

PLASTIC FREE STONEHAVEN

Request for Support – Proposed Motion

However, although it is not a requirement, I would welcome the SDCC continuing to express its support as over time community councillors change and it would be good if the current community councillors had the opportunity to consider the issue. I had suggested the wording in the email below to Steve, but given the passage of time, I would update that as follows –

Stonehaven and District Community Council continues to support the projects and initiatives of the Plastic Free Stonehaven campaign including the monthly beach cleans, the Plastic Free Business Champions work and other occasional events aimed at raising awareness of the negative impact of single use plastic, as well as other avoidable single use items, on the environment and encouraging reuse options instead.

The SDCC will indicate this support through social media posts including –

- Avoiding the use of single use plastic at its meetings and events whenever possible
- Sharing information about the monthly beach cleans
- Highlighting the support from the local Plastic Free Business champions and those working towards the status
- Sharing information on social media about other Plastic Free Stonehaven events.
- Identifying a representative of Stonehaven and District Community Council to participate in the Stonehaven Plastic Free Community Steering Group which sits within the Stonehaven Town Centre Improvement Group.

In terms of background information, I was hoping I could attach the email I provided in February 2024 which explained the background to the campaign. The server will not let me do that as it is more than a year old, so I have cut and pasted it into a Word Document and added updates in red to give you the current picture. To be clear, we met all the objectives for the campaign detailed in that email and we now have Plastic Free Stonehaven status. However, the work continues!

I hope the SDCC will be happy to continue expressing its support for our efforts.

Kind regards
Sarah

EMAIL TO DAVID LAWMAN AND CC'D TO STEVE MCQUEEN ON 14TH FEBRUARY 2024 PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLASTIC FREE STONEHAVEN CAMPAIGN

2025 Updates in RED TEXT

Dear David,

As promised, please find below some background information regarding Plastic Free Communities and the accreditation process to achieve this status which is awarded by Surfers Against Sewage (SAS). My apologies that this is such a long email.

SAS is a UK wide charity which started some 30 years ago amongst the surfing community where there was a real awareness of the growing impact of plastic pollution in our seas. Today it is a very successful marine conservation and campaigning charity. [About Surfers Against Sewage - Surfers Against Sewage \(sas.org.uk\)](https://www.sas.org.uk)

One of its many programmes is **encouraging communities to reduce and remove single-use plastic** from where they live through the Plastic Free Communities initiative - [Home - Plastic Free Communities](#).

Why? Because single use plastic is harming the environment alongside other forms of litter. You are probably aware of the growing number of marine animals and seabirds that are being harmed by plastic whether that be through ingesting it or being trapped by it. As the plastic breaks down into microplastics, it becomes increasingly dangerous to them. We can pick up this litter from our streets and parks, and we can remove it through beach cleans which this initiative encourages, but what is really needed is to tackle the problem at source by raising awareness of the problem and encouraging one another to stop using single-use plastic when that is possible. There is also, of course, a carbon impact from single-use plastic as well. However, in the words of SAS, *"It's not about removing all plastic from our lives. It's about kicking our addiction to **throwaway plastic** and changing the system that produces it."*

We need the participation of local businesses to support that aim through changes to their business processes and we need everyone in our community to play their part too through their consumer choices whether that be as individuals or through the groups which bring them together by thinking about single-use in what they do and saying no to it whenever they can.

I became aware of the potential for Stonehaven to become a Plastic Free Community back in late 2018 and we discussed it at Greener Kincardine and Mearns meetings, but it was not until 2022 when I spoke with Marion Montgomery, the founder of Paws on Plastic, that work really began on seeing if we could achieve this status for Stonehaven. Marion agreed to be the Community Lead and another local resident who was interested in green issues and was aware of what we were looking to do joined us as well. We are, therefore, a small team of three driving this initiative but we are being supported by many others as you will see below.

