



## Quick guide for festival organisers on how to reduce single-use plastic

### 1. The plastic problem

#### 1.1 What's wrong with plastic?

Our inability to deal with plastic as a waste product is causing the contamination of our water systems, threatening marine life, entering food chains, impacting wildlife and affecting human health. We are all consuming plastic. It takes over 500 years to degrade and has led to a crisis for UK recycling systems.

#### 1.2. Plastics at festivals

Festivals consume vast amounts of single-use plastics and other materials in their catering outlets, often evident in the sea of litter left by audiences after events. The good news is that festival organisers can control what comes on site and can choose to take action to limit plastic waste. Reducing plastic at festivals has several advantages:

- Environmental benefits. Put simply, using sustainable products is kinder to the planet.
- Less litter. A significant amount of waste thrown on the ground at festivals is single-use plastic cups and bottles.
- Money saving. Less waste equals lower clean-up costs.
- Meeting festivalgoer expectations. Audiences may be expecting you to act on this issue. If Glastonbury, Brexfest and Port Eliot can do it, you can too! Consider tweaking your festival publicity to encourage participants to be more environmentally aware.

This is a brief guide for anybody organising a festival – whatever the size of the festival, and whatever the audience. Get it right and you can save the planet **and** save money!

### 2. The plastic solution

Two golden rules: Remember the mantra, Avoid – Reduce – Reuse – Recycle  
Work out your waste plan early

#### 2.1 Control the materials coming to your site

Reduce the waste that you will have to deal with by banning single-use plastics, items that cannot be recycled and items that don't fit in with your waste management plan. Send out guidance for stallholders and festivalgoers about what is and isn't acceptable.

**Stallholders:** No plastic, Styrofoam or polystyrene food packaging, no plastic bottles or straws, no balloons, plastic bags or plastic toys or banners. Remove bulk packaging before coming to site.

**Festivalgoers:** No plastic bottles, glitter or plastic bags.

## 2.2 Propose alternatives to banned items

What?	How?	Notes & tips
Cups	Introduce a reusable cup system.	See section 2.3
Bottles	Ban sales of drinks in single-use plastic bottles at all concessions and stands on site. Promote and sell reusable water bottles (stainless steel are best, followed by aluminium and then plastic) Provide plenty of water points. <a href="#">See Refill Devon webpage for promotional material.</a>	Cans are a good, recyclable alternative to plastic bottles. Consider producing your own branded reusable bottles so festivalgoers have something to take away from the event.
Plates & cutlery	Ensure that concessions use only reusable items – metal, china or glass. Items labelled as ‘compostable’ or ‘biodegradable’ generally require specialised composters and cannot currently be processed by Teignbridge District Council. In fact, they contaminate other waste streams.	
Food containers	Ban polystyrene and single-use plastic packaged foods.	
Straws, stirrers and single-use sauce sachets	Ensure that concessions have bottles of sauces on the counter rather than sachets, and that they provide wooden stirrers. Ban straws or ask concessions to offer paper not plastic straws.	
Badges and wristbands	Use reusable rather than event-specific items.	
Fancy dress and glitter	Suggest water-soluble face paints for decoration.	Even biodegradable glitter takes a long time to break down in the environment so <b>all glitter</b> is best avoided.
Signage, stickers & laminating	Use non-PVC banners. Replace corex or similar with products such as eco-foam board. Avoid laminated card or paper and polypockets in signage or in onsite offices.	
Merchandise	Use paper bags for merchandise packs.	



What?	How?	Notes & tips
Balloons and lanterns	Ban them.	All released balloons, including so-called 'biodegradable latex', return to Earth as ugly litter. Teignbridge has banned the release of helium balloons and lanterns on council land.

## 2.3 The reusable cup system – deposit return

Work with a reusable cup company who will provide enough cups to serve all drinks throughout your event. The company will remove dirty cups at the end of the event. Festivalgoers pay a deposit or a oneoff non-refundable charge for their first cup and exchange dirty cups for a clean one whenever they purchase a drink. The benefits are:

- reduced waste management costs
- revenue from non-refundable charge for cups
- no capital outlay for cups if using a company.

Promote reusable bottles and cups to festivalgoers, artists, staff, contractors and volunteers. Providing staff and artists with reusable bottles (and making sure they use them) sets a good example.

## 2.4 Recycle

Where plastic is unavoidable, make sure it's recyclable. Minimise the types of plastic onsite (for easier recycling). Provide an effective means of sorting plastic waste and recycle it.

