

Portsmouth communities work together to tackle plastic pollution

Community leaders attending the Environment Agency event heard how they could access resources and share experience as part of wider ambitions to reduce avoidable plastic waste to zero by 2042.

It was delivered by the plastics and sustainability team as part of a programme of partnership activity in England and France for the Interreg Preventing Plastic Pollution project, which identifies and targets hotspots for plastic by looking at catchments from source to sea.

Preventing waste plastic entering the environment by cracking down on waste crime and poor waste management is a key activity for the Environment Agency as a regulator. As an influencer, it also has an ambition to promote better environmental practices that result in a reduction of plastic waste, helping to achieve the goals and commitments outlined in its' 5 year plan to create better places for people, places and the environment, and the government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

Experts believe around 10 million tonnes of plastic waste enters the ocean every year, of which approximately 50 per cent of marine litter is made up of single-use items.

Environment Agency officer Jonathan Harvey, from the plastics and sustainability team, said:

As an organisation we're urging people to avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle waste. This network of local leaders, which includes zero waste groups, sustainability groups, plastic free communities and local authorities, will support communities with the resources they need to make long-term sustainable change, and tackle plastic pollution at source.

Plastic litters our countryside and coastline, blighting our natural environment. It is harmful to wildlife and there are concerns about potential impacts on the food chain and biodiversity.

As a result, it's absolutely essential we encourage open conversations with communities, bring people together, and provide the tools for them to speak with one voice to tackle this rapidly escalating problem.

Workshop attendees had the chance to find out about the impact of plastic pollution using sustainable alternatives, how to organise litter picks, access marketing materials, and get involved with existing local projects.

They also heard from keynote speakers, including Professor Steven Fletcher from the University of Portsmouth, who spoke about a project called Revolution Plastics.

To find out more about the workshop email plasticsandsustainability@environment-agency.gov.uk.

If you spot a plastic pollution incident contact the Environment Agency's 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Notes for editors

Working in partnership with 18 organisations from across France and England, [Preventing Plastic Pollution](#) (PPP) seeks to understand and reduce the impacts of plastic pollution in the river and marine environments. By looking at the catchment from source to sea, the project will identify and target hotspots for plastic, embed behaviour change in local communities and businesses, and implement effective solutions and alternatives.

PPP is a €14million funded EU INTERREG VA France (Channel) England Programme project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund which works mainly across 7 pilot sites: Brest Harbour, Bay of Douarnenez, Bay of Veys, Poole Harbour, and the Medway, Tamar, and Great Ouse estuaries.

Partners are the Environment Agency, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Queen Mary University of London, LABOCEA Conseil, Expertise et Analyses, Syndicat mixte établissement public de gestion et d'aménagement de la baie de Douarnenez, Office Français De La Biodiversité, Parc naturel marin d'Iroise, Brest Métropole, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Conseil départemental de la Manche, Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer, The Rivers Trust, Syndicat de bassin de l'Elorn, ACTIMAR, Brest'aim, Westcountry Rivers Trust, South East Rivers Trust and Plymouth City Council.