

PLASTIC FREE COMMUNITIES

SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE

Freeing where we live from single-use

LEADING A COMMUNITY

ALL THE TOOLS YOU NEED TO GET STARTED



www.sas.org.uk





We're creating Plastic Free Communities to free where we live from single-use. Wherever you live, whether you're on shore or inland, urban or rural, high-tide or high-rise, we're uniting communities in the fight against avoidable plastics.

It's not about removing all plastic from our lives. It's about kicking our addiction to throwaway plastic and changing the system that produces it.

This guide is to help you as a Community Leader kick-start this journey in your local area. We've mapped out the basics for you to consider in each area, but feel free to add your own and let us know if you think there are ideas we could add.

Here at Surfers Against Sewage we know that you know your community best, and that's why we want to empower you to take action in a way that's effective and inclusive for your local area.

We've put together a range of resources and guidance to help you work on the five objectives, which help your community own what happens and guides what you do as you move forward together.

This guide starts with the basics.



GETTING STARTED

1

KNOW YOUR ROLE

2

GET SUPPORT

3

START WORK

4

SET UP A
STEERING GROUP

5

HAND OVER TO
YOUR COMMUNITY

FREE WHERE
YOU LIVE



STEP 1

KNOW YOUR ROLE

Before you start, be clear on your role: how much time can you dedicate and how much you are willing and able to take on? What are your skills and qualities? Where will you need help? Make sure you read and understand the Community Lead Agreement and how your role fits with SAS as a whole.

As a community leader you are an instigator and motivator. But you do not have to do everything on your own. Use our toolkits and guides to help you set boundaries and work out how to approach things in your community.

Your skills and capacity

- How will you fit the role into your life?
- What time do you have?
- What are your strengths?
- Where will you need help?



Your Relationship with SAS Reps

- Reps are an established SAS volunteer network
- They hold a separate role to Community Leads
- You support each other
- Reps are trained on issues
- They roll out SAS campaigns locally
- All SAS campaigns contribute to the Objectives
- You're stronger together



Refer to your Community Agreement

- Clarity of role
- Vision
- How to handle data
- SAS's commitment to you
- Your relationship with SAS and SAS Reps



Stick to the five objectives

- Council motion
- Business action
- Community allies
- Events and fundraising
- Steering group



YOUR ROLE What do you do?

Use The Support From SAS

- Toolkits
- Regular advice and guidance
- New information and support
- Links to national work
- Campaign visuals
- Monthly email shot
- Campaign focus

Empower your community

- Collaborate
- Be inclusive
- Community ownership and self determination
- Involve diverse groups of people
- Sustainable change
- Positive change

Use your dashboard

- Upload info and keep track of your local campaign
- Access useful resources and actions
- Check the map and contact other leads nearby



STEP 2

GET SUPPORT

Build a team around you and begin to get some momentum going. At first it may just be a group of like-minded people. Or you may be part of an existing group who want to create and lead a Plastic Free Community.

Have clear roles and communication, but don't put pressure on yourselves — we set no deadlines. Fit your plastic free journey into your lives, not the other way round!



GET SUPPORT

Don't do everything on your own

Build community support

- Build Community Allies
- See '**Start Work**'
- Build Your Steering Group
- Keep Objective 5 in Focus
- See '**Hand over to your community**'

Build a volunteer team

- Start small to get off the ground
- Plan how to tackle the objectives
- Be realistic with the time and people you have
- Delegate objectives to team mates
- Play to everyone's strengths
- Set up clear communications
- Have clear roles
- You can say 'No' — individually and collectively

Community Ownership
- See step 5

Link to expertise in the Community



Identify allies in your community

- Identify groups to work with
- Include existing work, don't double up
- You don't have to be an instant expert
- Which local organisations can you tap into?
- Are there local experts with credibility and knowledge?



STEP 3

START WORK

Use the Plastic Free Communities toolkits and decide how to work on the objectives. You may want to tackle one at a time... or delegate responsibility for individual objectives to team members and work on several simultaneously.

Look at what work is already happening in your community. Potentially there is lots going on that contributes to your community's status. Don't create extra work or duplicate action.

Remember to use the social media toolkit and top tips to spread the word.

THE 5 OBJECTIVES

1

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Local council passes a resolution supporting the journey to Plastic Free Community status.

2

BUSINESS CHAMPIONS — LOCAL BUSINESSES

Work with businesses in your community to help them reduce single-use plastics.

3

COMMUNITY ALLIES

Inspire the wider community to spread the plastic-free message.

4

COMMUNITY EVENTS & ACTIONS

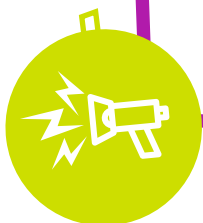
Mobilise your community. Hold a clean-up or mass unwrap or other events to raise awareness.

5

SET UP A STEERING GROUP

Form a group of local stakeholders and meet at least twice a year to take your community campaign forward.

