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Plastic Free Steyning, Bramber and Beeding

Notes of meeting with Steyning Parish Council, 18 September 2019

Present: John Fullbrook (Clerk), Hazel Roxby (Assistant Clerk), Geoff Barnard & Stephen Bullen (Greening Steyning/Plastic Campaign)

Background

The purpose of the meeting was to begin a concrete discussion on how the Parish Council could cut its own consumption of plastics, especially single use plastics. It followed on from a meeting with the Premises Committee on September 3rd, where SPC members gave their support for the campaign, and an earlier presentation to full Council in December 2018.

Understanding the current situation

Hazel and John explained that:

- SPC is not a big plastics users because, by the nature of its operations, it doesn't give anything to its customers, other than offering meeting space.
- The disposable coffee cups and stirrers it provides are all recyclable. In the kitchen it offers china crockery and utensils for customers to use and wash up.
- Consumption of single use plastic is mainly a function of what customers choose to bring in themselves, which SPC has limited control over.
- Apart from grass cutting, hedge trimming, cleaning of public toilets, and litter bin emptying, SPC's operations are entirely centred on the Steyning Centre.

We discussed the wider question of waste collection at the Centre, and learned that:

- At present there are no onsite facilities for recycling. All waste goes into two trade waste bins, kept in a fenced compound by the PreSchool playground. These are picked up weekly. This means that all paper, plastic, glass and green waste goes in the same bin. This is obviously not ideal!
- The reason is primarily a cost one. It would cost more to have separate recycling bins. There's also a space issue of where they would go.
- SPC doesn't want to encourage users to leave their waste or recycling at the Centre, as that only adds to the problem of disposal.
- Hazel estimated that 90% of current office waste is paper, and that the volume of paper being consumed (mostly for meeting minutes and notes) has been going up recently, not down, despite the potential for moving to a 'paper free' world.
- There will be some plastic waste, mostly empty drinks and cleaning product bottles.
- The PreSchool group is probably one of the largest regular producer of waste. They bag it up themselves and it goes in the main bins.
- Kitchen users are reminded with signs to take away their own empty bottles and other waste, and most regular users are quite good at this. Some one-off events, however, such as funeral wakes, tend to generate quite a bit of waste.
- Staff take some recycling home to recycle in their own household recycling bins.

We discussed the situation with litter bins:

- There are two systems in place. SPC is responsible for bins on the MPF and the High Street, and employs a contractor to do this. The rubbish ends up in a single bin in the MPF car park which HDC empties.
- There are a number of HDC managed bins in car parks that they pay a separate contractor to empty.
- We were not sure where either waste streams end up, but presume it goes to the Horsham MBT plant (or another similar facility) for sorting, rather than going straight to landfill.
- HDC has separate recycling and waste rubbish bins in Storrington High Street, so this raises the question of whether that might be a possibility in Steyning.
- It's recognised that getting the public to neatly segregate their rubbish when they are out in a public space is very difficult. Unless waste streams are kept 'clean' they can't easily be recycled. It would be interesting to hear what HDC says on this.

Water Fountain idea

The idea has been raised of putting together a joint bid to the Wilson Memorial Trust for a number of public water fountains in Steyning, Bramber and Beeding. This would be a way of encouraging refilling of water bottles, and also supported on general health grounds. All three councils have shown interest in principle. We discussed the practical aspects of this. The main observations were that:

- Water fountains have disappeared in public places over the last 20 years, but may be making a comeback given the new awareness about plastic bottles and the trend to refillable ones.
- Access to a water supply will be a major factor in choosing suitable locations. In Steyning, the obvious places where a water source is available nearby are:
 - on Cuthman Field (where the Festival supply has been installed)
 - near the MPF changing rooms
 - near the Clock Tower public toilets (which are leased from HDC, but managed by SDC)
 - near the Rublees allotments (where standpipes are installed)
- Good design will be crucial, so fountains are robust, useable, easily cleaned, safe from frost damage, etc.
- Who pays for the water? Presumably the Parish Council. This should not be a large bill assuming there are no leaks or abuse.
- Who maintains and cleans them (including ensuring there are no risks of legionella)? This would presumably be the Parish Councils' job. In Steyning this could potentially be added to their cleaning firm's contract.
- We need to learn more about the practicalities and costs of operating water fountains before getting into further discussions on location and funding.

Areas for further investigation/action

The following action areas were identified:

Area	Action	Who to take the lead
Encourage Steyning Centre customers to adopt good practice	There is scope for adding a specific clause in the booking terms and conditions, and marketing material, saying that the Centre urges users to adopt good practice. Suitable text would be needed but this might include: • Avoiding single use plastics wherever possible (disposable food containers, clingfilm, etc.) • Bringing in drinks in glass containers rather than plastic. • Minimising use of disposable cups, plates and cutlery – using proper crockery, glasses and cutlery instead and washing them up • Taking away all litter and recyclables for disposal at home	Hazel/John to consider
Encourage SPC contractors to adopt good practice	Simon Birnstingl, Chair of Upper Beeding Parish Council, is looking into whether it could usefully include some clauses in their standard contracting terms to make contractors aware of the plastics issue and adopt good practice.	Geoff to check on progress and pass on any ideas.
Buying cleaning products in refillable containers	Investigate whether there are suppliers who can provide washing up liquid, floor cleaning fluid, bleach and other cleaning products in refillable containers, at an economic price.	Refer to Business sub-group of PFS campaign
Installing water fountains	Look into modern designs for water fountains and see how others are deploying and maintaining them. What can we learn about costs and practicalities? Once we have this information, fix a meeting with Beeding and Bramber PC's to compare notes and consider a joint bid.	Stephen Geoff
Investigate options for beginning recycling at the Steyning Centre	Speak to HDC about options for swapping one of the general waste bins for two large wheelie bins, one for mixed recycling, the other green waste. Maybe this could be introduced on a trial basis.	John
Consider segregated public recycling bins	Check with John McArthur, Head of Waste & Recycling at HDC (john.mcarthur@horsham.gov.uk) what their experience is with segregated waste bins, and see whether they might be an option for Steyning.	Stephen

Next steps with the Council

- John will report to the Amenities Committee meeting in September that this meeting has taken place and some ideas identified for further investigation.
- Greening Steyning will report back to full Council on 21 October, spelling out the areas for investigation we identified and reporting back on progress.
- At that meeting, Greening Steyning will explain what it is looking for from the Council in order for Steyning to achieve 'Plastic Free' status with the Surfers Against Sewage campaign. The key elements are that SPC:
 - Confirms it is backing the campaign
 - Appoints a Councillor to be on the Plastic Campaign steering group (Georgia Saunders and Liz Trundle have already agreed to share this role)
 - Pledges to act by example and act to remove single use plastic from it's premises (the measures identified in this note will cover this)
- Assuming the Council agrees, a motion to this effect might be put to the November SPC meeting.

Geoff Barnard, 19 September 2019