

Introduction to Plastic Action Champion Volunteers

‘Positive action to reduce environmental harm starts at home and takes you on a journey that is sometimes challenging and sometimes rewarding but always interesting’.



This document is an introduction to our volunteer scheme Plastic Action Champions. To help Champions in their role, we provide a full handbook which in turn is a reference guide for people in Suffolk who are thinking about organising or go to events in their community to help others take action to reduce unnecessary uses of plastic, recycle effectively and engage others in keeping their community clean. The full hand book is provided on request to volunteers who register as a Plastic Action Champion to give more detail in relevant topics. At the end of this document you can see a list of what is contained in the full handbook.

The vision of the Greenprint Forum includes a goal of a “Pollution free environment”, whereby we want to see, by 2030, significant progress towards an East Suffolk in which the use of plastics is tightly controlled and everyone takes responsibility to reduce the impact of their activities on the environment. The Greenprint Forum initiated this project in 2018 as part of its #Year of Plastic Action in order to take action to contribute towards this goal.

If after reading the rest of this document you still have any questions about the programme please email greenissues@eastsuffolk.gov.uk



The main question: WHY?

We are doing this because:

- It is clear that when plastic escapes into the natural environment there is the potential for harm to wildlife and eventually to us.
- Tackling litter is costly and the less money that needs to be spent on that the more there could be for other activities.
- Well sorted materials can have a higher value which can bring in income to cover the costs of tackling those materials that have no economic value currently and therefore represent a cost.
- People like you have approached us and asked for help so that they can help their community and stop environmental pollution and respond to national consultations in an informed way and we recognise that pooled knowledge helps us all.



What do we want to achieve?



Ultimately: A pollution free natural environment but for now our goals are:

1. Reduction in litter = improved tourism, pride of place, lower flood risk and enhanced wildlife value and lower risk of plastics harming wildlife and ultimately us through the food chain, lost income and/or lost natural value.
2. Improved value of recyclate with less going into the wrong bins and being contaminated with liquids, foods, or nasty items = more money to spend on other services e.g. taking people out of fuel poverty.
3. Reduction in plastic waste generally = less need to empty street bins as regularly and less waste to handle = more money to spend on other services e.g. taking people out of fuel poverty and lower risks of plastic entering marine environment. Reduced wastage of the time, money and natural resources put into making and selling products.

What is a Plastic Action Champion Volunteer?

A plastic action champion is a volunteer worker who:

- ✓ wants to stop plastic misuse, who wants to stop it getting into nature and causing harm and who does not like to see waste.
- ✓ is already taking or is willing to take action in their own life.
- ✓ likes other people enough to engage others in a friendly positive way and knows or is willing to learn when to walk away and let enforcement action by someone else take the place of engagement without getting angry or disheartened.
- ✓ is willing to try to make action on waste fun whilst recognising the serious need to act.

What do we want from you?

In return for the resources and support we offer we ask that you attempt to volunteer as a plastic action champion in your local community for at least 20 hours a year and that you attend relevant briefing/knowledge share opportunities or read the notes from them if you can't get there, and then submit a summary once a year of the activities you've undertaken. How you use those 20 hours is up to you.

The emphasis is on flexibility!

What can you expect from us?

We will provide the comprehensive handbook, offer a briefing in person or online and a point of contact and support at East Suffolk Council.

What might the role involve?

- 1) Taking part in knowledge share opportunities, which will be delivered online, in person or in the form of visits coordinated and delivered by the Environmental Sustainability Officer and the network Coordinator.
- 2) Organising and running as many community litter picks as you want during the year – if you want to record and submit reports great if not no pressure.
- 3) Looking at what local groups are in your area and if appropriate offering to give a presentation and/or attend an event and/or help organise a plastic action event.

4) Talking to local shops and cafes when you use them and complimenting them on changes made and gently encouraging further action. If they report blockages, communicating these back to your contact at the council to see if solutions can be found.

5) Writing or sharing articles for the Greenprint Forum newsletter about plastic action that people can take.

6) Supporting one or two events outside of your area if you are free and if the coordinator invites you to – this could be by taking a stall, helping set up and meet and greet people and/or by taking minutes.

7) To use any role that you have as an opportunity to engage others in action and to recruit further Plastic Action Champions.

8) Submitting a summary once a year of all of the plastic action activities you have undertaken.

