

Discussing Lowestoft Town Council becoming the named lead for Plastic Free Communities

Initially set up in 2017 as Plastic Free Coastlines by Surfers Against Sewage, this campaign is open to all communities with its campaign and objectives being unique to each locations and based on the population size the community. There are currently 910 communities signed up and nearly 200 have received the award. It should be noted that this is not a Council award, it is a grassroots campaign that is led by the community and is therefore a community award held by the community. Whilst Councils can lead on the campaign, it belongs to the community.

Five objectives:

1. Work with your local Councillor – The Council would need to pass a motion in writing supporting the plastic free initiatives and declaring the aim to remove single use plastic from its premises. A Councillor would then be a representative on the steering group.
2. Set up steering group – This group would work towards the award and consist primarily of people and businesses from the community. It is advised to keep the number of Councillors low with 4-5 being the advised number, but this would be dependent on the population size of the community. Other groups could include local eco groups, climate action groups and national trust sites. The steering group would be expected to record the minutes of their meetings, with at least two meetings held a year.
3. Get businesses on board – Any existing Plastic Free Businesses can sign up themselves, with resources on Plastic Free Businesses showing the steps for accreditation. Each community would need a certain number of accredited businesses, for Lowestoft this would be 12 businesses, with a community outline target of 30. Business champions need to be local to Lowestoft, these can be small to medium organisation sizes. It is advised to stay away from franchises and large chains and if in doubt we can always check with Plastic Free Communities if the business is appropriate, which would be dependent on the business conducted by the organisations and their accreditations. Any business types can be involved, and they can be self-employed, from the service industry etc. not just high-street businesses. These can be reviewed individually by Plastic Free Communities.
4. Work with community allies – By having these allies sign the pledge to remove three single-use items from their premises/organisation and work with us as a Plastic Free Community. Community Allies can be signed up and uploaded to the Plastic Free dashboard. Allies can also offer their sites as venues for steering group meetings. It is recommended that schools sign up as an ally before they sign up to Plastic Free Schools which is separate a campaign. They do not have to be a Plastic Free School to be a community ally. A Plastic Free Champion can be an ally too. CICs are also accepted and if they pay tax then they can be a business champion. Allies help to spread the campaign and provide community support. Other groups to consider would be religious groups, community organisations, gardening and art clubs, scout groups etc.
5. Hold two events a year to get the award – These events must be free, open to public and organised/advertised as part of the Plastic Free Community. Ideas for events include town cleans or litter picks, mass unwraps (which Plastic Free Communities can provide training for), business breakfasts (where the allies supply the venue). Plastic Free Communities are looking to improve Event Pack they are looking to improve. Business breakfasts (ally supply

venue). Creative event ideas, when upload give a good description, photos. Plastic free picnic with a prize for the best picnic. Can be small-scale. Needs to be free and open to all.

No time limit to achieving the award. Once award achieved then provided a kit with PR templates, certificate to share with community, approve logo. Set up a social page or email address (generic).

Dashboard – where you update all activities, photos, steering group minutes. Can access podcasts, blogs etc. Monthly training webinar held so can join here, each webinar focusses on a different objective. Newsletter monthly with campaign updates, case studies, links to masterclass. Also have conferences and meet-ups.

Can work the big green weekend litter pick day in with PFC. Million mile clean litter pick.

Beginning documents and videos due to be sent.

Can build up businesses and allies before getting the three pledges signed.

Not official accreditation, it is a grassroots movement, the award is a recognition.