

Climate Emergency Group
Minutes 6 January 2020

Plastics and how to shop more effectively
By Gaye, Mike and Ray

Format : three short presentations; small groups discuss what we are doing at home which might be worth sharing, then identify what we might need help with; feedback.

Plastics: Supermarket questionnaire revealed customer satisfaction as regards to cutting down plastics showed Iceland as coming top (to counter their palm oil interests?). Sainsbury's came bottom. But none of them are doing well. We must vote with our feet. 'How to give up plastic' book also had some good ideas. Gaye discussed how she started reducing plastics by shampoo bulk purchase 5 litres! Then tried Lush soap bars. Then tried washing hair with just water, but results were all unsatisfactory. Products are improving now though. Experiment!

Gaye then decided to buy less: do we really need dishwasher cleaner?! New clothes in particular, which started a trend at work. Gaye also complains to marketing companies who send her plastic wrapped materials. Gaye has now learned to Tweet to keep the anti-plastics issue alive.

Leaner household: Ray plans food for the week/month and has a schedule of reviewing what they are doing. It's a lifestyle choice and she is now able to embrace the extra time it takes. Money is tight so saving everything is important. They also have an allotment. Ray makes a shopping list and sticks to it, but she still managed to have an overstuffed fridge with leftovers at Christmas!. She uses items even if beyond 'before best date', and advises to review fridge contents and the week's menus. Because they review, they work out whether or not they are on target. Ask yourself "Have you got everything on the list?" if so, then shop no more. They also compost everything that is vegetable based. Ray would like to look into a community effort for bulk buying.

Greener shopping: Mike informed us that supermarkets make 59 billion single use bits of plastic. This figure is still going up not down. They produce 1.1 billion single use bags alone. So, remember to bring your bags to the shop and remember to use them rather than leave them in the car. Supermarkets exploit our forgetfulness and need for convenience, and they can prolong shelf life and therefore make it cheaper if it's wrapped in plastic. We just need to educate ourselves and planning ahead is key. For example, produce bags are free and reusable. Use them for dry food such as pasta too. Use wax/silicone covers instead of clingfilm at home. Shop at the market in Witney on Thursday or Saturdays. Quality is often better anyway. There is a zero-waste shop in Eynsham 'The Market Garden'. They have a full range of eco products but still a lot of plastic is in there - **see info sheet** for other local sources. Online shopping and packaging has a carbon footprint, clothing and footwear alone account for 8% greenhouse gas production.

Greenpeace have volunteer speakers we can invite to give a more detailed presentation. Mike has also offered to arrange a tour to find out what happens to our recycling in West Oxon mikesofroniou@gmail.com

Summary: Self-discipline and degree of self-denial are involved. But we can say “No”. This is a support group: think about what you are prepared to do, choose your own individual bottom line; any small change matters. Use the group to find a buddy who wants to share bogof offers or bulk buys eg potatoes from Freeland Nursery.

Feedback from groups:

What we are doing now

Able and Cole Veg box (tailored)/Riverford veg box
Turn off the dishwasher at the ‘dry’ setting and open the door to let it dry.
Use microfiber cloths to clean around the house – no (or less) need for cleaning products
Use milkman to get bottled milk (their oatmilk is great too)
Bulk buy from Suma (see below)
Always keep a cotton bag in your bag
Google ‘Change Your Habits’, ‘Your plan your planet’
Use soda stream instead of plastic bottles of pop
Bars of goatmilk shampoo and soap
Make eco bricks from clean fly away plastics – see ecobrick website
Take contact lens daily wrappers to Boots for recycling
Wash tin foil/plastic bags for reusing
Freeze and label leftovers
Witney Lidl have bargain boxes of fruit and veg £1.50
BBC recipe search according to surplus eg, glut of beans
Write a list of things thrown out so you don’t keep buying it.
Olio app for left over ingredients
‘Too good to go’ website for surplus from high end establishments.
Buy bulk from foreign foodshops eg Cowley Rd and Birmingham (Sacks of rice/flour)
Cheese eaters: swap to goats and ewe because less CO2 is produced.
Go 80% veggie and use the money saved to buy ethically produced meat /fish as a treat.
Bakers butchers in Witney will box up goods rather than plastic if you ask.

What do we want to do.....

Find a comparison website for green/ethical goods along the lines of Ethical Consumer magazine

This website <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/food-drink> has some good examination of the environmental credibility of some food products but it involves a subscription. Perhaps someone with a university library membership would be able to access it..

Buy more loose goods

These are available at Botley Road Waitrose, Market Garden shop in Eynsham, Finstock shop and more. See Information Sheet

Bulk buy of dry goods

Harriet is willing to share her order from Suma. harrietkopinska@googlemail.com

Set up a local surplus produce stall; co-ordinate gluts eg, apples (Helen can get hold of a press).

This is being organised and will be discussed at the February meeting

Where can we go to buy local affordable organic loose veg?

See Information Sheet

Engage Matt and Rekha in discussions re a greener local shop

Rachel Aldred is asking them to re-install Ecover refills. Ray is talking to them about bags

Find out what local supermarkets do with their best before date goods

How do we find out which products come by ship and which are flown?

Gardening club – can they come to a meeting to give us a few tips on growing our own?

Date of next meeting: 3 Feb on Tree Planting and Community Produce.

We need to start thinking now about where we might plant trees in our locality.