



PRESS RELEASE

Liskeard goes plastic-free: campaign launch

Monday 23 April 2018 at 7.30pm in the Refreshment Room, Liskeard Public Hall

Last year something important shifted in the national conscience. It was about plastic. Plastic in our shops, plastic in our homes and most of all, plastic in our oceans. A toxic tide poisoning the planet. No-one who saw David Attenborough's TV series, *Blue Planet II* can forget the images of plastic pollution and his message, "We can still do something to stop this". Even the Government woke up and took notice.

St Agnes-based environmental organisation *Surfers Against Sewage* has risen to the challenge, with their *Plastic Free Coastlines* campaign. More than 100 towns across the UK have signed up, including Liskeard – one of ten Cornish towns to do so. Liskeard resident, Tristram Besterman, who is leading the Plastic Free Liskeard campaign, has single-use plastic in his sights. "Plastic bags, plastic straws, plastic cups, plastic cutlery, plastic food trays from the take-away and plastic bottles: we don't need them and we don't want them. It's not just down to retailers: as customers, we can each kick the plastic habit in what we choose to buy."

Several of Liskeard's independent traders are well ahead of the game and have already replaced single-use plastic with environmentally friendly alternatives: and the customers like it. In Penzance, footfall in the town centre has increased since it went plastic free – and it has given them national coverage in the media.

Tristram has been preparing for the public launch of the campaign since February. He has consulted activists in Looe and in Liskeard, where local artist, Rob Arnold, has been campaigning on the issue for several years. With retired teacher, Cllr Sue Pike, Tristram has worked with Hillfort Primary School to raise awareness of plastic pollution. Liskeard Town Forum has given the campaign the thumbs-up and so has Liskeard Town Council, which, following Cornwall Council's lead, resolved in February, to phase out, wherever possible, the use of a whole range of single use plastics from the entire Town Council estate, by 2020. In addition, the Town Council pledged to work with local businesses to promote the banning of similar products.

Anyone with an interest in Liskeard's environment is welcome at the inaugural meeting to launch the Plastic Free Liskeard campaign on 23rd April. Tristram is keen to recruit volunteers who can spread the word in Liskeard and help the town to reduce its dependence on single-use plastic. As Tristram put it, "Plastic Free Liskeard is about our community, our shared responsibility for the environment and about the world that our children inherit. Every single one of us can make a difference."

Liskeard is set fair to take up David Attenborough's challenge. As Tristram admits, it won't happen overnight, but initial responses have been very encouraging. So, he's confident that the town will do its bit. It's in everyone's interest that it succeeds.

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Surfers Against Sewage *Plastic Free Coastlines* national campaign
<https://www.sas.org.uk/plasticfreecoastlines/>