SAS has set five objectives which are explained in their Plastic Free Communities Toolkit, and which have to be met for a community to be awarded the SAS Plastic Free Community Certification. [The community toolkit - Plastic Free Communities](#)

Update July 2025 – we achieved all the objectives detailed below in July 2024 (from memory) and have been awarded Plastic Free Stonehaven Status by SAS

The five objectives are –

1. **Engaging our local council**

This objective relates to the Community Council, and I will come back to it in more detail below – see yellow highlighted section if you want to jump straight to it.

2. **Working with local businesses to help them reduce single-use plastics**

The requirements under this objective are for independently owned businesses in our community to remove at least three single use plastic items from their business streams. Our target number of businesses is linked to our population size – from memory we are aiming for at least six businesses to pledge that they will remove or have removed three items of single use plastic from their business and then to sign up to our Stonehaven Plastic Free Community dashboard which ensures their pledge and commitment is recognised by SAS as contributing to achieving our objective.

Currently, the following businesses have pledged their support and are on our dashboard – My Beautiful Caravan, How Bizarre, How Bizarre, Fountainhall Wines, and Godsman Graphics. We have at least three other businesses that have pledged support but still need to sign up to the dashboard - Replenish, Seafood Bothy and Nicola Smiles Optometry – and we are in touch with others, so we are making good progress with this objective.

Update July 2025: We now have the following 20 businesses registered on our dashboard. Those with dates are now **Plastic Free Business Champions** (15) with some progressing to silver and gold status given the number of items they have removed from their business operations.

But n’Ben Books – 19th June 2025

Urban Bay – 21st July 2025 – **Gold Status**

Stonehaven Sea Salt Company -

Haven Treasures – 24th April 2025

Café Neuk –

Beauty 53 – 22nd August 2024 **Silver Status**

Dalriada Luxury Lodges – 3rd July **Silver Status**

Carma – 18 June 2024

Replenish – 12 March 2025 **Silver Status**

Bayview Apartments – 10th April 2024

Sofasoy Candle – 2nd May 2025

Nicola Smiles Optometry –

The Villa Coffee Shop –

Enscape Consulting – 10th March 2025

E Guiliannotti –

Picos Deli – 16th May 2025

My Beautiful Caravan – 10th June 2024

Godsman Graphics – 29th February 2024

How Bizarre How Bizarre – 10th June 2024

Fountainhall Wines – 1st August 2024

3. Community Allies

This objective requires us to work with schools, community groups, places of worship, community centres and so on to encourage them to action and to spread the word. I think we need 20 groups to be supporting us. We are gradually gathering the support of a range of community groups – Horizon, The Community Collective, and Paws on Plastic have pledged support to name a few but we are in touch with lots more. Marion is actively involved with the local schools promoting the initiative with their support. So again, we are making good progress.

Update July 2025 – we have 20 allies including three schools (Mackie, Arduthie and Mill O' Forest)

4. Community Actions and Events

This objective requires us to run two events annually to raise awareness of the campaign locally. We are doing much more than that. As you probably know, we run monthly beach cleans on the first Saturday of the month, have held one unwrap event at the Coop, and have held a very successful post-Christmas "Crafting a Recycled Christmas" event.

In 2023, the beach clean outcomes were a total of 261.455 kg of waste removed representing 258 volunteer hours. It is great to see the community coming together for these events with people of all ages taking part.

We have an active social media presence on Facebook [Facebook](#), Twitter (X) @PFStonehaven, and Instagram plastic_free_stonehaven_

Update July 2025: we continue to run our monthly beach cleans and by December 2024 we had cleared 1 tonne of litter through these monthly events since we started in February 2023. Marion has also undertaken beach cleans with the schools.

We held our second Crafting a Recycled Christmas this year and we were planning a Repair Café in June but had to cancel it while we work out the details relating to insuring such an event which are more complicated than expected. We are in touch with a Repair Café organiser in Udnay and hope to learn from their experience to run a local event in due course.

5. Set up a Steering Group

We are required to form a group of local stakeholders who meet at least twice a year to take our campaign forward.

