



# COMING UP

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November Jackie and Penny will be at the House of Commons in London at the 2018 Groundwork Community Awards where we are finalists for the award of Best Community Environmental Sustainability project for our plastics campaign.



We owe thanks to Zoe at PCC for the nomination and have already been described as “An outstanding example of community collaboration” by the judges. We are up against two other projects from the Lake District and Felixstowe.....**POST SCRIPT** : Just in case you didn't hear....we won ! Thanks to everyone for getting us there !

## FUTURE VISITS



We will be following up the opportunity to visit the new South West Water water works at Roborough as soon as possible. Details will be circulated as usual.

Details will also be circulated for the next MVV Devonport Open Day which will have a marine litter theme. Jane was delighted to report that the recent Open Day was extremely well attended (230+) and the annual litter pick attracted 120 participants.

## BEACH CLEANS IN DECEMBER

**Our 40<sup>th</sup> Beach Clean Event will be Bovisand Beach**

**Date/Time: Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December, 9am.** Location: PL9 0AD - Meet on the Beach at the bottom of the Stairs, Parking: There are a couple of car parks, the best is the Cliffedge Café Bovisand Car Park on Bovisand Lane, Wembury, Plymouth, PL9 0AD. (Sometimes they have a parking charge of around £2 if the Cafe is open).

**41. Hoe Waterfront Beach Clean** : **Date/Time: Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December, 9am,** Location: Meet opposite the Dome on the Hoe Waterfront, PL1 2NZ . Parking: There is road parking on the Hoe Waterfront or a small carpark down towards the Barbican.

**42. Jennycliff Beach Clean** : **Date/Time: Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 10am,** Location: PL9 9RN, Meet on the Beach at the bottom of the Stairs for 10am start. Parking: There is a big free carpark at Jennycliff. When you arrive cross over the road, head past the Cafe and down the path to the beach where we will all meet

**43. Mount Batten Beach Clean** : **Date/Time: Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 11am,** Location: PL9 9SJ, Meet on the Beach at the bottom of the Stairs . Parking: It is free on road parking and free car parks nearby. You can also take the water taxi from the Barbican.

What to bring? Yourself, Water Bottle, Suitable clothing (i.e. Wellies, Rain Coat, Sturdy Shoes), you are welcome to bring your own litterpickers/bags/gloves. \*Under 18s must be accompanied by an Adult at all times\* For further information please do reply or check out our Facebook events <https://www.facebook.com/pg/plymouthbeachcleans/events>

## GLOBAL BOOK CLUB

*Lost Japan, Last Glimpses of Beautiful Japan* is the title of December's Global Book Club book.

Free Event Open to All

Wednesday 5 December 2018, 7:00-8:30 pm

Babbage Building (Room 002), Plymouth University.

This room has disabled access. If the ground floor door is locked ring 01752 588400.

If you don't have time to read it, a summary will be available.

For more information email [s.kay@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:s.kay@blueyonder.co.uk) or call DDE on 01392 438811

## Sustainable Earth Institute Christmas Public Talk

Marks & Spencer's Plan A programme:  
translating science into meaningful action

Mike Barry, Director of Sustainable Business at Marks & Spencer

- Monday 3 December, 6:00pm for 6:30pm  
Roland Levinsky Building, University of Plymouth. Mike Barry from Marks & Spencer will be discussing how the company translates science into meaningful action through its ground-breaking Plan A programme.

Mike is responsible for delivering Plan A 2025, Marks & Spencer's ambitious, customer focused sustainability plan that will support 1,000 communities, help ten million people live happier, healthier lives and convert Marks & Spencer into a zero-waste business by 2025.

Free event but registration is essential:  
<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/whats-on/marks-spencers-plan-a-programme-translating-science-into-meaningful-action>

## SNIPPETS

**MASS UNWRAPS** – Are being promoted across the UK as a protest against all the packaging we get on food. It was noted that, in some cases, wrapping prolongs the life of the items we buy and therefore prevents food waste. Take part if you wish – most supermarkets will accept the wrappings and simply dump them in their own recycling/waste streams (so it doesn't make that much of an impact. We'd recommend using supermarkets who have made a definite commitment to reducing plastics as a more positive approach...the more you use them, the more they'll do. On the topic of 'direct action' it seems to be experiencing a new lease of life through the Extinction Rebellion and other initiatives where the rules strictly state "no criminal damage". However, recent TV coverage has shown film of deliberate damage being done to walls, glass and doors.....what do you think of this approach. Are there other ways of making a point > What would the implications be if you were to be arrested ?

