

STOKE ENVIRONMENT GROUP



ROUND ROBIN



WELCOME TO STOKE ST GREGORY'S BLOG ON ALL THINGS ENVIRONMENTAL

RECYCLING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

CLOSED-LOOP RECYCLING? The recycling of products so they never enter a landfill or cause pollution. Every product is used, recycled, and formed into a new product, without the addition of raw materials. Most effective for aluminium and glass. Making garden compost applies!

OPEN-LOOP RECYCLING? Recycled materials are added to raw materials to produce a new product. This recycling is not sustainable and doesn't preserve natural resources. Creating new products can cause high emissions. Recycling one aluminium can needs 5% of the energy required to produce a new can. Aluminium has been recycled so effectively that it is thought that 75% of the aluminium ever used is re-used today. Recycling glass uses 28% of the energy needed to make new glass.

WHAT IS WISH-CYCLING? Caused by confusion over what we can re-cycle. We throw it in the bin and wish it away!

GREEN WASHING? Being told something that is not true by companies trying to sell a product. A good example is below where we are falsely assured we can re-cycle most plastics responsibly.

WHAT PLASTICS CAN BE RE-CYCLED? Short answer - not many. Only about nine percent of plastics ever produced have been recycled, the rest is incinerated or sent to landfills. Black plastics are almost impossible to recycle. See below for more information.

The “**Big Plastic Count**” was launched by Greenpeace and Everyday Plastic in 2022. They found that the average household disposes of 66 pieces of plastic packaging every week – 83% of which is food and drink packaging. 100 billion pieces of plastic are thrown away by UK households every year.

GOOD BUGS TO THE RESCUE?

Scientists from the Swiss Federal Institute have discovered microbes that can digest plastics at 15C. This could lead to a breakthrough in microbial recycling. Sourced from alpine and arctic soils, these organisms could help to reduce the costs and environmental burden of recycling plastic. While plastics have only been in wide use since the 1950s, microbes can degrade polymers because they resemble some structures found in plant cells.
(The Guardian 10.5.23)

WHERE DOES TESCO'S PLASTIC GO? A must watch *Bloomberg* investigation. Go to *YouTube*, type in search bar 'Bloomberg Tesco' - video title '*Tracking Devices Reveal Where Recycling Really Goes*'. It shows the appalling work conditions in some countries and explains how the government gives incentives for re-cycling. PLEASE WATCH IT!

“MEN ARGUE. NATURE ACTS.” VOLTAIRE (1694-1778)

HOW WILD IS YOUR GARDEN?

Somerset Wildlife Trust is awarding plaques to people who allow wildflowers to bloom and cut out the use of weedkillers in their garden. This year, for the first time a street, village or an entire town can earn a community plaque if enough people start managing gardens and green spaces for wildlife. Bryony Slaymaker, of Somerset Wildlife Trust, (and member of SEG) said: "The aim is to give people recognition and to say thank you because gardens are so important and if we all do a little bit it will make a huge difference."(BBC News 16.5.23)

OUR BIG CHALLENGE: TO GET A PLAQUE FOR OUR VILLAGE?

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE AND NOT A DROP YOU CAN DRINK!

GOOD NEWS: On 26th April, South West Water was fined for environmental offences across Devon and Cornwall spanning four years. It is the largest ever fine imposed for environmental offences in this region. District Judge Matson said 'incidents of pollution will no longer be tolerated by these courts' and fined SWW £2,150,000, and £280,000 costs. Charges included were: harmful chemicals released resulting in thousands of fish poisoned in River Axe; raw sewage pumped into River Fowey for 12 hours plus; Watergate Bay discharged for 35 hours plus resulting in E. coli levels 2,000 times higher than the level classified as poor.

BAD NEWS: Water UK, the industry body who represent water companies across the UK, issued in May an apology for their poor performance on the sewage pollution issue. They promised to invest £10 billion into infrastructure by 2030. However, it emerged that this would be done at the expense of us bill payers. Incremental increases are to be expected in the coming years in addition to the record 7.5% rise that was applied this April. English water companies will pay £14.7 billion in dividends by 2030.

'Why should we have to pay twice for a service that hasn't been delivered once?' says clean water campaigner Ed Acteson.

CRICKEY MATE!!

Recently, the editor had the opportunity to go to Australia and Thailand.

In Queensland I visited Steve Irwin's Australia's Zoo. Most of us will remember the lovable and slightly crazy Crocodile Hunter leaping away from snapping crocodile jaws on our TV. His wife Terri and their family continue to operate Australia Zoo and expand the many environmental projects started by this dynamic couple. Their conservation, research, rescue and education is remarkable. They conserve over 450,000 acres of vital habitat across Queensland. Their Wildlife Warrior schemes include saving the Sumatra Tiger and Whale Sharks among many others. In South Africa's Kruger National Park women are army trained to become rangers and educators.

On a Sydney harbour cruise I heard of projects to clean the waters. Each year rubbish the equivalent of 44,000 wheelie bins is collected by traps. Now, cameras, sensors and AI are used to identify and count floating plastic to improve performance. These bins can spill out when overfilled. This new technology can tell a chip packet from a soft drink bottle, identify litter hot spots, litter movement and education.

In Bangkok, as I sat by the River Chao Phraya, watching motor boats continuously chugging up and down belching out smoke and seeing dead fish in the green murky water, I decided I would not be eating any fish on the menu. Sadly the economics and politics of the two countries are worlds apart. And who am I to criticise when our rivers shamefully flow with filth?

SEG NEWS

- * What an amazing event this was! Our 3rd event and it gets better every time. There was a tremendous amount of work involved and it paid off, and the weather blessed us too! Thanks to all who came to our fair, please come back next year and spread the word. Thanks to all the people who were involved to make this so successful.
- * Please use brilliant new website to find out about more events, projects, and information: <https://www.envirostoke.org>
- * Have you seen the lovely restoration of the bench near Church Close? Well done Trevor Williams!
- * We are trailing a drop-off point for BLISTER PACKS - those pesky medicine packages that are hard to re-cycle. We will put a box in the telephone box by the end of June. They will be taken into Superdrug who recycles them responsibly.

JOIN US AND TURN THE WORLD AROUND! Contact: envirostoke@yahoo.com

If you have any queries or ideas about this publication please contact me: housego20@yahoo.com uk. The research and content of the Round Robin is done to the best of our abilities. Let us know if there has been a big blunder, for the little ones please forgive us.