



SUSTAINABLE EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

*Sustainable Cheshire
An Eco Communities project*





WHO ARE ECO COMMUNITIES?

The Sustainable Cheshire project

This guide is taken from our experience of the events we organise. They are now huge festivals with thousands of attendees but the general principles will be the same for any event from a community one to a three day festival in the middle of the countryside. Eco Communities started by organising the Sustainable Cheshire Fair, we are now supporting Sustainable events and activities within Cheshire. Our aim is to support sustainable living, reducing our carbon footprint and plastic free communities. We do this via our E-newsletters, printed Tellus Magazine and events.

Climate change is one of the most urgent issues facing us today and leaves no corner of the planet untouched. We can see this on our doorstep from the increasing floods, wildfires and other weather related disasters that the effects are taking place right now. We are also starting to see it impact on food security as farmers struggle with the changing weather conditions.

When we put on our Sustainable Cheshire events in the region we obviously try to ensure they are as sustainable as possible without any huge costs. As a Community Interest Company everything we do is via funding. We tend not to go down the route of sponsorship, so we generally put our events on with a very tight budget, no costs to attend and low costs for stall holders.

Firstly we look for venues which fit with our ethos. We try to think about how people will travel to our events, can they get to it on public transport or via bike or walk.



EVENT FOOD



A plant-based diet is much more environmentally friendly, plus buying locally and seasonal.



We make sure any catering is all or mostly plant based. It won't do meat eaters any harm trying to make this change for a days or so.

Our overriding aim though it to support local businesses that are part of our Plastic Free Cheshire project, supporting Chester Zoo's Sustainable Palm Oil initiative or have menus within their business which are at least 25% Plant Based. Any businesses that fit one of these can become one of our Sustainable Cheshire listed businesses,

When it comes to food waste, not that the vendors have much waste, if they do we encourage them to support local food banks or projects like Too Good To Go.



Too Good To Go

Fact - to produce a pound of beef it takes 1,799 gallons of water and releases about 22 lbs of carbon.

WATER

We all need water every day.

Good drinking water is readily available at home in the UK, We think water should be free when you are out and about, so say City to Sea who launched the Refill campaign. Refill asks businesses to allow people to refill water bottles with them and become part of its Refill App. We are the Chester contact for Refill and aim to ensure drinking water is available at our events free of charge as a refill in their own bottle. No single use plastic water at our events.



WASTE

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The 'Sustainable ideal' is for everything to be part of a circular economy, so zero waste. Reusable items are key to this, single use gets a thumbs down. We understand it's not that simple and we have not found a way to put on a zero waste event so far and we are only small fry. But all events should segregate waste properly for recycling. A waste management programme that follows the principle of 'reduce, reuse and recycle' is key.

Having strategically placed recycling bins that are correctly marked or colour coded for dry and wet waste, paper, aluminium cans, and so on should be a must. Ask exhibitors to try using QR codes to online brochures/leaflets where possible. We encourage all our stalls to be part of our Plastic Free Cheshire project.

Fact - Music Festivals, on average, generate 23,500 tonnes of waste which includes plastic bottles, food waste, abandoned tents and clothing. (@bbc)

PACKAGING



We must rethink on the go packaging in the UK. When you are away from home you want things to be easy when you attend events, but as more and more people are paying attention to sustainability they will be looking to see what your event is doing to make change. Making your event more sustainable means understanding the Waste Hierarchy and how your event impacts on the environment.

“By recycling materials, such as plastic, paper, glass and metal, this significantly reduces the amount of energy and emissions used to create a new product from recycled materials, as well as addressing the challenge of resource scarcity. It is estimated that 5.6 gigatons of carbon dioxide could be avoided by 2050 if recycling rates of industrial, commercial and household waste increased to 65%.”

Most disposable plastics are difficult to recycle and a nightmare to deal with for waste management providers. Glass and cans can be more easily recycled and in theory recycled for ever. Only a small % of plastic gets recycled, and it can only be recycled a few times until it degrades too much, and you get microplastics. Don't get us started on the whole problem with microplastics. Producers are being pushed to use more recycled plastic, but much just gets downcycled into items like garden furniture. So, glass and metal will always trump plastic where possible.

A range of polluting single-use plastics have already been banned, including straws, stirrers and cotton buds. More are to be added from October 2023. The new ban will include single-use plastic plates, trays, bowls, cutlery, balloon sticks, and certain types of polystyrene cups and food containers.



According to estimates, England uses 2.7 billion items of single-use cutlery.

All these changes have resulted in an increase in the use of compostable products, such as coffee cups and even glasses made from plants which are marked as biodegradable. We do not support these items as very few regions or businesses have a way of composting such products which need industrial composting which isn't readily available.



REUSABLES



We need to think circular economy

Using reusable cups instead of single-use cups can significantly reduce plastic production, waste, and the overall environmental impact of serving drinks at events.

Sadly 94% of us are still not actively engaging with reusables. We leave the house, keys - tick, phone - tick, cards - tick... Reusable cup... ✕

Coffee Cup (hot drinks)

In 2019 10.8 million people took a coffee from a coffee shop in the UK mostly in a single use coffee cup. This equates to 55,080 coffee cups just in Cheshire West which could well have been single use.

Did you know less than 1% of single use coffee cups are recycled as they need to go to specialist recycling facilities as most are a mix of paper and plastic. Some businesses have tried to become more responsible and gone for the compostable versions, the difficulty here is that these require industrial composting that's not available in most locations in the UK and so they are thrown away into general waste in the region. The optimum aim is for a circular economy, no waste as in nature.

We now have funding via Spacehive, part funded by the Council for a reusable, returnable coffee cup scheme. We plan to retain a batch for use at events, with the option for other community events to hire these.

Drinks Cup

We financed a batch of reusable plastic glasses for events in Upton and Chester in 2018. They worked really well even raising some funds. Lots of work has gone into such ideas at larger events since and now we even have hire and wash options available for reusable plastic glasses. We are working with City to Sea, a National organisation to trial reusable glasses. We hope to be able to support other events as well locally. Read more on this and research from Refill - [click here](#)





EVENT CHECK LIST

If you are planning an event, think about everything involved in your event that becomes waste, such as:

- Plastic glasses
- Single use coffee cups
- Take away containers
- Napkins
- Paper Tickets
- Balloons
- Single use decorations
- Paper table cloths
- Paper straws (plastic straws have been banned in the UK)
- Single use cutlery (even bamboo/ anything saying biodegradable will end up in land fill or incineration)
- Give away items (usually thrown away quickly after the event)

Who do you use to deal with the waste from your event, do you know what they do with what they receive. Could any of the above be switched to reusables? Could you decide not to use some single use items? Think reduce, reuse and only finally recycle.

More often than not waste will be incinerated rather than go to landfill, since the government imposed large taxes on landfill. We can't afford to create all these products and then dispose of them. We need to find alternatives.

Sustainable Cheshire is a not-for-profit organisation by Eco Communities which want to support sustainability with our region. If you have any questions email office@sustainablecheshire.uk
Helen Tandy, Director Eco Communities

Need more help.

www.sustainablecheshire.uk
office@sustainablecheshire.uk



Eco Communities

