**Single-use plastic ban and advice to churches:**

**Ecclesiastic single-use plastic**

Do you have single-use plastic cups, cutlery, plates, and drinking straws, or polystyrene cups and food containers hidden away at the back of your church’s kitchen cupboard; or, perhaps in the Sunday School’s arts and crafts box, you might find plastic-stemmed cotton buds and balloon sticks?

Now is the time to use them up as Phase 1 of the Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act comes into force on Monday, 30th October.

From 30th October, it will be against the law for churches to supply the following single-use plastic items, even if giving them away free.

* Single-use plastic plates – this includes paper plates with a laminated plastic surface
* Single-use plastic cutlery – for example forks, spoons, knives
* Single-use plastic drinks stirrers
* Cups made of expanded or foamed extruded polystyrene.
* Takeaway food containers made of expanded or foamed extruded polystyrene
* Single-use plastic balloon sticks
* Single-use plastic-stemmed Cotton buds
* Single-use plastic drinking straws – with exemptions so people who need them to eat and drink safely and independently can continue to have them

Perhaps, if you have church gatherings and events over the next few weeks that involve food and drink, you could use up any surplus single-use plastic items as it would be your last chance to do so.

At the end of this month, you will need to check with your local authority whether the item can or cannot be recycled, as you will not be able to use it in church. You may find that most councils will not collect the above items as part of their recycling scheme. The items would then need to be disposed of responsibly by putting them into the general waste collection.

Unsightly single-use plastic litter is a blight on our streets, parks, and countryside and often ultimately, it ends up on our beaches and in our seas.

Even when securely placed in our waste stream, single-use plastic is difficult to recycle and so, goes directly to landfill - after just one brief use.

Single-use plastic only slowly breaks down to form tiny ‘microplastic’ particles; it never disappears.

The good news, however, is that there are plenty of fantastic biodegradable alternatives to single-use plastic.

So, let’s say bye-bye to single-use plastic in our churches once and for all and play our part in caring for God’s creation.

**Additional reading**

Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act. Visit: https://www.gov.wales/environmental-protection-single-use-plastic-products-wales-act#117942

Marine Conservation Society. Visit: https://www.mcsuk.org/ocean-emergency/ocean-pollution/plastics/single-use-plastics/

Surfers against sewer. Visit: https://www.sas.org.uk/plastic-pollution/

**News links**

Church to host all-Wales climate summit, announces Archbishop, Church in Wales news, 5th September 2023. Visit:<https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/news-and-events/church-to-host-all-wales-climate-summit-announces-archbishop/>

Archbishop heads to beach to mark the King’s Coronation, Church in Wales news, 29th March 2023. Visit: <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/news-and-events/archbishop-takes-to-the-beach-to-mark-kings-coronation/>