

NewsFeature



**Caroline Townsend,
from Abingdon
Carbon Cutters,
writes on behalf
of the Friends
of Abingdon**

CIVIC PRIDE

Cutting scourge of plastic pollution in Abingdon town

PLASTIC waste is a hot topic at the moment, polluting our seas and killing wildlife, so how does it affect citizens of Abingdon?

A walk through our parks or a drive on the A34 reveals the persistence of plastic litter.

Unless picked up, those plastic bottles will hang around for 450 years.

We all know plastic is a useful material; it is resistant to water and chemicals, an electrical and thermal insulator, and durable.

But it is made from oil, which is in limited supply, so it makes sense to treat plastics as a valuable resource not to be used casually.

As a good recycler, your green bin plastic is sent to London, sorted and sold around the world to make new plastic products.

Compared to making these products fresh from oil, a fraction of the energy is needed.

Non-recyclable, grey-bin plastics are burned for useful household energy at the Ardley Incinerator, near Bicester.

Only five per cent of Oxfordshire's waste now ends up in landfill.

The bad news is that, like landfill, incineration makes greenhouse gases.

It also destroys plastic for good. It is much better to cut waste in the first place.

Refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle are the four Rs of plastic waste prevention.

Abingdon Carbon Cutters have launched a campaign called Abingdon Cuts Plastic to advise residents how to follow the code.

As part of this campaign, Carbon Cutters ran a temporary pop-up advice shop in Bury Street which attracted lots of interest.

Some great tips for reducing our use of single-use plastics were given:

- Carry a refillable water bottle. Many local businesses will refill your bottle for free, thanks to the Refill Abingdon scheme launched by Carbon Cutters. Look out for window stickers or download the Refill app

- Take a refillable coffee cup to local coffee shops. Businesses will fill your own cup with hot and cold drinks to take away. Some cafes, including Costa Coffee, will even give you money off.

- Buy reusable vegetable bags. There are many varieties available on the internet and local supermarkets are happy for you to bag up loose fruit and veg in them.

- Buy household liquids from a SESI refill station. Added Ingredients on Stert Street will fill containers you supply with laundry and washing-up liquids, at a low price.

- Think of plastics you can refuse, such as straws, condiment sachets (ask for bottles), drinks stirrers and small milk pots

Abingdon Town Council takes the plastics problem seriously.

On May 9, the Mayor of Abingdon, Jan Morter, gave an award to Carbon Cutter's Anne Smart, celebrating her group's work for the town with Abingdon Cuts Plastic.

Well done, Anne and the plastics group!

For more information, visit abingdoncarboncutters.org.uk