**Reducing Plastic in Ilmington Community Shop and Café**

**Report from Ilmington 20:20**

This note is in response to a request from the shop committee for advice on reducing the use of plastic in the shop and café.

The recommendations are based on a survey carried out with the assistance of Michelle, further research and discussion.

In common with other retail outlets, the use of plastic in the shop/café is ubiquitous as a packaging material. It is cheap, transparent and protects products from deterioration by acting as a moisture barrier. A distinction can be drawn between rigid plastic which is recyclable and plastic film and single use plastic bags which are not. There is therefore a stronger imperative to reduce use of non-recyclable materials

We looked at two aspects of plastics use:

1. Product stock
2. Everyday use in shop and café

**Product stock**

There are very few products that do not use plastic packaging. All the shop’s fresh food other than some cheeses, some butter and lard, vegetables, eggs and bread/pastries are packed in plastic. Somewhat disappointingly even the wholefood ranges are packed in plastic bags Products which appear to be plastic free such as cereals in cardboard packaging usually have plastic liners. Products not packed in plastic include tea, coffee, flour, sugar, preserves, most fruit juice drinks, alcohol and canned goods.

*Positive points*: the shop stocks loose vegetables, eggs, bread and pastries. Milk and juice in glass bottles have recently been added to the range.

Cakes and soups made in house or by volunteers are not prepacked.

**Everyday use of plastic**

The shop uses plastic bags for out of date bread as this helps to keep it fresh. It also gives out plastic carrier bags (albeit previously used) to customers on request.

The café uses cling film to protect cakes etc. overnight. Drinking straws are plastic.

*Positive points:* The shop sells jute shopping bags and supplies paper bags for customers for loose goods.

The café makes extensive use of reusable ‘Tupperware’ type food containers for storing fresh food.

The café uses paper cups for takeaways and is sourcing non plastic drinking straws.

**Recommendations**

Product stock

1 Substitute products not packed in plastic for those that are, such as Covent Garden Soups which are packed in waxed board for current soups in plastic containers.

2 Avoid adding to range of plastic packed products e.g. stick to juices packed in cardboard or glass e.g. not ‘Innocent’ juices in plastic bottles.

3 Avoid products that use excessive plastic. We noted for example that Borders Biscuits have a rigid plastic container as well as clear outer plastic.

4 Suggest to certain suppliers such as Wilton Wholefoods and local suppliers such as Cotswold Fudge, that they switch to non-plastic packaging. (M and S have switched a number of their products to waxed paper, so it can be done).

Everyday use

5 Shop: explore alternatives to single use plastic bags. Consider using brown paper bags for out of date bread or explore the use of waxed paper or specialist greaseproof bakery bags. Products are offered by a number of suppliers including , ‘The Bag Broker’, ‘If You Care’ and ‘Progressive Supplies’ which have a range of brown ribbed Kraft paper ‘artisan’ bread bags,

<https://www.ifyoucare.com>

<https://www.progressivessupplies.co.uk>

<https://www.thebagbroker.co.uk>

6 Change the message on supplying plastic carrier bags from ‘Would you like a carrier bag’ to ‘Can you manage without a carrier bag’.

7 Consider making a charge or asking for a donation for each plastic carrier bag issued to customers.

8 Promote jute bags by offering a discount. Stock cheap nylon fold up pouch bags that slip inside a bag or pocket.

9 Café: explore alternatives to clingfilm for protecting food overnight. Options could include storing cakes etc. in large plastic boxes or using waxed paper wrap see:-

<https://www.beeswaxwraps.co.uk>

General

10 Publicise that the shop and café is committed to reducing plastic

11 Ask volunteers and members for their suggestions.

JB for 20:20 April 2018