- Devised by experts
- Designed for effective grassroots action
- Proven framework
- Keeps focus
- Helps you say 'no'
- Quickest route to success



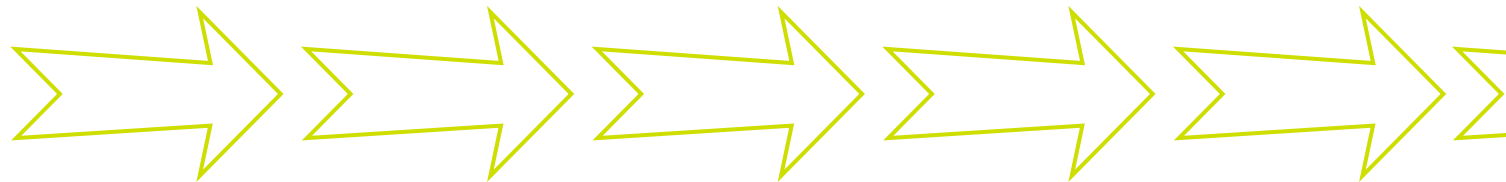
STEP 4

SET UP A STEERING GROUP

Keep it small (we recommend up to ten people) and pick people who can make things happen in your community.

Meet monthly or quarterly, delegate as much as it makes sense to, and make this the start of the process of handing over responsibility to the wider community.

Hold separate volunteer meetings to include and activate the community going forwards.



What it does

- Sets the course of action locally and strengthens its impact
- Brings in local expertise and knowledge
- Can fit action into existing policy and initiatives
- Spreads the workload
- Gives your campaign weight and presence

Who to involve

- Get key decision-makers and volunteers on board
- Include local councillors and business leaders eg. Chamber or BID
- Bring in local environment experts/groups
- Include other local Community Leads to join up work
- Include community leaders (e.g. faith leaders, school heads, community centres)
- Make sure you have plenty of people who can make things happen where you live!

Why?

- Creates shared responsibility and community ownership
- Leads to a more sustainable campaign locally
- Creates change within key community organisations
- Increases your sphere of influence
- Builds support at a higher level and amplifies your voice
- Can set plan of action based on local need and circumstances

STEP 5

HAND OVER TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Eventually you will want to apply for SAS Plastic Free Communities Approved status. The next step, once you've given yourselves a pat on the back, is to involve as much of your local community in what happens next as possible.

We'll send you another toolkit to help your onward journey. Then get your Steering Group to look ahead. How does your specific community need to build on the foundations you have set? Draw up a community plan which the group collectively takes responsibility for.

Use the five objectives as the foundations of long term action and sustainable change.

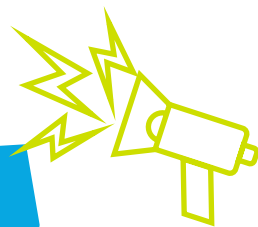
Your community decision makers are now in a position to take responsibility. Your community is activated and on board, be it through individual actions, volunteering or taking part in initiatives and events.

Your community has a plan of action in place for long term change.

What role do you want going forward?
Only you know the answer to this one!



COMMUNICATION



Good communication is the key to a really successful, thriving Plastic Free Community.

Success lies in a mixture of different channels and using the right one at the right time. Sometimes it can seem easier to use digital channels like email, but there's also no substitute for the good old-fashioned phone call or face-to-face chat!

Here we map out the keys to building a successful community that knows what's going on and why.



Press

- Get to know your local press and build a relationship
- Use the press to raise awareness and invite to events and launches
- Send updates to your press contacts
- Find someone who can write great press releases for you
- Use our Talking Points to help you
- This counts as a Community Allies action!



Images

- Take high quality, engaging images at your community events and share them with your community. Check out the Image Guide for top tips what works best.



Share with us

- Tap into the SAS national network
- Get inspiration from fellow communities
- Share your stories and work
- Share your experiences
- Help inform our campaign development
- Use #PlasticFreeCommunities hashtag on social

Get someone to manage it

- Use the skills in your community
- Use the Social Media Toolkit
- Offer work experience
- Local knowledge



COMMUNICATION

FACE TO FACE

SOCIAL MEDIA

Say hello

- Pop into businesses
- Visit groups
- Go to local events
- Build 'chat time' into your usual routine
- Ask volunteers to do the same
- Use your local contacts
- Build relationships
- Go for coffee!



Hold events

- Attend existing events
- Community talks
- Film nights
- Hold a community beach or river clean
- Hold a 'plastic free clinic'
- Hold meet & greets
- Make sure events are accessible, friendly and inclusive
- Use word of mouth

Meet regularly

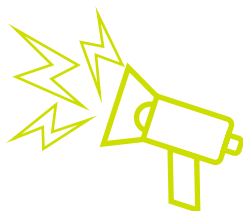
- Have quarterly steering group meetings
- Hold separate volunteer meetings
- Keep everyone updated
- Regular delegation
- Ongoing planning
- Leads to effectiveness

Share information

- Tap into local threads
- Inspire with what you find out
- Chat to your community
- Send positive messages
- Share aspirational and inspiring content
- Share tips and advice please

TOP TIPS

TALK



Word of mouth is one of the most effective tools at your fingertips. Tell people what you are doing when you're shopping, at work, on the school run, out socialising, in every walk of life.

Use our social media resources and toolkits to create an online presence. Create a buzz. Be positive, inclusive and confident.

Get people talking and thinking. Use our individual action plans to motivate the wider community and create community ownership.

BE SEEN

Go to local events. We supply materials you can take along. Get creative and use your group's presence to instigate more conversations. Use being part of it to get organisers on board as allies or local backers.

Hold your own Plastic Free Communities events. Keep things simple... and simply raise awareness.

Visit businesses and allies in person. Forge relationships over (plastic free) coffee and cake!

COLLABORATE

Work with your community and pull together existing action where you can. Don't give yourselves extra work! Use your collective voice.

Use existing and new contacts you have made to develop relationships with decision makers. Use your growing presence, positive actions and collaborative attitude to win them over. Show community appetite!

