

Stroud District Action on Plastic – Steering Group Meeting

12th September 2019

Present:

Claudi Williams (SDAP, Action Group Leader)

Peter Williams (SDAP)

James Millar (SDAP, Director of local food hub Stroudco, former Keep Britain Tidy board member)

Chloe Turner (SDAP, Project Coordinator)

Cllr Catherine Braun (Green, Stroud District Council)

Tricia Watson (Community R4C, Waste/Recycling Industry expert)

Clare Mahdiyone (Chief Executive, Stroud Valleys Project)

Anita van Rossum (Head of Outreach & Campaigning, Earth Protectors)

Gary Thomas (eco-auditor, Ecotricity)

Apologies:

Kate Turner (Sustainability Team, Renishaw)

David Murphy (SGS College Sustainability Co-ordinator)

Helen Appleyard (Bristol University)

Katharina Child (Atelier Stroud and Invivo Healthcare)

Erik Wilkinson (Transition Stroud)

Patricia Woodham (Snow Business)

1. Introductions

Each of the above members introduced themselves and shared their interest in and reasons for participating in the group. Claudie welcomed Catherine as our Local Governance representative, Tricia, Anita and Clare as Community Allies, and Gary as a representative from one of our Flagship Employers for the district. Since the meeting, we have had confirmation from Renishaw plc that they will also join us as a Flagship Employer - we look forward to their insight at the November meeting – and we hope SGS College will come on board in the same role.

2. Progress To Date:

Chloe outlined the progress made towards obtaining the Surfers Against Sewage 'Plastic Free Accreditation' for the district, as outlined below (and circulated before the meeting). In addition to what follows, it should be noted that we have set up Instagram and Twitter accounts for the group (both with around 200 followers) and we run an active Facebook group with around 680 members – we use these to raise awareness of issues around plastic pollution and the benefits of reduced reliance on single use plastic/ lowered consumption, as well as to publicise our own events and those

of our partners/Champions. Members of the group were urged to share details of businesses who might be interested in participating in the Champion scheme and/or open to receiving some support/tools to improve their plastic footprint.

a. LOCAL GOVERNANCE (Thanks to Catherine for the detail in this section)

We are fortunate in having great support from the Town and District Council for this project.

Stroud District Council approved a motion to reduce single use plastics at the full council meeting on 26 April 2018.

You can see the debate here (skip to last agenda item)

<http://c.connectedviews.com/03/SitePlayer/sdc?session=13700>

And the text of the motion – of what the council has committed to - is in the minutes of the meeting here:

<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings/council/council-26-april-2018>

The draft SDC Corporate Delivery Plan was discussed at the full council meeting in May. The paper can be found here:

<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1032737/item-12-corporate-delivery-plan-and-key-actions-for-2019-20.pdf>

To note that Key Action 13 says:

“In our role as statutory waste collection authority, support community groups to phase out single use plastics; whilst also reducing its use across council services”

Gloucestershire County Council have also made a commitment to reduce single use plastics. A GCC task group set up to tackle single use plastic was also due to meet for the first time on 12 Sep 2019 – via Eva Ward, Chloe is due to attend a future meeting of this group.

b. BUSINESSES (“Resistance Hubs”)

We have had 6 (of the minimum 14 we require for the district) Plastic Free Champions already signed off by SAS and awarded their certificate and plaques.

Beeswax Wraps UK
Golden Sheep Coffee
Spacehoppers Co-Working
Harbour Business Supplies
Snow Business Ltd
Loose

Two applications were rejected, based on new criteria that SAS have introduced since launching the award: Slimbridge (rejected as a charity, despite having a trading arm) and Schlumberger UK (rejected under the new criterion of <250 employees).

Chloe has approached 21 additional businesses

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rxoZ02prIJH7pVTnN_QPHmEc3Zm7FoPO/view?usp=sharin

g who are at varying stages in uptake/progress, and continues to approach new businesses each week. Cold-calling is hard, so please give Chloe any introductions/leads you may have to small- and medium-sized Stroud district based businesses that might be open to considering their plastic footprint.

c. COMMUNITY PARTNERS (“Plastic Free Allies”)

These are the other community groups, schools, charities, councils, large businesses etc that we have been working with, and brief details of our interaction. There aren’t specific measures around this for the purposes of the accreditation, just “widespread community engagement”, although some target examples are given. A flagship employer must be included. We need to access more schools and community orgs, which Chloe is working on – please give leads.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11Zvk3QY-BrmzJfuxsDj3H7CGN2ejXekO/view?usp=sharing>

d. EVENTS TO DATE (“Plastic Free Rallies”)

These are the events we have organised to date. The accreditation requires “at least two community events arranged and made open for all to attend”, which we have comfortably achieved.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/12uovOaSegsxtlLvGslByTBQKz2XYgwRN/view?usp=sharing>

e. LOCAL RESISTANCE STEERING GROUP

A local group of stakeholders (to include a council representative and flagship business employee) must meet at least twice a year – this meeting was the first of those, with the next on November 20th.

