

**SWFWI PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT EVENT  
9 NOVEMBER 2019 AT LAVENHAM VILLAGE HALL**

Annie Phillips, Public Affairs, welcomed 61 members to the meeting together with Federation Trustees and Sub Committee members. Public Affairs had arranged three presentations, two in the morning and one after lunch, on the subject of waste and recycling following up 2017 resolution End Plastic Soup,



The first presentation was by Dr Adam Read, representing the company Suez Recycling & Recovery UK, and he began by saying that waste has a value which keeps changing. Not all plastic is bad – it is what we do with it which is important. Packaging protects and extends life – think of cucumbers! However, we have to make changes so that we don't get swamped by plastic and at the same time develop strategies to utilise what is discarded.

Adam highlighted several new innovations such as a plastic free aisle being tried in a supermarket but it was felt we were unlikely to seek out particular products in this way. A well known crisp manufacturer, however, is working on changing its packaging after a campaign where people posted back their empty packets for disposal, showing that public opinion can change minds.

Whilst manufacturers are seeking to use new materials, this also poses problems for recycling centres whose sorting systems cannot cope with them. Re-using items is also the way forward and like plastic bags, re-usable coffee cups are becoming more mainstream.

A system of colours and/or numbers on our bins could be replicated on labels which would give clear guidance on how to dispose of our waste. Finally, everyone is looking for EPR – Extended Product Responsibility! Adam was thanked for his presentation.



Anne Hitch from the charity RECOUP was introduced. Their mandate is to work with all bodies in the field of recycling, respond to public concerns and improve communication.

Anne explained the Recycling Plant process and we were able to look at samples of plastic from the discarded bottle, to flakes, to pellets, to new bottles which UK manufacturers can process in five weeks. Even textiles can be manufactured from plastic.

What was stressed throughout Anne's presentation, however, was that our recycled items should be clean. Members were horrified to hear that many items of personal hygiene were being put in blue bins as well as dog poo. She gave advice on what can and cannot go in recycle bins – toothpaste tubes, pill blister packs, pump sprays and crisp packets (at present) OUT. Trigger sprays IN. She said, if in doubt, put it in.

An area which could be worked on is music concerts and festivals where punters end up walking on a carpet of waste. Apparently this does not happen in Japan!

A quote from Wil.I.am – "Is waste waste because we wasted an opportunity to turn it into something else."



The raffle theme was eco friendly products and recycled items, with some items being donated by the speakers. A delicious lunch of jacket potato and chilli followed by various fruit crumbles, made and served by the Catering Committee.



The third speakers were from Anglia Water, Rachel and Clare who head their company's Keep it Clear Behaviour Change Programme.

They began by telling us about the Authority which covers the biggest area in the country with 28% of the land below sea level. This is a massive challenge to keep our pipes clear and despite public conception, they are very pro-active in detecting leaks using dogs and drones

The water authority gives advice to restaurants and eateries on best practice for disposal of oil and removal of grease from washing up water. There are measures that can be taken against persistent abusers.

Wipes are a relatively new phenomenon and despite being labelled as flushable, they contain plastic microfibres and should not be put down the toilet. They emphasised that toilets are not wet bins. It was felt by the meeting that Trading Standards should be putting pressure on manufacturers to tighten up their descriptions. It seems that wipes do degrade in time but not quickly enough for them to pass through our pipes and cause blockages.

Rachel and Clare told us the Plastic Pledge is to rid East Anglia of Single Use Plastic by 2030 and gave everyone a reusable goodie bag containing a spray which can convert toilet paper into a flushable wipe.

Armed with all the information we had been given during the day and the NFWI booklet In A Spin, members can surely spread the word and make changes to their routines which will make a difference.

Well done SWFWI Public Affairs Committee.

Brenda Dyer  
Resolution Adviser

### Links to presentations:

[Adam Read's Presentation](#)

Anne Hitch's Presentation



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