

Press release: statement on this Sunday's Plastic Attack at Lidl in Bristol

July 5th 2018.

Our #HandBackPlastic campaign continues this Sunday July 8th, when we will host another Plastic Attack peaceful protest with shoppers, this time at Lidl, Sheene Way, Bristol, from 1-3pm.

At this event we will again highlight the amount of unnecessary single-use plastic packaging still being generated every day by supermarkets. Shoppers will be invited to join in with removing the plastic from items they have bought in the store and handing it back to the store to deal with and recycle where possible.

The store has been informed. As usual this will be a polite, law-abiding event, with no littering and no obstruction of checkouts.

On Sunday we will also be gathering petition signatures calling for a ban on single-use plastic across Bristol as far as possible, using measures achievable by the city council (1). Around half a million people have now signed a separate petition by Greenpeace calling for a ban on single-use plastic packaging across supermarkets (2).

Our actions are being repeated globally. Plastic attacks are now being staged by a growing network of campaigners. We are visiting a wide range of stores where we find unnecessary single-use plastic still being sold.

Whilst we recognise that some supermarkets are starting to listen to the message, and making some limited commitments on plastic, still not enough is being done, and not as fast as it could be. We are continuously seeing very many examples, and have hundreds of photographs from our own research, that confirm this to be the case.

The responsibility is still being placed far too heavily on the consumer to recycle, instead of removing the source of plastic, which would be possible in very many cases. Existing voluntary compliance efforts on plastic reduction, endorsed by Wrap UK and supermarkets in the UK Plastics Pact, clearly direct the blame and responsibility on to consumers for not recycling, instead of producers.

It is tax payers, the planet and wildlife that bear the heavy cost and harm caused by single-use plastic, with only a tiny fraction of the cost being met by UK supermarkets under current legislation and policies.

The term 'recyclable' does not mean the plastic will be recycled. Research suggests only about one tenth to one third of plastic packaging that could be recycled actually gets recycled. In the UK, at least one million tonnes of throwaway plastic goes to landfill, incineration or ends up in the sea or as litter in the environment each year. (3) & (4).

'Recyclable' does not stop plastic litter and it does not halt the unsustainable and unnecessary use of fossil fuels. Plastic packaging is not biodegradable, not good for the planet, not good for wildlife, not good for tax payers, and crucially not even necessary in very many cases. It does not necessarily prevent food waste, as recent evidence shows (5).

#OneByOne's own research and very conservative calculations show that, on average, a typical supermarket from among the big UK brands still creates enough unnecessary throwaway plastic packaging for campaigners to be able to easily fill at least one trolley per hour, per store, with the waste. We can easily picture that volume being multiplied by the tens of thousands per day when we count up the hours and how many stores operate in this way.

If these estimates are applied to Lidl and multiplied across all their stores, we estimate this plastic burden is likely to equate to at least 700 trolleys per trading hour of plastic just from Lidl's UK stores alone, and more than 10,000 trolleys of plastic wrappers per hour in total across Lidl branches in Europe and the US, under its current policies.

These volumes of avoidable single-use plastic waste from supermarkets still equate to an unforgivable, giant pile of plastic waste each hour, each day, each week, stacking up into a mountain of disgrace every year.

Lidl's policy, like those of rival stores, will still result in thousands more tonnes of plastic entering our environment every year, and staying there for hundreds more years. This is not an adequate reduction in plastic generation and use.

Rival stores have pledged to do more. Supermarkets can and need to be more ambitious to meet increasingly environmentally conscious customers' demands for positive change.

What is Lidl doing on plastic?

Lidl has pledged to ensure all packaging is 'widely recyclable, reusable, refillable or renewable by 2025'. (6) Lidl defines 'recyclable' only as being offered for kerbside collection by 75% of UK councils.

* From 2025, half its packaging will still be made from recycled materials - so half won't be.

* Lidl will only reduce own brand plastic packaging by one fifth before 2022.

* Lidl is doing well on eradicating microbeads from all cosmetic and household products ahead of legislation; replacing plastic-stem cotton buds with biodegradable stems; removing single-use bags; and only selling paper straws instead of plastic ones.

Lidl has obviously recognised there is a plastic packaging problem and made good efforts on plastic bags, however we believe its pledge on single-use plastic packaging does not go far enough, much like we are seeing from other UK brands.

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Any questions - please contact:

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REFERENCES

(1) 38 Degrees Petition for a city-wide ban on single-use plastic in Bristol:
<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/a-city-wide-ban-on-single-use-disposable-plastics?source=facebook-share-button&time=1530320133>

(2) Greenpeace Petition to ditch throwaway plastic packaging:
<https://secure.greenpeace.org.uk/page/s/plastic-free-supermarkets>

(3) A whopping 91% of plastic isn't recycled:
<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/07/plastic-produced-recycling-waste-ocean-trash-debris-environment/>

(4) Only a third of UK consumers' plastic packaging is recycled:
www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/nov/21/only-a-third-of-uk-consumer-plastic-packaging-is-recycled

(5) Unwrapped: How throwaway plastic is failing to solve Europe's food waste problem.
http://zerowasteeurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Unwrapped_How-throwaway-plastic-is-failing-to-solve-Europes-food-waste-problem_and-what-we-need-to-do-instead_FoEE-ZWE-April-2018_final.pdf

(6) www.lidl.co.uk/en/Packaging-and-plastic-12985.htm