Remember – the emphasis is on flexibility; how you use the Handbook and what forms of action you choose to take are up to you; the examples listed above are just suggestions and you may choose to do other things instead that still help towards our goals.

Join us!

If all this sounds like something for you, we would welcome you as a Plastic Action Champion. The easiest way to join is by registering online via [https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Plastic action champions and volunteering](https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Plastic%20action%20champions%20and%20volunteering)

(Or alternatively email greenissues@eastsuffolk.gov.uk)

Other things you need to know

Do we pay expenses?

Public transport costs will be covered on presenting a receipt and when agreed in advance with the Environmental Sustainability Officer. Car parking fees and mileage at the HMRC rate will also be possible to claim when agreed in advance with the Environmental Sustainability Officer.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

Volunteers will not be required to have a DBS check before undertaking the role. You will not be asked to undertake any activities unsupervised with children or vulnerable people and you are asked not to put yourself in that position when organising your own volunteering.

Data Protection

The information you will supply when registering is being collected for the purposes of administering Plastic Action Champions. By completing the membership form, you consent to East Suffolk Council, and the contractor coordinating the network on their behalf, using your information in this way. If you do not provide your consent, we will not be able to register you as a Plastic Action Champion.

Your information will not be used for any other purpose unless we obtain your consent. Your information will not be shared with any other third parties unless we first obtain your consent (an example might to enable you to network with another Plastic Action Champion in your local area).

Your information will be retained until the project no longer runs. You can request that your information is deleted at any time.

Data will be processed and held securely and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 (and any updates).

Further information about data protection can be found on the East Suffolk Council Website <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/yourcouncil/access-to-information/>

Contents of Plastic Action Champion Handbook

No.	Title	Additional explanatory notes
1.	Contents, the approach and checklist to see where you think you fit	
2.	Why we are doing this, what we hope to achieve, who has been involved	
3a.	What we want you to do	
3b.	Plastic Action Champion Activity Diary	
4.	Champion sign up form	
5.	Who does what in waste and litter in Suffolk	
6.	The how to guides	
6a.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running a litter pick 	
6b.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter pick sign in sheet 	
6c.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter pick risk assessment 	
6d.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street cleanliness reference photos 	A visual representation of cleanliness reference photo's. This includes grades that can be used in assessments of street cleanliness.
6e.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter pick template report 	This page gives an example of how to write a report on a litter pick to publicise your work.
6f..	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Composting well 	This section covers the role of home composting in cutting down on plastic packaging.
6g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free the Trees 	Free the Trees is an initiative by the National Landscapes to address the negative impacts of tree guards remaining in the environment beyond their useful life.
6h.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running a Swap & Mend 	
6i.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See it, Report it 	This page gives advice on how to report an incident, fly tipping and tells you what information you will need to supply in order for the mess to be cleared and charges to be made.

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6j.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycling Buddies 	This is aimed at those who wish to help other members of the community for whom travelling to a recycling centre is not easy.
7.	The Suffolk A – Z of reduction, recycling and waste disposal	
8.	Common questions/issues	As a plastic action champion you will be asked many questions regarding plastic. This section shows what questions we usually get and example answers that can be used when asked.
9.	Where you can find useful and reliable National and Global information	
10.	Connecting projects to be aware of	
11a.	How to engage businesses	This section includes information about the plastics sector in East Anglia.
11b.	How to promote Refill to local businesses	Refill is a national initiative to promote availability of free drinking water at business premises.
11c.	Directory of product refill vendors in Suffolk	This section covers other types of product refill, e.g. dry goods and cleaning products.
12.	How to engage your community	
13.	How to deal with the Media	If you like to share your activities you may choose to engage with the media.
14.	Suggested considerations for responding to Government consultations on related issues	Aspirational – yet to be produced
15a.	Guide for having a low impact Christmas	
15b.	Alternatives to sky lanterns and balloons	
15c.	Low impact event/occasions guides e.g. Halloween, Easter, Bonfire Night, new Year, Harvest Festival, bereavement, birthday, wedding, music festival	Aspirational – yet to be produced

As of March 2024, the sections highlighted in yellow are not yet available, their inclusion is aspirational and subject to availability of time to produce them, and there is an opportunity for an enthusiastic volunteer to contribute to the development of these sections.

This introductory document was produced by Jamie Bretton, Apprentice for Climate and Environmental Sustainability, East Suffolk Council, March 2024