We meet this objective through the Stonehaven Town Centre Improvement Group (STCIG) which has agreed to have Plastic Free Community as a standing item on the agenda. This provides us with an opportunity to raise awareness and discuss the campaign with the stakeholders who meet every few months round that table including the Stonehaven & District Community Council, the STP, the Stonehaven Business Association, Stunning Stonehaven, Horizon, the Men's Shed, and Aberdeenshire Council.

Update July 2025 – Plastic Free Stonehaven is and continues to be a regular item on the STCIG meeting agenda.

So, coming back to the first objective ENGAGING OUR LOCAL COUNCIL.

When I first started looking into the objectives, I was led to believe by the person I was dealing with at Surfers Against Sewage that *Local Council* referred to the Local Authority and so Aberdeenshire Council. The objective requires the Local Council to make a resolution supporting the journey to plastic free community status. The motion must say that –

1. The Council will lead by example to remove single-use plastic items from their premises.
2. The Council will encourage plastic-free initiatives, promoting the campaign and supporting events.
3. A representative of the council will be named on the Plastic Free Community steering group.

I have had multiple conversations with Aberdeenshire Council legal officers about this motion and how I would take it forward which it was agreed would be through a Notice of Motion to Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee. I had wording for the motion which I had shared with SAS and they had agreed to over a year ago. I was simply waiting for the right time. However, there was a change of personnel recently and so I ran the wording past this SAS representative to be on the safe side and he came back saying, to my astonishment, that I did not need the Local Authority, I needed Stonehaven and District Community Council to put forward and support the motion as it was the “local” council *in Stonehaven*.

So, the ask of the Stonehaven and District Community Council is to consider whether it will support the following motion which has the approval of SAS so that we can fulfil the first objective:

1. The Stonehaven and District Community Council will lead by example and remove single-use plastic items from its premises and operations.
2. The Stonehaven and District Community Council will encourage plastic-free initiatives in the area, promoting the campaign and supporting events.
3. A representative of Stonehaven and District Community Council, currently ?, will sit on the Stonehaven Plastic Free Community Steering Group which sits within the Stonehaven Town Centre Improvement Group.

Taking those in turn –

Under point 1, I appreciate that you probably rarely have reason to use single use plastic as a community council, and you do not have premises as such. However, in agreeing to this point, you would be saying, in effect, that as and where appropriate you would remove single use plastic from what you do whenever you could. So, as a group of councillors you would be actively thinking about that commitment in what you do and organise together and where there was an alternative you would not continue to use single use plastic. A simple example of an action you could take could be to agree that you will not have or bring single use plastic bottles of water or other drinks to meetings.

Under point 2 – you would be undertaking to raise awareness of the campaign through, for example, your social media. We can make sure you are aware of the dates of our beach cleans or you can simply share to the SDCC pages from the Plastic Free Community pages. You might also do a press release or write to Mearns FM/ The Bellman highlighting your support of the campaign.

Under point 3 – Steve McQueen has very kindly offered both to propose the motion and to be the SDCC representative on the Steering Group so ? could be changed to Steve McQueen if that has the support of the community council before you finally vote on the motion.

Update July 2025 – the above motion was approved in March 2024

If we achieve the status, it does not mean that all single use plastic is gone from the town, the work will not end with the accreditation. It will continue. We will continue to work to encourage local businesses and groups to think about single use and to remove it whenever they can. It is not a requirement of being a Plastic Free Community, but we are also encouraging people to think about other types of single use by encouraging reuse, recycling and more sustainable choices. I hope we will see less plastic litter, over time, as a result of these efforts. I hope we will see less *demand* for single use plastic over time as well with that fundamental shift at source. I believe the accreditation will be attractive to visitors who are concerned about sustainability so will support our local economy.

I very much hope that the SDCC will feel able to support the motion and support this campaign.

Please let me know if you have questions. I will, of course, be at the March meeting to answer any questions then as well.

Kind regards
Sarah