**NURDLE HUNTING** – Nicky and Paul took their nurdle hunting skills abroad and found evidence of over 300 pieces on the surface of the beach near Alicante....jar full now in Jackie's evidence collection. Jackie noted the popularity of anti-plastic campaigns on Crete this year.

## TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

On 19<sup>th</sup> November Environment Plymouth asked the following question of the Full Council in Plymouth following discussion at the October meeting :

**“ On 8<sup>th</sup> October the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a stark warning of the need to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. Given the emphasis on public involvement in this report, how does Plymouth City Council propose to lead the local action required to realise this target ?”**

Cllr Sue Dann gave the following response : We take the IPCC’s warnings very seriously. The report made it clear that we cannot afford to delay further action on Climate Change and the need to continue our acclaimed work on our City’s Low Carbon future. This Administration has made a manifesto pledge in re-committing Plymouth to become a carbon neutral city by 2050 and working to achieve our interim target of halving emissions by 2034.

Our soon-to-be adopted Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan provides the statutory planning policies to pursue these ambitions through the consideration of future developments. We are already delivering a range of energy efficiency and new renewable generation projects across the City including :

- Allocating £350,000 to our Energy Company Obligation top up grant fund to support 500 fuel households get energy efficiency improvements in their homes.
- Launching a new Warm Homes Fund to allow another 200 home to get brand new efficient heating systems.
- Drilling a 100metre deep borehole to access ground source heat to support regeneration of the Civic Centre and the expansion of District wide heating solutions.
- Running an ambitious energy advice and community engagement programme to give 1000 homes the opportunity to get free LED lights and other simple energy saving measures.
- Working across our estates, and in partnership with Plymouth Energy Community, to identify new solar and other renewable energy projects across the City.
- Working with schools and community buildings to drive an uptake in LED lighting systems.

In addition to this we are also :

- Continuing to run our successful Plymotion campaign offering incentives to encourage residents to try greener and healthier ways of travelling.
- Investing heavily in public transport infrastructure.
- Have approved a Plan for Plastics and are banning Single Use Plastics from Council venues.
- Committing to install more electric car charging points across Plymouth.

However we recognize there is more to do in response to what the IPCC have said. Plymouth City Council is already leading several innovative initiatives in relation to climate change issues – but to achieve even more we will need the support of central government, our local businesses, other public sector partners and a range of community organisations to make the difference required. **COMMENT** : This response is almost exactly what we were expecting and, interestingly, leaves out the low carbon work being done by Economic Development at the Ocean’s Gate development. It says very little about any approach to the City’s vulnerability to extreme weather conditions, sea level rise, the need for businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, public awareness of climate change or the links Plymouth has to marine research and the topics of ocean acidification amongst others things.....but it is fair to say that these topics do not attract much grant funding at the moment and resources are scarce. The focus on home energy and energy efficiency is to be welcomed but it will make only a partial difference to the overall action needed to become carbon neutral. Through the new EP Working Group on Climate Change we will look towards ways in which we can fill the gaps – perhaps through a Carbon Neutral Strategy of our own. Details to follow once we’ve met to consider a way forward.

# FOCUS ON AIR QUALITY

Throughout 2018 there have been a number of headline grabbing stories about the impact of poor air quality on everything from levels of obesity to dementia, children's health and general well-being. Links with urban tree cover have also featured; together with the Government's failure to meet EU standards for air quality and their failure to issue policy guidance. Then, in May, a WHO report suggested that Plymouth's air quality was the 12<sup>th</sup> worst in the UK.

To many this didn't make sense as, with a few notable exceptions, air quality in the city is generally recorded as good. We do have a recognized Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) but little seemed to be known about the available data and whether it could be assessed against health statistics to see if a correlation could be identified.

