

Here is a full list of all the comments I have had regarding plastic bags:

From Pete Brummell:

We have very few plastic shopping bags as we purchased Wiltshire Recycling Green bags which are woven from natural fibres. These will last for years as did those used before retailers providing customers with a over abundance of the plastic variety. Like most every one we use any plastic bags we acquire as a lining for our waste bin. I also fill such bags with fallen autumn leaves to compost into leave mould. We have an on going building project on at present and also use plastic bags for waste, which can not be composted, and must be store until our next trip to the recycling depot. Unfortunately all these plastic bags continue to be a scourge long after each has been used again and again for other purposes.

We are convinced that shoppers should be required to pay the retailer a LOCAL PLASTIC WASTE TAX every time they use such bags. 100% of that charge should be passed to the appropriate local authority to assist funding of specialist equipment at recycling depots particularly to sort different types of plastic for use for recycling. Waste contractors current policy of requiring the general public to sort one type of plastic for recycling from others which must be put in waste bins is counterproductive to the effort of developing a more positive attitude to recycling amongst the public. The consequence will inevitably be a more negative attitude regarding recycling.

From Sally Fletcher:

I felt my uses would be too mainstream to be worth a mention!

They are:

- re-use for shopping, lining waste bins, storage around the home and garden
- taking to local healthfood store for re-use
- returning to supermarket re-cycling bin where available

Now that more of the hemp type bags are around, I think I shall be using plastic bags to line them as I have encountered problems with the natural materials getting dye transferred from the contents when it rains or something leaks!

From Peter Williams:

I have been pushing for cardboard and plastics recycling on the Pewsham Estate in Chippenham and am in contact with our new town councillor , Mark Packard, who has pledged to follow this up. So far the response from the Council has been that there is no money for such a scheme until 2009.

My suggestion to Mark was that we put together a community scheme whereby volunteers collect and take cardboard and plastics to the recycling centres. However I am aware that we may be over-whelmed going by the average amount of cardboard that is thrown out each week by every household.

Anyway we'll wait and see!

From Christine Giles:

Re making Melksham a plastic bag free town.

Dear All

This seems to be really moving ahead! the Melksham News are putting a piece in next weeks paper, I am doing an interview with BBC Wiltshire Radio on the breakfast show Monday 810am and I am going to give the presentation to the Council on 21st January.

On Wednesday the 5th December (next week) at 8pm the Melksham Climate Friendly group are holding their monthly meeting at Spencer's sports and social club (Beanacre Road) and I am going to give a presentation then to everyone who is interested in supporting this campaign. At this, we are going to arrange a meeting for all the Traders (and residents) of Melksham to come along and see the presentation. This will obviously need lots of advertising and talking to as many of the shops as possible.

Therefore I ask you to please come along on Wednesday even if it is just to say that you want to support this. If we only get a few people, then we will have a much more difficult task ahead. So please do come. (If you're not from Melksham but would be interested in starting a campaign for your Town then do come).

If you're not convinced, then look at this very short film

<http://www.plasticbagfree.com/facts.php>

and look at this other community who have a website

<http://turnlymegreen.wordpress.com>

and if you're still with me, look at this film

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Verhi88kR60&eurl=http://www.plasticbagfree.com/iframe_facts.php

Thank you, this is a brilliant cause, worthwhile, doesn't cost us any money and will not only help millions of animals and birds but also ourselves and our beautiful planet.

Please pass this message on to anyone else who may be interested in coming.

Chris

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from David Levy:

Plastics

Although plastics is a generic name for a range of polymers they are now so varied in structure and use that they have recycling logos which try to assist with recycling. Logos 1-3 can be recycled and reprocessed in this country. Logos 4-7 cannot be reprocessed in this country therefore we should use our stall to promote the use of colour coding on our plastic packaging. This is something everybody can ask for to assist them in sorting out their waste packaging. It is something that helps the public in terms of selection. eg I would choose my basket of products from the green packaging and would reject all red packaging.

The alternative is that all plastics end up in the wheelie bins where much is incinerated

David has also been in contact with Tesco's and the local press

6th December 2007

attn Ian Hutchins

Govt Affairs Manager

Tesco Stores Ltd

Dear Mr Hutchins,

Thank you for your letter of the 29th November 2007. It was my understanding from a letter from Terry Leahy that my point of contact was to be Melanie Chiswell and I enclose a copy of correspondence with her which remains unanswered.

I would wish to thank you for your correspondence and to assure you that I am aware of the serious commitment that the supermarket industry has towards the issue of packaging and Tesco as the market leader would also lead in commitment terms. The benefits are obvious economically for Tesco's but I am reassured that engagement is more far reaching than that. If you are prepared I would appreciate further correspondence on the following issues.

