

GOING PLASTIC FREE

By Shelia, Skanska Employee

“Following a visit to South Uist in June 2017 whilst visiting some remote beaches there, my husband and I were horrified by the number of shampoo bottles/plastic bottles washed on to the beach from the sea. On our return to home we decided that we would look to cut out as much plastic as possible going forward.”

Here are some to the things we have manage to achieve going plastic free.

- Moved to shampoo bars and nice soaps instead of shower gels
- Shaving soaps going back to traditional shaving.
- Switched to beeswax paper instead of clingfilm
- Buying only unpackaged fruit and vegetables available from large supermarkets, greengrocers and also farmer markets. In supermarkets I take along my own washed freezer bags to use instead of taking another plastic bag from the roll.
- Getting bread and rolls in paper bags, from bakery and farmer markets.
- Oils, only buying in glass bottles but also in tins, investigating where there is a local refill option.
- Buying cheese only wrapped in paper – some supermarkets will let you buy cheese from the cheese counter and will put in your own container.
- Switched from teabags to tea leaves, most teabags contain plastic.
- Use a local shop to refill washing up liquid and also will refill Faith in Nature shampoo/conditioner bottles.
- Stopped using laundry liquid and now use washing powder.
- Brought a sodastream so no need to buy soda water in plastic bottles
- Reuse washed freezer bags for home cooked freezer meals.
- Making own lunches and hot drinks in reusable cups/thermos flasks.
- Cotton dish cloths instead of plastic sponges, jay clothes. Our friends in Denmark recently gave us a wool knitted dish cloth something to consider going forward.

Hurdles we have encountered:

Cost although we would like this not to be a barrier we soon realised that going plastic free comes at a price.

Milk, we would really like to switch completely to glass bottles but the cost is a barrier 12 pints of milk (per week) from supermarket £3.00 cost via milkman with glass bottles = £9.72.

Greek yoghurt – Getting a yoghurt maker with glass jars, ideally we would like to make our own but that would mean buying more milk.

Even in large supermarkets we have noticed that buying loose fruit and veg ie peppers is a 3rd more expensive than buying prepacked in plastic wrapping.

No longer buying blueberries/raspberries as cannot find anywhere selling without plastic wrapping and plastic tray.

Hard to find loose fruit and veg not wrapped in plastic in smaller supermarkets.

So what have we achieved:

- Before we put out our plastic recycling bin every 4 weeks. We now only put out our plastic recycling bin (our council allows plastic, tins and glass all in one bin) every 12 weeks. (Collected fortnightly).
- Our landfill also goes out every 12 weeks (collected fortnightly). Before every 4 weeks.
- Foodwaste – we never have foodwaste, for vegetable peelings etc we have a compost bin.

Going forward

- Really encouraged by new shops opening up where you take your own container and refill using that. IE <https://naturalweigh.co.uk/>