

## Tewkesbury Green Party Waste Q&A talk by Councillor Cate Cody Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Cate told us that, after a conversation with a neighbour around 10 years ago, she realised that she was hardly using her bin. This led to a gradual, but continual change in her life-style so that she hasn't put her a green (waste) bin out for 4 years!

How has she done this? Mostly by following the Reduce, Recycle, Reuse and Repurpose mantra (see the previous talk on incineration and R4C). Not buying things is the key to this or certainly reducing, trying to buy products without plastic packaging, especially new 'things', often packed with styrene fillers. Buying second-hand and things that last and can be repaired. Cate's plastic-free blog: <https://bit.ly/2P8RMst>

Repair what you can, web search for local repair businesses and help make your economy circular. Share what you can, it helps bind your local community and costs less! There are 1,300 Repair Cafés worldwide. Locally, try Tewkesbury: <https://bit.ly/3r2xnTg> or Cheltenham: <https://bit.ly/3bXoVjW> Some are on hold due to Covid, but hope to be back fully soon. Repair café blog: <https://bit.ly/3qZHNDg>

Recycle, but what? Use <https://bit.ly/3lrHsrT> and enter your postcode for your local council's details as they vary enormously. Hard to recycle items? For a list of all the free programmes and their locations see: <https://bit.ly/3s25ADM>

Electrical goods retailers are now obliged to take back items when they can't be repaired any more.

Reuse. There are plenty of web sites to suggest creative ways to use your old items, or ask your neighbours if they would like things. Find your local Freecycle here: <https://bit.ly/30XDEoF>

Food shopping: if you can, buy things loose, or use a paper bag if really needed. If there are none ask for some. Take your own containers to deli counters, independent shops and take-aways. Support local veg box schemes, <https://bit.ly/2Qk4tI5> Waste-free food blog: <https://bit.ly/3IADCwz>

Many refill shops are now opening. Tewkesbury: <https://bit.ly/30XyoRW> Cheltenham: <https://bit.ly/2P6GPys> Green drinks blog: <https://bit.ly/3vDwTqj>

There should be no such thing as 'food waste', veg tops, tails, bruised / manky bits, peelings (if not eaten), should be composted. Cooked, therefore inedible herbs, corn cobs, lemons etc are the sorts of things that could be left over and aren't suitable for composting. These can be sent to industrial composting or anaerobic digestion. If you live in a flat you could consider the Japanese use Bokashi system, or, if you have a gardening friend, ask them to take your compostables – use two buckets and swap the empty one for the full one each time. There is no such thing as too much compost - it helps us to grow food. Wormeries are great too and work well in very small gardens and on patios.

Cleaning the house and you: Most cleaners come in packaging. Refill if you can. Simple soaps are better for you than shower gels and plastic-free. Apart from eco washing up liquid, loo cleaner and washing powder, Cate says that all other cleaning jobs are completed using various mixes of distilled vinegar and bicarbonate of soda and or water. Lemons are great for cleaning in the kitchen, descaling the kettle etc. Vinegar cleans the bathroom, bicarb and vinegar do the drains, although all of this is easier if kept clean in the first place, rather than letting things build up. For eco friendly cleaners try the EcoLeaf range or why not make your own? There are lots of ideas on-line. Clean, Green Bathroom blog: <https://bit.ly/38UsLIK>

Lobby. If you find a product which is badly packaged, write to the manufacturer and politely ask them to improve. They like active consumers. If they don't change buy elsewhere and tell them why.

Above all, keep it all simple and circular. People think that sustainable living sounds complex, but the reality is that it is actually very liberating. Stuart Galey