This is an ongoing topic of discussion for Environment Plymouth's Air Quality Working Group and it was decided to dedicate the November meeting to unravelling a few misunderstandings; including the role of the MVV Waste to Energy Plant that, initially, came in for a lot of criticism when people assumed the WHO report was related to their emissions.....it wasn't !

## THE INFO AVAILABLE

Locally there is a very well developed Air Quality Action Plan that goes in to some detail about the conditions in the city (<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/airqualityactionplan> ) and the physical conditions we have to deal with in the city. For example, Plymouth has a lot of road buried in valleys and the city itself lies in a bowl; creating an atmospheric bowl over the city. In addition many areas the city was not designed for modern traffic densities.

We now have a single AQMA that includes Exeter Street, Mutley Plain, Stoke Village, Royal Parade, Tavistock Road and their connecting roads. There is a key monitoring station in the City Centre (in Armada Way just north of the sundial) and another one in Tavistock Road. These send regular readings of a range of pollutants to the Automatic Urban and Rural Network data system. This provides regular updates and the info required to check against pollutant thresholds. It is probably here that the WHO report found the heightened levels of PM2.5 particles as, in general, air quality is recorded as good.

There are all sorts of available records to peruse. These include the hourly updates and the pollutant plumes over time (see <https://agcn.org/city/united-kingdom/plymouth-centre/> and <https://air.plumelabs.com/en/live/plymouth> ) and the data made available via the City Council at :

- <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/environmentandpollution/airquality>
- <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2017%20Air%20Quality%20Annual%20Status%20Report%20summary%20only.pdf>
- <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/airqualityactionplan>

So it is pretty clear that the data is available to us but how does this relate to the city's general health and wellbeing? That was the subject of a second question to Full Council posed by Alan Ramage on the 19<sup>th</sup> November (See page 7).

# THE WASTE TO ENERGY PLANT

Back in May several people were very quick to place the blame for the WHO report's headlines on the plant at MVV Devonport but, as we were told by Community Officer Jane Ford, energy from waste plants are highly regulated with tough limits on the pollutants released. In many cases the limits are lower than they would be for diesel cars and there is only one chimney at Devonport so comparisons need to be taken in context.

The plant is monitored 24/7 and, for the record, the waste is not used to fire up the furnace so there is no risk at that time. The biggest emission is actually moisture (11-15%) as this is a by-product of flue gas cleaning. Pollutants such as dioxins and furans have a molecular structure that is destroyed at 750 degrees. The plant operates at 850 degrees so there is very little chance of these being released. Sadly there are no sensible monitoring regimes for these pollutants and no safe limits so care is always taken to ensure they are not emitted. The monitoring undertaken by the plant is undertaken in addition to that undertaken by the Council.

The plant is effectively an energy plant. It burns the residual waste from Plymouth, South Hams, West Devon, Torbay and Teignbridge. It produces superheated steam that, in turn, drives the generators and the energy created is used to run the plant and the dockyards in a district scheme.

Details of the plant, including the air quality monitoring, can be found at

[https://www.mvv.de/en/mvv\\_energie\\_gruppe/mvv\\_umwelt/beteiligungen/mvv\\_environment\\_1/devonport/](https://www.mvv.de/en/mvv_energie_gruppe/mvv_umwelt/beteiligungen/mvv_environment_1/devonport/)

## QUESTIONS

The presentations led to a dynamic discussion.

Q : Are there any areas of concern ? : The biggest change would be to encourage people to recycle more so that resources can be reused and reconstituted rather than burned. There needs to be a much bigger awareness programme – for example, please don't put your recyclables in a carrier bag as the bags can't be recycled in the first place and if the MRF cant see what's in the bag it is ditched from the system and burned anyway.

Q : What happens to metals ? : They generally melt and are collected from the bottom of the furnace.

Q : Is Brexit likely to impose lower limits on the plant ? : MVV is a German company so it is highly regulated by EU limits. Jane had spoken to the Environment Agency about this who sent the following quote “ We have no reason to expect our regulatory work to relax in any way and our understanding is that EfW emission limits may well tighten as a result of the forthcoming BREF review.”

