



Press Release for Gazette December 2007

Survey shows Thornbury shoppers are ready to change

Members of Sustainable Thornbury recently asked residents whether they would support reducing the number of plastic bags used in the town. The results show an overwhelming support for action. Over 400 people responded to the survey which was taken at the Farmer's Market, at the Mundy Fireworks event and on the High Street at lunchtime. Over 97% supported reducing the number of bags given out in our shops.

Most people were concerned at the environmental damage caused by these bags and many shoppers already carried their own re-usable bags. Plastic bags are made from oil which is already in short supply. They damage wildlife who swallow them and they can take hundreds of years to degrade.

Sustainable Thornbury hope that retailers in the town will take their lead from shoppers and consider alternatives to giving out plastic bags with every purchase. Members will be speaking to all the town's retailers in the new year to give them more information about alternatives and ask them to commit to reducing the number of bags given out. Members of the Chamber of Trade have already given their support.

Note to Editor: See below for some facts about plastic bags

The world uses over 1.2 trillion plastic bags a year. That averages about 300 bags for each adult on the planet. That comes out to over one million bags being used per minute.

On average we use each plastic bag for approximately 12 minutes before disposing. It then lasts in the environment for decades.

Not all litter is deliberate. 47% of wind borne litter escaping from landfills is plastic. Much of this is plastic bags.

In the marine environment plastic bag litter is lethal, killing at least 100,000 birds, whales, seals and turtles every year. After an animal is killed by plastic bags, its body decomposes and the plastic is released back into the environment where it can kill again.

Plastic bags, as with all forms of plastic, do not biodegrade. They photodegrade, breaking down into smaller and smaller toxic bits contaminating soil, waterways, oceans and entering the food web when ingested by animals.

(<http://www.messageinthewaves.com/facts.php>)

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