Firstly may I inform you that I have been engaged with the issue of packaging in relation to incineration before WRAP were formed, therefore I have some knowledge of the progress which has been made and the issues that still remain outstanding.

This is my correspondence to Melanie Chiswell.

Corporate Affairs Manager

Dear Melanie,

I would wish to respond to Mr Leahy's letter of 7th November 2007 with a request of a meeting with yourself at your earliest convenience. At that meeting both my colleague Stephen Eades, Friends of the Earth, Dr Andy Tubb - The Bristol Group and myself would wish to probe further into the replies given by Mr Leahy and we would wish to be made aware of the detail behind the responses received so far.

As part of that preparation we would appreciate the names of the WRAP personnel who meet with your company daily and where one can go to visit the information and progress that this group has made so far. I would also be very interested as to whether you have become engaged with the reprocessing of plastics industry such as BPI over the expansion of home based reprocessing rather than the exporting of dirty plastics to the Far East.

The offer of a real life survey of excess packaging into your supermarket base still remains firmly on the table and I wonder whether this exercise has been carried out by the liaison groups you have functioning.?

25% by 2010 may sound a far reaching proposal but in terms of the growth of incineration options it is too little too late. Contracts are being signed now for 25 year obligations by local authorities for MBT and Incineration all because the supermarket industry have dragged their feet over their producer responsibilities on packaging. This needs to be discussed.

I look forward to your response

Yours Sincerely,
David Levy
Chair TATWBG
Executive UKWIN / TBG

Your letter has engaged with some of the issues raised in this letter, however not all.

Secondly I would wish to respond to your letter of the 29th November 2007 . I acknowledge the conflict that arises when assessing the environmental impact of the choices you have to make on packaging. What I would wish to know is how do you assess what goes onto your shelves?

For example Panadol has an award winning design packaged product that presents multi task disposal problems for end of use.

Another example is the range of packaging for cat food. Metal tins, foil sachets, resealable plastics etc. Without resorting to customer choice can you provide a sound science answer as to why poor choices in packaging are tolerated and Tesco fails to use its influence on the producer to concentrate on its products going into identified packaging that impacts less on the environment than other choices?

It is also my contention that Tesco's and the supermarket industry could engage with colour coding for different plastics if they will not stop using plastics that cannot be reprocessed in this country. Colour coded trays are in multiple use without any reason already. If coding was used where those plastics that could be recycled/reprocessed bore one colour and those plastics that could not, bore another colour it would have the following effects

- i. Give the public the choice of choosing via their wallets
- ii. Make sorting of the plastics at the recycling centers (which are very basic), easier to achieve recycling improvements and sorting the plastics for sequestration.

For those products that are imported maybe in house colour coding could assist the public in its environmental choices.

The problem with inhouse symbols such as the triangle logo 1-7 is who knows and has it proved useful? I would say only very partially and the results via minimisation and constructive public engagement have been in my opinion poor. What has resulted this year has been a 2% increase in packaging not a reduction. This would be in any other function a failure, but the industry view this as progress by providing more and more choice of the same or similar products being presented in more and more ways.

Tesco's remit is that products sell because they give the public what they want. They do not say they provide packaging that is in the public 's best interest. Why not?

Finally you have stated that you do not see Tesco's role of rejecting plastics that cannot be reprocessed in this country but fail to engage with any of the options. This means that these plastics end up in incinerators with the associated health impacts. Is that what Tesco's wants ?

The team from UK WIN stands ready to engage and assist with existing customer and NGO Liaison Groups as an easier vehicle by which to communicate .

Yours Sincerely,

David Levy
TATWBG / UK WIN / TBG

From Derek Quinn:

We are often short of plastic bags for the rare time that we have something really messy that needs to be disposed of in the dustbin. My wife and I refuse carrier bags and have got into the habit of taking our "bags for life" with us whenever we shop. When one of my sons lived in Germany 15 years ago he bought home some of the cloth bags that Germans used instead of plastic. Here we are playing catch up. I am trying to pluck up the courage to remove the excess plastic from the few plastic wrapped things that I do buy and hand them back to the till person.

From Una Welles:

I try not to have them and when I do I use them to line the bin

From Maureen Lambden:

I am very aware that plastic is plastic whether recycled or not and will still take hundreds of years to decompose if it ends up in landfill so have been using less and less as time goes by. I don't use carrier bags as bin liners instead I purchase compostable bags (which should be available in Sainsburys shortly if not already) or use carrier bags from the Co-op which have the date they will start composting from printed on them. Any plastic bags I do collect are packaged up and sent on for recycling (see July/Aug 2007 Newsletter for details – I have checked and the company take plastic types 2 & 4 and the bags are recycled in this country) Should I get a carrier bag I take them back to the recycling points at the supermarkets.

