

The Plastic Pollution Bill

The immediate focus of Plastic Free Bridport is to enlist as many businesses as will join us, in order to drastically reduce the amount of single-use plastic used in our area. The plastic pollution bill, however, has a much wider scope, looking at manufacture, reuse, recycling and microplastics. The plan calls for legally binding commitments to immediate and long-term action to achieve near-zero plastic pollution.

Plastic pollution is endemic. The massive use of plastic, plus the growth the industry predicts, creates a scenario where recycling will never be able to make much impact on the amount landfilled, incinerated or left to pollute our oceans. So Friends of the Earth has joined up with Surfers against Sewage and others to promote an action plan to handle this crisis.

Chris Loder has recently become one of the cosignatories for the bill. Chris has gone further and has added an amendment to the Environment Bill. It calls for setting targets for the reduction of plastic pollution and reduction of the volume of non-essential plastic products sold.

WD FoE through WDEA (see later article) has been holding zoom meetings with Chris throughout the lockdown. Plastic pollution, which Chris was already focused on, was one of our first briefings. The importance of getting his amendment accepted lies in the fact that we will pass the environment bill; it is necessary for the replacement of European legislation, which is no longer binding. The plastic pollution bill is a private members bill and these bills often do not pass through parliament.

The Environment bill began its report stage on the 26th of Jan and then was postponed until after Easter (probably May). Chris' amendment was discussed and not voted on. Rebecca Pow (Environment minister) indicated that the Environment Bill would adequately tackle the scourge of plastic pollution, and also, interestingly, said that government wants a more ambitious and holistic target that deals with all kinds of waste not just plastic.