3. Remaining work on the SAS accreditation

Chloe outlined what remains to be done towards achieving the SAS accreditation, primarily in recruiting additional Plastic Free Champions, with a focus on achieving a good spread of Champions across the district. We will obviously continue our community outreach work, events and share our tools as widely as possible. There is potential for a talk followed by a climate film at Stroud Brewery, which would be great. We also have ‘plogging’ (litter picking while jogging) events coming up with local running clubs, and more talks scheduled, including to the association of town and parish council clerks (GAPTC) in Nov and a presentation to Stroud Business Voice in October, which will be a useful opportunity to widen our reach across the local business community. We continue to approach schools and other community organisations. We hope that by the November meeting we will be ready or close to readiness to submit our Plastic Free Community application to SAS.

4. Future of SDAP

a. Local education/outreach activities

It was felt that excellent progress had been made in reaching out into the community and that the positive momentum achieved should not be wasted once the accreditation has been achieved. Clare emphasised the importance of education, and the great public interest in understanding how to do better at minimising plastic waste and maximise recycling – it was agreed that more innovative ways to disseminate the information could be explored. Tricia mentioned the web hub that has been developed by CR4C for finding local recycling outlets – *action since, Chloe will ask SDC to include a link to this tool on their new recycling pages, and CR4C/SDAP will discuss the ongoing maintenance of this tool.*

With regard to business engagement, GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership, the Local Enterprise Forum and the local chambers of trade were all raised as possible avenues to broaden our business reach. Chloe has made contact with the president of the Wotton chamber of trade, about the possibility of a joint plastic pledge along the lines of the one rolled out in Plymouth – this is something that could then be replicated across the 8 other chambers. Claudi noted that so many of the solutions to plastic dependence boost the local economy in the provision of local alternatives, something we have already seen in the mutual support of our Plastic Free Champions.

Regarding funding for ongoing work, Clare noted that SVP are working with Transition Stroud on a response to the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund's information gathering exercise – this £100m fund, due to open this autumn, is targeted at major partnerships, and SDAP could perhaps be included in the wider SVP/Transition Stroud bid.

Action: Chloe/Claudi to consider producing video segments (perhaps with the support of Stroud TV) around reducing single use plastic, for sharing via our own social media and those of our partners

Action: Chloe/James/Claudi to consider funding for ongoing work over the next few months.

Action: Chloe to meet with the Wotton Chamber President and explore possibilities at GFirst, LEF and the other chambers.

Action: Chloe/Claudi to speak to Fred about the TNL bid – *done, have agreed with TS that SDAP will feed into the bid process as part of the wider TS/SVP/SDC/SWEA partnership*

b. Wider geographic reach

Another possibility for SDAP is to expand the remit of the group geographically (again) or to support groups in other areas, such as the other districts of Gloucestershire. Chloe is already speaking to a new group who have set up in Tetbury and another possible lead in Cirencester. This will be something for further discussion at the November meeting.

Action: Chloe to continue discussions with other groups and share our tools as they arise

c. Research partnerships

Another possibility for SDAP is to partner with an academic institution in producing meaningful research around the behavioural changes in reducing reliance on plastic and/or

reducing consumption. This could involve working with civic institutions, businesses and individuals, using qualitative and quantitative measures (eg impact on time, finances, state of mind) to assess the response in each case to making plastic lifestyle changes. This could then be used by organisations such as SAS to further their work. It was noted that this work would require a specific funding stream, to be pursued once the scope of the work was agreed.

Some initial research was carried out last year by Helen Appleyard of Bristol University with the assistance of Claudi and Pete, and although she might not be available to pursue the project further due to other time commitments, it was thought there might be other interested parties in Bristol Uni, or Bath, Gloucester (perhaps in partnership with GFirst LEP, the local enterprise partnership), Plymouth (with its close links to SAS) or within one of the marine conservation charities, or even in a producer of alternatives to plastic. Pete has previously met with Sally Becker, who is an adviser to government on plastic and unintended consequences and a great source of information. It was agreed that she would be a very useful adviser to the group with regard to next steps.

Action – Pete to invite Sally Decker to the November steering group meeting, where this discussion can be taken further.