

# COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

## Pledge to reduce single use plastics

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### 1. Background

At a recent County Durham Association of Local Councils' Smaller Councils Forum, member councils agreed in principle that they would like to sign up to join the County Durham and other organisations in the County Durham Single Use Plastics Pledge.

Single-use plastics are used only once before they are thrown away or recycled. These items are things like plastic bags, straws, coffee stirrers, water bottles and most food packaging. It is thought that more than five trillion pieces of plastic are in the world's oceans and it can take years for it to break down. Most of it isn't biodegradable, it doesn't rot like paper or food and so it can hang around in the environment for hundreds of years.

There are many things individuals can choose to do to reduce single-use plastics. These can include things such as:

- carry a shopping bag instead of buying a plastic bag
- carry a reusable bottle - download Refill app to find out where you can refill your bottle
- take a reusable coffee cup - some cafés and shops even offer a small discount if you use your own cup
- say no to plastic straws
- avoid excessive food packaging
- say no to disposable cutlery
- pack your lunch in reusable containers
- get your milk delivered - you can find your nearest delivery on Find Me A Milkman
- avoid using microbeads which are mainly found in exfoliating face and body scrubs, shower gels, toothpastes etc

Parish councils can help reduce the use of single-use plastics

- by signing up to the pledge and doing as little or as much as they can
- making their local community groups and businesses aware that they have signed up to the pledge and encourage others to do so
- raising their community's awareness of this through their noticeboards, websites and newsletter
- carry out an internal audit and seek alternatives to single-use plastics where possible
- work with their suppliers to reduce single-use plastics.

### 2. Signing the pledge

There is a simple electronic sign-up form on which to state what the Parish Council will be doing to reduce single-use plastics.

### Recommendation

To consider whether the Parish Council should sign up to the County Durham Single Use Plastics Pledge.