BREF stands for Best available techniques REFerence document and can be accessed at :

<http://eippcb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reference/> or

<http://eippcb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reference/wi.html>

There is still a lot to ask and a lot to understand about this complex topic but the meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> November answered quite a few of the initial enquiries we had. Now the hard work starts !

## AND FINALLY ON AIR QUALITY.....

The future of air quality issues in the city was brought home to the Full Council meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> November when Alan Ramage asked the following question :

“ Will Plymouth City Council task its Public Health Team to assess relevant health data for citizens residents close to arterial routes compared to those who are not close ? What legislation and policy changes would PCC wish citizens to lobby their MPs for help to enhance PCC’s current air quality improvement measures ? “

The full response will be featured in the next edition of Feedback once the formal Minutes have been issued so watch this space.

## LASTLY.....TERRACYCLE IT!

Lastly, if you're worried about plastics you can't recycle, Environment Plymouth member Nicky Hatherell may have a solution. Items such as biscuit wrappers (plus other things) can be collected for Terracycle (see <https://www.terracycle.co.uk/en-GB/>.) They are a company that specialises in recycling what is generally unrecyclable locally. It works in what they call 'brigades' and Nicky has signed up for 5 of them... with all proceeds raised through sending them this 'rubbish' going direct to her chosen charity which is Shekinah. Obviously anyone (or any organisation) could sign up for themselves and nominate their own charity.

The five topics that can be accepted are : air and home care products, babyfood packaging, biscuit packaging and dental care packaging.

We don't want to swamp Nicky so please drop her a quick email first (at [nickyhatherell@aol.com](mailto:nickyhatherell@aol.com) ) and you'll then be able to work out how to get recyclable supplies to her....or bring small amounts to the regular Environment Plymouth meetings.

**Response:** (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs)

The Public Health team currently assess a wide range of data at different geographical levels, as defined by the Office of National Statistics. Reports based on neighbourhood and ward level, for example, are available on our website. Data shows a trend of worsening health from the east towards the west of the city, which reflects the pattern of deprivation rather than tracking arterial routes.

The analysis of health data to determine the impact of air quality is complex; multiple factors influence health, air quality changes very sharply with distance from a road, people's home postcode may not reflect their exposure to different pollutants. The complexity of this means that it is the topic of large-scale research, rather than routine monitoring.

This large-scale research has been carried out and has shown significant harm can result from exposure to pollution. Therefore the position this Council takes is that there is a proven link between poor air quality and worse health outcomes, and so we take air quality very seriously.

The principles of protecting the air we breathe is contained within the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP), as it was previously in the Plymouth Plan and the Local Development Framework before that.

Plymouth City Council has a balanced transport strategy that seeks to support the objective of cleaner, healthier air for its residents and visitors. Emissions from road transport are by far the greatest cause of air pollution in Plymouth, and significant transport schemes have been carried out and are planned to shift the flows of traffic to reduce exposures. The strategy also has a strong focus on encouraging greater sustainable transport use with more trips undertaken by bus, cycle and foot, alongside reducing the need to travel, and enabling greater use of cleaner fuel vehicles.

Indeed since 2014, when the Air Quality Management Area was put in place, air quality improvements are being observed in all of the areas contained within the AQMA with all but one small area well within recommended levels.

We have recently worked closely with DEFRA to validate and analyse all data, with the result that they are satisfied that the actions taken by Plymouth have shown results, with schemes currently underway predicted to reduce air pollution even further.

Influencing the type of vehicle that people and businesses buy and how they use them are predominantly in the gift of central government. The following policy changes would therefore help to drive the transition towards less polluting private transport choices:

- Unfreeze the fuel duty escalator and significantly increase the duty on high-polluting diesel relative to petrol
- Reverse the recent decision to reduce the recent decision to cut the Plug In Car Grant (which reduces the purchase cost of electric cars) from £4.5k to £3.5K
- Amend Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) rates to dis-incentivise ownership of diesel vehicles as well as incentivising low carbon emission vehicles
- Significantly increase the money available to local authorities under the Air Quality Grant

