

#RefillDorset awash with success

Over 50 businesses have signed up to take part in a simple scheme which aims to reduce the number of single use plastic bottles being littered in our streets, green spaces and beaches. How? Simply by offering free tapwater refills to their customers. Participating businesses have opened their doors to anyone wanting to have their own re-useable bottles refilled for free, in the hope that more people will be encouraged to carry re-useable bottles rather than reaching for bottled water each time they're thirsty.

The project is being run locally by Litter Free Coast and Sea who, as Project Co-Ordinator Natalie Poulter explains, hope it will help change people's habits: 'Every time somebody refills rather than buying a new bottle from a shop or café, one fewer bottle runs the risk of ending up as either litter or going to landfill. Single use plastic water bottles are one of the most frequently found items of litter on our beaches here in Dorset, so it's important to take as many out of circulation as possible. We hope that by encouraging businesses to offer this simple service, and encouraging customers to take it up, it will become the norm to invest in a bottle you love and take it everywhere with you.'

'Participating businesses have told us it makes perfect sense to offer free tap water to their customers, and many are keen to promote something they're doing already. The refills are totally free with no pressure to buy anything else, but we find often people buy a coffee or cake at the same time. Refill not only saves customers money but, for a café, it can also cut down rubbish and recycling bills. Most importantly it means they can show that they're a friendly business that cares about their customers and local environment, which is increasingly important in building customer loyalty.'

Whilst most businesses involved are cafes and coffee shops, there are some more unusual ones to find- a couple of charity shops, a community centre and even an estate agency have agreed to join the scheme. #RefillDorset is also supported by Dorset Wildlife Trust, who have signed up all their visitor centres as Refill stations, and sell attractive refillable bottles from their centres at Kimmeridge and Chesil Beach. Julie Hatcher, Marine Awareness Officer said "Plastic drink bottles and lids are among the commonest types of litter we find on beaches. The Refill campaign aims to tackle this problem at its source and offer people a healthier and cheaper option at the same time. All Dorset Wildlife Trust's centres are happy to offer free tap water refills. Just call in and ask!"

Each business proudly displays a 'Refill here' blue sticker in their window to show customers it's OK to ask. To make it easy to find your nearest #Refill station, all the Dorset businesses who've signed up are mapped on a new Refill Britain App available for free for iOS and android smartphones. Simply tap the app, search for your nearest station, and get refilling!

Notes to editors

Refill Dorset is run by Litter Free Coast and Sea as a constituent project of Refill Britain, which is run by Bristol-based community group City to Sea CIC.

Litter Free Coast and Sea is an ongoing campaign to reduce the social, economic and environmental impacts of marine and beach litter, and improve and maintain bathing water quality along the Dorset and East Devon coast by preventing litter from getting to our coast in the first place. It is supported and promoted by over 500 local organisations and individuals up and down the coast. All supporters want a litter free coast and sea, act in ways that will help achieve this and encourage other people to do so.

Image credits:

Kimmeridge Marine Centre proudly display their refill sticker- credit Dorset Wildlife Trust

Reusable bottles available at all Dorset Wildlife Trust Centres- credit Dorset Wildlife Trust

