

NEWS

PLASTIC ATTACKS GO VIRAL

How simple plastic attacks in South Bristol

Voice naturalist and campaigner Alex Morss reveals how protests against plastic packaging that began here in South Bristol have snowballed into a global movement

IT IS easy to think we are personally incapable of anything more than tiny ripples, when we need a massive tidal wave of global change to heal our trashed planet. But here is a great example of people power, and I hope it will replenish the optimism in anyone who, like me, sometimes feels despair and helplessness on environmental issues.

A small anti-plastic

movement that we began at stores here in South Bristol has now gone global. It has shown what a huge influence we can have as ordinary people – and that campaigning is not a waste of time.

South Bristol members of new local campaign group #OneByOne began staging and promoting ‘plastic attacks’ at BS3 supermarkets earlier this year. These peaceful protests involve shoppers being invited to rip off all the unwanted plastic packaging and handing it back after paying, asking the shops to recycle or deal with the plastic.

Our local uprising was perfectly timed, because the issue had just hit the mainstream public consciousness after being highlighted by Sir David Attenborough during the Blue Planet II TV series.

Sir David showed that the furthest reaches of the oceans are awash with plastic, and it is

ICELAND LEADS THE WAY

ONE STORE chain, Iceland, has promised to remove all own-brand plastic packaging by 2023. Other brands are starting to follow and trial ideas.

Iceland spokesman Keith Hann told the Voice it will be a “huge challenge” but they have seen an “overwhelmingly positive” response from customers. “The major barrier to action is the need to achieve plastic reduction without creating another problem,” he said, such as an increase in food waste, or creating greater volumes of non-recyclable or non-compostable packaging.

harming all kinds of wildlife. Soon afterwards, in January, I sent out an angry Tweet about an ‘organic’ coconut pictured at Sainsbury’s in Winterstoke Road, that had been stripped of its skin and covered in plastic, sold

“We can improve shelf life by switching out of plastic, for example into paper or pulp punnets for mushrooms and strawberries, but overall, plastic provides good protection for products and the biggest challenge is ensuring that replacements can match this.”

He added: “Iceland has advantages over many other retailers, in carrying a much smaller range than the major supermarkets, and in being a private, family company that can take long-term decisions.”

Iceland has stores at the Broadwalk Centre in Knowle, East Street, Bedminster, Avonmead, and Winterstoke Road, Ashton.

wrapped in a box with a plastic straw. That went around the world and found its way on to pretty much every UK news channel, radio station and newspaper, with the chief executive of Sainsbury’s, Mike