **The opportunity to use the official Plastic Free Communities logo on correspondence and location signs**

# HAVE YOU COMPLETED ALL FIVE?

- Objective 1  
**Local Governance**
- Objective 2  
**Resistance Hubs:  
Local Businesses**
- Objective 3  
**Plastic Free Allies**
- Objective 4  
**On The Ground Action:  
Plastic Free Rallies**
- Objective 5  
**Local Resistance  
Strategic Group**



## Field Notes



## Field Notes



## Field Notes





Surfers Against Sewage is a marine conservation and campaigning charity inspiring, uniting and empowering communities to protect oceans, waves, beaches and wildlife.

Plastic pollution in our oceans is the 'new sewage'. Blighting our beaches and strangling our seashores it reaches every part of our oceans. It is one of the biggest global environmental threats of our age and fighting it together is our priority issue.

To combat plastic pollution we will:

- Stop the problem at source
- Clean up pollution from our beaches

Plastic Free Communities is a movement to engage and connect individuals, communities and businesses in the collective effort to reduce the flow of single-use plastics into the marine environment.

**Good luck!**



**SURFERS  
AGAINST  
SEWAGE**

**THIS PROJECT IS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO DONATIONS FROM OUR MEMBERS.**

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[www.sas.org.uk](http://www.sas.org.uk)