

The Plastic Waste Problem

In the past 100 years the world has produced a lot of plastic; much of this still exists somewhere today. Half of all plastic produced is for single-use purposes, including bottles, food packaging, coffee cups, straws, bags and plastic cutlery. These items, designed to be used for minutes, will still be on our planet in hundreds of years.



Up to **12 million tonnes of plastic** ends up in the sea each year and the impact of this was shockingly highlighted in the recent Blue Planet series. This plastic causes harm to ocean animals and can end up in seafood that is on our plates.

The **Plastic Free Letchworth** project helped people, businesses, schools and community groups reduce their plastic use. They achieved the SAS approved plastic free community accreditation from Surfers Against Sewage.

PLASTIC FREE
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY
SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE



Surfers against Sewage (SAS)
SAS was set up to clean up our coastlines. Now they are encouraging inland communities to do the same using their Plastic Free Coastlines Communities Toolkit. (sas.org.uk)

Seven Tips for Using Less Plastic



1. Bring your own shopping bag.....and save the 5p single use shopping bag charge.

2. Carry a reusable water bottle

Look out for the ‘Refill, Reuse’ sticker in local cafes, check the water refill app (refill.org.uk/get-the-refill-app/) or just ask.



3. Bring your own drinks cup

....cafes are beginning to offer discounts for people bringing reusable cups, so you may save money!

5. Say NO to plastic straws and cutlery

If you need a straw consider taking your own reusable stainless steel or bamboo straw. Take a set of metal, wooden or bamboo cutlery with you to use when out and about.

4. Pack a ‘Plastic-Free’ lunch

Avoid takeaways in single- use plastic. Take your own lunch using reusable sandwich bags, beeswax food wraps or reusable containers.



6. Avoid plastic produce bags when shopping

Visit smaller local shops who don’t use plastic bags and wrappings. In supermarkets try to avoid items covered in non-recyclable plastics (e.g. crisp bags, biscuit wrappings). Take your own paper or mesh bags with you for fruit and vegetables.

7. Avoid plastic in the kitchen.

Cover food with a small plate or beeswax wrap, or store it in a reusable container to avoid clingfilm and plastic bags.