Symbol	Polymer type	Examples	Recyclable?
	<b>PET</b> Polyethylene Terephthalate	Bottles: Fizzy drinks, cooking oil, squashes and water	In Teignbridge ✓
	<b>HDPE</b> High Density Polyethylene	Milk bottles Juice bottles Washing up liquid Bath & shower bottles	In Teignbridge ✓
	<b>PVC</b> Polyvinyl Chloride	Cable, pipes and, occasionally, bottles	✗
	<b>LDPE</b> Low Density Polyethylene	Carrier bags Bin liners Packaging films	Carrier bags only – at reuse and recycling centres, or at supermarkets
	<b>PP</b> Polypropylene	Margarine tubs, microwave meal trays	In Teignbridge ✓
	<b>PS</b> Polystyrene	Yoghurt pots	Polystyrene not generally recyclable, but hard plastic yoghurt pots OK.
	<b>OTHER</b> All other resins and multimaterials	Any other plastics	✗ NB. Black Plastic cannot be recycled

## 2.5 Devise your waste management plan as part of your early planning process

Identify the waste streams you will need (e.g. food and food packaging, cardboard, plastic, cans, paper, cigarette butts, general waste for landfill/incineration). Anticipate waste quantities and costs.

Develop the right 'bin-frastructure' for your event. Clearly labelled bins are a must! You might need different arrangements for different areas of the event (public areas, backstage, contractor areas).

Make it easy for people to do the right thing. The more you can get people to do for themselves, the better (saving you time and money). If possible, a team of 'bin-monitors' should be deployed to help get the waste to the right place.

## 2.6 Finally, communicate!

Getting the message out before, during and after the event is essential to your success. You need to communicate with:



**Your event team** – they need to understand the waste management plan and their own role.

**Contractors and stallholders** – they need to be made aware of what waste facilities are available to them and any restrictions on materials that they can bring, use or sell, and why.

**Festival/event goers** – explain why and how they can contribute. This needs to be advertised in the run up to and during the event (ask them to bring their own water bottles, reusable cups, cutlery, shopping bags etc.).

### 3. Links to suppliers

**GREENBOX EVENTS** Greenbox Events works with some of the UK's leading festivals, implementing initiatives to reduce waste, improve systems and maximise recycling.

Email: [info@greenboxevents.co.uk](mailto:info@greenboxevents.co.uk)

Website: [www.greenboxevents.co.uk](http://www.greenboxevents.co.uk)

**REFRESH WEST** Event bar specialist with extensive working knowledge of reusable cup schemes. They specialise in providing ethically sourced stock.

Email: [info@refreshwest.com](mailto:info@refreshwest.com)

Website: [www.refreshwest.com](http://www.refreshwest.com)

**MTD (UK & IRELAND)** Expertise in the area of water supply for festivals and concerts.

Email: [hans.verhoeven@mtd.net](mailto:hans.verhoeven@mtd.net)

Website: [www.mtd.net](http://www.mtd.net)

**FRANK WATER** is a charity that provides a water refill service for festivals and events

Email: [hello@frankwater.com](mailto:hello@frankwater.com)

Website: [www.frankwater.com](http://www.frankwater.com)

**GREEN GOBLET** Leading UK provider of branded and unbranded reusable cups ideal for festivals. They also offer a full service from start to finish, from a purchase and service option to washing, drying and storing the cups.

Email: [info@green-goblet.com](mailto:info@green-goblet.com)

Website: [www.green-goblet.com](http://www.green-goblet.com)

**GREENER FESTIVALS**, a not for profit organisation.

Website: <https://www.agreenerfestival.com/>

**ECOFFEE CUP** Supplier of reusable cups made from bamboo fibre, with lid and sleeve made of foodgrade silicone. The Ecoffee cup can be branded.

Email: [hello@ecoffeecup.eco](mailto:hello@ecoffeecup.eco)



Website:

[www.ecoffeecup.eco](http://www.ecoffeecup.eco)

**ENVIRO-CUP** Offers an innovative recycled stainless steel cup manufactured by UK company APS Metal Pressings Ltd., ideal for festivals and events. Cups can be branded.

Email: [enquiries@enviro-cup.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@enviro-cup.co.uk)

Website: [www.enviro-cup.co.uk](http://www.enviro-cup.co.uk)

## 4. Useful contacts

**Dawlish Against Plastic** Campaigns to reduce plastic. Provides advice to individuals and businesses locally.

Facebook: [DawlishAgainstPlastic](https://www.facebook.com/DawlishAgainstPlastic)

Email: [DawlishAgainstPlastic@gmail.com](mailto:DawlishAgainstPlastic@gmail.com)

**Recycle Devon** Provides general information about recycling and the Refill Devon tap water scheme.

Website: [www.recycledevon.org](http://www.recycledevon.org)

**Teignbridge District Council** - may be able to help with recycling bins for events.

Email: [recycling@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:recycling@teignbridge.gov.uk)

