

PLASTIC FREE COMMUNITIES

The Plastic Free Community network has been created by Surfers Against Sewage to address the issue of avoidable single-use plastic. The network was established to tackle the problem “from the beach to the brands and businesses who create it”. In Cheshire, Chester has achieved Plastic Free status and Ellesmere Port, Frodsham, Northwich and Tattenhall are working towards it.

The project is not about removing all plastic but rather “It’s about kicking our addiction to avoidable single-use plastic, and changing the system that produces it” (Surfers Against Sewage).

There are five objectives. A toolkit is available that explains in more detail the various steps required to meet each objective. There is flexibility to allow the objectives to be tailored to the unique needs of different communities.

OBJECTIVE	REQUIREMENTS	HOW
ENGAGING YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL The local council makes a resolution supporting the journey to plastic free community status.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Council must lead by example to remove single-use plastic items from council premises.2. Council to encourage plastic-free initiatives, promoting the campaign and supporting events.3. A representative of the council must be named on the Plastic Free Community steering group.	Motion passed by Council committing to all three requirements for this objective.
BUSINESS CHAMPIONS Independently owned businesses in the community remove at least three single-use items.	At least three single-use plastic items removed from local businesses and retailers (target number of businesses determined by population size).	Minimum of six Neston companies register to become Plastic Free Business Champions (<i>one company has already signed up</i>). Businesses will display certificates and window stickers to publicise and encourage further support.
COMMUNITY ALLIES Inspire the wider community to spread the plastic-free message.	This objective will be met when evidence has been provided of community engagement and participation levels across five categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none">(i) Schools/colleges/universities(ii) Community spaces (eg libraries, leisure centres)(iii) Organisations (eg community groups)(iv) Events (eg clean up events, community workshops)(v) Communication (eg social media platforms, local radio).	Minimum of 20 community allies sign a pledge to remove three pieces of single-use plastic (or confirm that they do not use any single-use plastic).
COMMUNITY ACTIONS AND EVENTS Raising awareness of the campaign locally.	This objective will be met when two community events have been arranged within one calendar year. Events must be open to all to attend.	This objective allows the organisers to be individual and imaginative, using their skills, connections and ideas to create events that they feel will raise awareness and make a positive impact on the local environment.

<p>STEERING GROUP</p> <p>To amplify the work of the application and ensure that the effort truly becomes a whole community action. An agreed strategy will keep the operation on track and ensure objectives are successfully met</p>	<p>A steering group of stakeholders to be established (must include a council representative) to meet at least twice a year to discuss the progress of Plastic Free Communities locally.</p>	<p>Establish a steering group with the remit to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree and set direction, • review objectives, and • complete the application for official Plastic Free Community status.
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Further details of Plastic Free status and the five objectives can be found here: <https://plasticfree.org.uk/community-toolkit/>

Neston Earth Group will be establishing a working group in September to co-ordinate the Neston journey towards achieving Plastic Free status.