



# Plastic Bag-Less Thornbury



## February News Update

ST members visited retailers in January and received very positive responses.

**Thank you all very much for listening to us and for thinking about the alternatives.**

### Actions You have Taken So Far:

- Many retailers now ask whether their customers need a bag **before** using one.
- Some retailers are looking into changing away from plastic (to compostable or paper bags)
- Some retailers are ahead of the game and already use paper in preference
- Some chain stores have agreed to promote their own reusable bags more prominently (Co-op)
- Some retailers are re-using other plastic bags and wrapping (GAP, Pete's Cycles, Saverys)

### Message in the Waves

**Sustainable Thornbury**, with the **support of South Gloucestershire Council and the BBC**, showed the film to an interested audience. They learnt about the huge swirl of plastic debris that is circulating in the Pacific Ocean. This 'soup' causes major damage to wildlife in the region, particularly birds such as the albatross and playful dolphins who get tangled in plastic which they mistake for playthings. After the film there was the opportunity to look at alternatives to plastic bags & discuss with the group.



### Town Bag

Everything is in place to produce Thornbury's own fair trade jute bag. Castle School A Level pupils are working on artwork that we hope can be used on the bag. **Once the design is finalised we will let you see it.**

The Town Council will co-ordinate orders so that everyone can order the number they need but discount can be achieved for a larger order. Details of costs from Sandra Richardson at Thornbury Town Council Offices, Old Police Station, High St, Thornbury BS35 2AR. She will also take payment with your written order. Tel 01454 412103



### What are You doing?

**Do your bit for Thornbury and help your local environment by reducing the number of plastic bags you hand out in your shop.**

**See over for how you can reduce your plastic bag use**

## Be part of the solution, not the problem!

### The Roadmap to Success: how to move away from plastic carriers

- **Do you wrap without questioning?** How much better to ask if the shopper wants, or needs the bag? Many shoppers are already prepared to say "no"; some are even prepared not to be offered a bag unless they specifically ask for one. This will reduce the number of bags you have to buy, and the number that end up in the environment. Eventually, we might reach the point where you don't need to stock unnecessary packaging or carriers.
- **Sometimes packaging is necessary.** We don't need a separate bag for toothpaste, we certainly need to package a portion of chips. In these cases, you could **look for more environmentally-acceptable alternatives to conventional plastic.** Today, there are plastics that compost completely or degrade to inert powder. Even better, there are natural materials: paper (recycled or at least from sustainable plantations), corn-starch, cotton and jute. Each has its own uses and all bio-degrade as nature intended. **Yes, these are all more expensive than conventional plastic, but if you are using less, and the customer is re-using more, then they become affordable.**
- **Be careful if trying to cut corners.** Is giving a durable plastic bag, any better than several single-use bags? In reality, most "bags for life" have a very short life.
- **What's your image?** However you look at it, plastic doesn't have a good image. Imagine 3 shoppers meeting up for lunch. One has a host of flimsy plastic bags; the second has a couple of smart paper carriers; the third has a woven bag colour-coordinated with her outfit. **Which shopper are you trying to appeal to? As a trader, which bags would you like to be associated with your products?**
- **What can you do if you are part of a local, national, or even international, chain?** The chain has rules, protocols and an image to maintain. But there are usually ways of interpreting these rules that mean you can still get involved locally. Don't find out too late that your competitors are moving ahead of you merely because you were didn't want to approach "head-office".



**Sustainable Thornbury will be 'launching' the campaign on Saturday May 3rd. By then we will have posters for the public and window stickers for participating retailers—to show that you are trying to reduce plastic bag use.**

#### Together we can make it happen

- We know that doing away with unnecessary plastic cannot be achieved by the traders alone. Sustainable Thornbury's campaign is aimed equally at changing the expectations of shoppers and helping traders to meet these expectations.
- During February and March we are encouraging traders to examine their policies and to plan for supplying only appropriate and necessary packaging. We will provide information and suggestions where we can.
- During April and May we will continue to support you, particularly by promoting those of you that are meeting the challenge. In these months we will also target the shoppers to reappraise their expectations and to make only reasonable demands for packaging.

**Together, we can achieve a better environment.**

**For more information on the campaign, contact 01454 416778**

**For help with alternatives to plastic, contact Judith Dale on 01454 415345**