NEWS RELEASE

Help us reduce single-use plastic waste



Exmouth Town Council is working hard to reduce single-use plastic waste, first by installing water refill stations and then introducing the Exmouth Cup.

The Town Council, having installed two water refill units and established the benefits, plans to install another in the town centre.

With the help of South West Water, the Town Council is installing a water bottle filling station in the Magnolia Centre to encourage the use of reusable water bottles and reduce the amount of plastic waste.

Like the others, the unit consists of a pedestal bottle filling station with a simple push-button actuation system to fill a bottle quickly and efficiently with little waste, and provides clean, hygienic water in accordance with the strict regulations. Look out for the unit in the Magnolia Centre which will be ready for use by the end of April.

Why is the Town Council focusing on reducing plastic bottles?

Plastic bottle pollution is self-explanatory – it refers to single-use plastic bottles ending up as waste in landfills, the oceans, and on beaches.

These bottles aren't just an eyesore for us, they can also harm wildlife. Animals often get sick, or die, from eating or getting stuck in plastic waste. For example, a whale found washed up on a beach in Indonesia had **115 cups**, 25 bags, four bottles, and two slippers in its stomach.

But the bigger issue is that **plastic doesn't really decompose**.

Plastic bottles take around 450 years to 'decompose', according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). But they don't get broken down into organic matter – such as carbon dioxide, water, and minerals – that can be reused, the way fruit peels or dead animals do.

Instead, the plastic particles just get smaller and smaller. **These small plastic particles are called 'microplastics', and they end up everywhere – from inside marine animals, to soil and water and the food we eat.** Recent studies have even **found** microplastics inside human organs.

What's worse, the mountain of microplastics is continuing to grow each year. According to research from Kyushu University, there are currently twenty-four trillion pieces of **microplastics in the ocean** alone, the equivalent of 30 billion half-litre water bottles.

This should be a cause for concern, since microplastics can be dangerous. **Studies** on fish, for example, found that microplastics can damage their liver and reproductive health. But it's not just fish. **Research** **has also found that microplastics can be harmful to humans, increasing their risk of cancer and infertility**.

Councillor Joe Whibley, Mayor of Exmouth said:

"We're delighted to install another water bottle filling station with South West Water's help as part of its community engagement programme. I would encourage everyone to use this and the other units around the town to fill their reusable bottles. Not only will they help us reduce single-use plastic bottles but also promote healthier lifestyles by ensuring we drink plenty of fresh clean water."

Daniella Twelvetree, Head of Customer Communications & Engagement at South West Water, said: "We're delighted to be involved in installing this water refill station in Exmouth, together with the local town council, in support of reducing single use plastic and protecting the environment. We hope local residents, and visitors to Exmouth, find this station to be a useful addition."

Plastic water bottle pollution facts

Here are a few facts about plastic water bottle pollution that you might not have known:

- Globally, roughly 1 million plastic bottles are purchased every minute, according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Roughly **2.5 million** tons of carbon dioxide are created from the process of manufacturing and filling plastic bottles every year
- The average Brit could save 94.4 kilograms (kg) of carbon dioxide (CO2) each year by switching to reusable bottles, the equivalent of spending 8,939 hours streaming films and TV shows
- For every six bottles of water bought, one is recycled, according to National Geographic
- In the UK alone, nearly **16 million** plastic bottles aren't being recycled each year
- About **80%** of plastic water bottles end up in landfills worldwide

- Over **8 million** tonnes of plastic bottles end up in the ocean each year

The statistical information has been provided by the ECO experts. For further information please contact the Town Council on 01395 276 167 or email us on reception@exmouth.gov.uk.

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