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#### **Single Use Plastics Policy**

1. **Background**

Plastic waste is one of the greatest environmental challenges facing the world today. The UK government estimates that there are currently more than 150m tonnes of plastic in the world’s oceans, and that some 100,000 sea mammals and one million birds die from eating or becoming tangled in plastic waste each year.

Surfers Against Sewage first created the ‘Wasteland’ campaign to create plastic free coastlines. Wasteland being a metaphor for the largest concentration of plastic in the ocean. Thanks to the success of likeminded people wanting to rid the oceans of plastic litter, they created the Plastic Free Communities campaign to take into account all of the inland communities that wanted to act; locally this saw the creation of the group Plastic Free Seaford.

There are five objectives that Surfers Against Sewage qualify as the criteria in getting towns to successfully become plastic free.

At its meeting on 29 March 2018, the Town Council voted to support the Plastic Free Seaford initiative and commit Seaford to a campaign to gain plastic free status. In December 2019 it was announced that Seaford had been awarded the aspirational plastic free status. Businesses and the town can now be awarded approved business stickers and certificates when the whole community is approved.

In 2021, the Town Council installed four water refill stations in the town to further encourage the use of reusable drinks bottles and reduce reliance on single use plastic bottles.

**What are single-use plastics?**

Single-use plastics can include any disposable plastic item which is designed to be used only once e.g. plastic bags, disposable utensils, beverage containers, coffee capsules, wet wipes, razor blades, plastic drinks bottles, food wrappers, bottle tops, straws, stirrers and plastic lids.

1. **Policy Statement**

Seaford Town Council is committed to tackling the plastic waste problem by taking responsibility for its own impact on the environment and society, both within the local area and across the globe. The Town Council will work towards minimising use of single-use plastics across its own facilities and services and by all staff and pro-actively work with partners to find positive solutions for reducing unnecessary waste plastics across the town.

To support Seaford maintaining its status as a single-use plastics free town, the Town Council commits to:

1. Work with staff to ensure that single-use plastics are eliminated across its offices.
2. Support the community in its efforts to make their buildings plastic-free zones.
3. Through Plastic Free Seaford and other local groups and initiatives, communicate the importance of protecting Seaford’s urban, rural and marine environments, and support and promote positive initiatives, town campaigns and actions for reducing plastic waste.
4. Work with its event organisers to eliminate single-use plastics across all town events held on Town Council land and share guidance for this more widely (see section 3 below).
5. Support communities and litter-pick initiatives to ensure our parks, beaches and open spaces are free from plastic litter.
6. Use government legislation that regulates against the use of single-use plastics to support its efforts where the Town Council can.
7. Require all its suppliers, tenants and concession holders to minimise the use of single-use plastics in their service provision and find sustainable alternatives (where appropriate).
8. Where the use of plastics is unavoidable, the Town Council will encourage the use of recycled plastics, where practicable, and support manufacturers that make products from locally sourced waste plastics.
9. Work with partners in joint ventures and innovative projects for reducing single-use plastic waste.
10. Share best practice and information about plastic free initiatives, to residents, businesses, visitors and beyond through the Town Council’s social media and communication channels.

The Town Council will embed these commitments into its strategic objectives, policies and plans.

1. **Plastic Free Events Charter**

Those organising events on Town Council land or taking part in Town Council events, are informed that Seaford is a plastic free town and therefore not to:

1. use plastic for their takeaways

This will be expanded with the adoption of this policy to work towards also including not to:

1. use plastic bags
2. use balloons both plastic and helium, or
3. use plastic cutlery.

In addition to the above, they are also asked to:

1. reduce the amount of plastic bottled drinks sold, and
2. encourage reusable cups for drinks (hot drinks and pint glasses) during 2021 with a view to becoming compliant by 2022.

Officers carry out unannounced spot checks to assess adherence to the above measures. Where it is found that the plastic free events charter is not being adhered to, officers will assess what steps can be taken to address this/prevent recurrence.

Actively reminding events organisers/partners of these aims for events within the town sends a strong message about the kind of town Seaford is aspiring to be and the kind of environment the town wants to hold.

1. **Plastic Free Action Plan for 2021 – 2022**

So as to ensure the implementation of the commitments within this policy the Town Council is setting objectives for May 2021 to October 2022 to evidence its continued commitment to reducing single-use plastics within the town.

1. Reviewing all application forms and contracts to ensure a clause regarding identifying alternatives to single-use plastics, where possible.
2. Regular refresher awareness sessions/communications with staff and councillors to be carried out surrounding single-use plastics; what is not allowed, what is encouraged to use etc.
3. Working in partnership with Lewes District Council, as the local tourism body, to identify ways in which to encourage green tourism. To include at the next review of the Seaford Beach Guide ensuring relevant mention of keeping the beach plastic free i.e. plastic free picnics, no plastic bags etc.
4. Continued working with Plastic Free Seaford and other local groups and initiatives to promote its work, including;
	1. Committing to taking part, and encouraging the whole town to take part, in appropriate events during Plastic Free July 2021 and 2022 (where possible).
	2. Sharing a clear statement about discouraging disposable masks (save for where specifically required) and instead using reusable masks.
	3. Limiting the use of takeaway cups and containers and steps identified to reduce reliance on such plastics/takeaway materials.
5. Creating a plastic free Seaford page on the Town Council’s website setting out the aspects of the policy and what the Town Council is trying to achieve but also highlighting the groups and initiatives in Seaford combatting single-use plastics and sources for more information.

Progress against the above actions will be reviewed by Full Council annually.

Adopted: May 2021

Review: October 2022