



Dear Sedbergh Business,

You may have heard that Sedbergh now has its very own Zero Waste group. The aim of **Zero Waste Sedbergh** is to facilitate ways in which residents and businesses in Sedbergh can reduce their contribution to landfill, and specifically their use of single-use plastics. ZWS provides information via our website and social media, and by hosting events throughout the year.

Why?

In recent months, media coverage in the UK has been shining a spotlight on the devastating effect that single-use plastic is having on wildlife and the environment. To a lot of people the enormity of the problem can feel both shocking and overwhelming. But can a single action like refusing a plastic straw in your drink *really* do much good when there is a plastic island the size of Europe floating in the Pacific Ocean? Well yes it can, if that same action is repeated up and down the country and throughout the world. How much greater then will that effect be if it is taken, not only by individuals, but by businesses?

I am hoping Sedbergh can become a town that leads the way in tackling the environmental issues of the day. You may have already noticed the shift in consumer behaviour as shoppers seek out greener alternatives to products and services and actively look to spend their pound with the conscientious business.

I am writing to you today to ask if you might **consider if there are measures you and your business could implement in order to help Sedbergh work towards becoming a Zero Waste and Plastic-Free town.**

It may well be that you are already making changes, in which case thank you! ZWS would love to help make consumers aware that your business is supporting the Zero Waste cause, so please do let me know what those measures are. For those of you not sure where to start...

Some Ideas

Refill Sedbergh

Thank you to those businesses that have already agreed to take part.

This is a scheme that offers free water bottle refills to passers by, thereby reducing the number of single use plastic bottles being discarded. It costs you nothing, encourages footfall through your door, and shows you to be a friendly, approachable, conscientious establishment. You will be listed on the Refill app. and will receive a sticker to display in the window of your premises. All that is needed is a cold water tap that is easily and hygienically accessible, and a willingness to oblige when asked to use it by a member of the public.

Plastic Straws

Even McDonalds are ditching plastic straws. Why not join them by phasing out the plastic and replacing them with paper alternatives, available from most suppliers.

Take-Out Packaging

Could you look at replacing plastic or polystyrene packaging for take-out food, with compostable (or at the very least recyclable) packaging instead? Are you willing to use a customer's own reusable container? If so, why not advertise that fact on social media and with shop signage?

Disposable Cups

Some cafes and shops that sell take out drinks have started to offer discounts to customers who bring their own reusable cups. Some even stock a supply of reusable cups to purchase. This encourages customer loyalty, and as a result should have a positive effect on your takings.

Stockists

If your supplier tends to use a lot of plastic and unnecessary packaging in their deliveries, it may well be worth asking them:

- Could they please use minimal packaging for your deliveries?
- Have they any plans to reassess their packaging in the future?

Sometimes all it takes is for one or two good clients to ask the question, then before you know it, it is on the agenda of a staff meeting and has been actioned by the directors.

Plastic Bags

Consumers are used to the charge for carrier bags by now, but unfortunately it is still not enough of an incentive for them to remember their reusable bags on every trip. Why not supply a paper bag for purchases as standard? You can always keep a few plastic bags back for when something stronger is required. Some retail shops are now also stocking reusable bags for purchase next to the till.

Stock

Are there alternatives to the stock that incorporates a lot of single-use plastic in its packaging? Is yours a shop that could start to stock items that promote a Zero-Waste lifestyle (reusable bags, cups, straws, plastic free toiletries)?

Premises

Is there anything you could look at on your premises? Do you have space for a composter for kitchen waste? Do you make full use of your recycling bins?

Erm...

Of course, not all these suggestions will be relevant to your particular business, perhaps none of them! But I hope they have given you a few helpful hints. If you are still unsure how your business can make a difference, please do get in touch and I will be happy to chat.

Where Do I Sign?

All that is needed now is a simple "yes, count me in" message via email or social media (addresses at the bottom of the page). Then just keep me informed by email, phone, or by tagging ZWS in posts as you make changes to your business. I do hope that the majority of Sedbergh businesses will feel able to contribute in some way, in order to work towards becoming Zero Waste and Plastic Free. Thanks for reading.

Best wishes,

Suzie Pye

Zero Waste Sedbergh

Website: zerowastesedbergh.com
Email: zerowastesedbergh@gmail.com
Social Media: facebook.com/zerowastesedbergh twitter.com/SedberghZero
Phone: 0783 3534 710