From Sheila Veitch :

Forwarded is a thread from the association of Green councillors. It does show that the issue of plastic bags has caught the imagination of the public, even though the effect of reducing use has such a small impact upon the amount of waste produced overall.

I concur with previous posters on this. The media response has been massive to our attempt to kick off a small campaign in the World Heritage Site of Saltaire (as a pilot for the rest of the district) and the whole thing has built up a momentum of its own. This has left us trying to concentrate on making sure we get the credit, rather than whether we will be successful or not.

Basically it is an issue that effects everyone, is visible, is here and now in our bins and lying around our streets as litter, and can be easily won! If you haven't tried this yet, give it a go!

Cheers

Martin

I've not followed this debate, but anyone who's arguing AGAINST plastic bag motions needs a rest in a darkened room having been visited a doctor

Leicester greens put a motion, not massivley ambitious but symbolic, which garnered unanimous support in council chamber. Since putting the motion I have been on local BBC radio, on regional BBC tv, regional ITV, the local paper did a massive page 3 spread on it on a saturday (a popular day for circulation) plus a leader column praising the idea.

I've had members of the public send me letters of congratulatoryions, I've had non active members write to me about it, i've had god knows how may council officers speak to me about it positively

Local green councillors now firmly on map, getting other things done in council or covered by media will be easier.

Matt Follett

Bernard Little wrote:
I agree with you John.

Yesterday I was interviewed by two broadcast journalism students at Sheffield University about the plastic bag motion we have had passed at full Council in November. The two students were from Mombia (Bombay) and said that recent floods there had caused a huge amount of damage, plastic bags clogging up drains were a huge contributory factor and as a result the city was banning plastic bags.
Bernard.

John Matthissen wrote:

For all you meanies who rubbish the plastic bag campaign, a thought from Greenpeace : In June 2007 Danny Kennedy, the campaigns manager for Greenpeace Australia-Pacific said
"I see the case of reusable bags as fairly superficial, but also very useful. The best thing about the plastic bag campaign is that people recognized the ecological world view; that everything is linked. It's also very empowering that so many people have engaged, and so quickly. If that's people's first entry point into taking action, then it's fantastic. Their first taste is a win. But governments can't think that's the only thing."

I hope he's right!

John

Certainly, for Modbury, the bag campaign has made us start to question how and where products are made, how they are transported and where they go when we're finished with them. It's made us look at all consumer goods in a different light. It's a start but there is a lot more we all have to do. My personal view is that the disposable plastic bag is the icon of our unsustainable lifestyles. I know that removing plastic bags from our lives won't make us a sustainable culture anymore than saving the polar bear will stop global warming. However, plastic bags and polar bears will make us all stop and think about the bigger picture.

John Matthissen wrote:

It is not if but when, according to my local tesco manager.

Does anyone know the situation in N.Ireland? as my Asda manager made some remarks about stopping bags there having boosted the sale of kitchen bin liners. Might have been Irish republic of course, but anyone know?

thanks

John

<http://www.carrierbagtax.com> . They say:

1: INCREASED USE OF PLASTIC IN EIRE

The Irish claim the use of plastic carrier bags has declined by over 90%. DEFRA says 80% of plastic carrier bags are re-used at least once in the home. That is why the reduction in carrier bags in

Ireland has been replaced by an increase in the use of heavier gauge bin liners, refuse sacks and nappy disposal bags.

One plastic bag company in Drogheda, County Louth, Eire (maker of 19 types of bin bags) states "We've experienced a growth of 300-400%. It's been phenomenal. You can trace it back to when the bag levy came in." He also stated that he now had to employ workers on double shifts to cope with the demand.

The Irish Examiner Newspaper found the following:

Tesco – 77% increase in pedal bin liner sales; Superquinn (Ireland's biggest supermarket) – 84% increase in nappy bag sales; Superquinn – 13.5% increase in bin bag sales; Supervalu/Centra – 25% increase in nappy bag sales; Supervalu/Centra – 75% increase in swing bin liner sales.

PIFA statistics derived from Customs & Excise show no statistically significant change in the tonnage of plastic bags made and shipped to Ireland after the tax than before it. (Not counting the increased home production noted above.)

I think the obvious argument against this is that the situation depends on whether the extra bin liners add up to more than the reduction in disposable carrier bags. Logically that would be the case if all or most carrier bags end their lives as bin liners, which is surely not true?

Chris