

Show Notes for *Living in a Plastic World: Do We Need a Revolution?*

This podcast is the recorded discussion from the event Living in a Plastic World: Do we need a revolution? This discussion was preceded by the film screening of A Plastic Ocean. The discussion consisted of five student panellists all with different backgrounds interacting with the audience on the issues of plastics. Find out more about how plastic use in our daily lives can affect the environment, your health and your future. Enjoy.

The University of Leeds and Leeds University Union have pledged to be single-use plastic free by 2023. For more information on the #2023PlasticFree pledge see:

<http://sustainability.leeds.ac.uk/plasticfree/>

Further the discussion. Follow the University of Leeds on Facebook @UoLSustainability

Twitter: @uol_sus

Instagram: @uol_sus

**All notes posted here are summary of responses*

@00.43 Do we need to cut out all plastics? (summary of all responses)

Plastics have provided us with certain standards and have become beneficial especially in regard to the science field. Plastic is a resource that if used effectively can be helpful. However there needs to be a reduction in single use plastics. Though not all single use is especially bad if we specifically think about the science and medical field where this component of plastic is needed in this sector. Though in everyday consumption single use plastics is the main issue but this needs to be a step by step gradual process

@04.39 Can an individual have an impact or make a difference? How did you start making a difference? (Summary of all responses)

A person can have a positive effect in creating change and telling the people around you such as friends and family is one of the easiest ways to create a change. Once person can make a change.

- Finding alternatives such as using a 'shampoo bar' can be a way to start making a difference in your lifestyle.
- Start by becoming aware of what plastic you are using (maybe cutlery or straws) and start making small steps toward this. Refusing to take a plastic straw for example
- Going to markets or zero waste stores in your local areas to get produce and goods (bringing your own bags of course)
-

@10:17 Are there other ways we can interact with plastic waste if it is impossible to eradicate them completely? (Summary of response)

Eco Bricking

You can take any bottle such as a water or laundry detergent bottle and fill it with plastic that cannot be recycled and fill it up . You can find local collection points to deposit your eco bricks.

For more information on eco bricks <https://www.ecobricks.org/> ,
<https://wasteaid.org/toolkit/how-to-turn-mixed-plastic-waste-and-bottles-into-ecobricks/>

@14:20 How bad do you think the problem is in the UK and what could Leeds students do about it? especially on campus?

The U.K is both good and bad. While plastic is mostly manufactured overseas. The U.K generally recycles 45% of our plastics in comparison to a 9% global average. We do have room for improvement such as introducing the plastic bottle recycling scheme and lobbying the government to make change in certain areas. We still export plastics that may end up not being recycled. Encourage others to change at least one thing and lobby your university to make a difference.

@17.15 Is the plastic consumption issues possibly overshadowing other environmental problems?

Everything falls under the 'umbrella' of climate change and tackling plastics is one of them. There are broader issues in which plastics is a part of. This issue may be manageable in terms of creating action than some other issues but should not be take away from other issues such as the burning of fossil fuels.

@18:57 How can students gain more knowledge and understanding about the alternatives to the way they consume plastic?

Social media is a great resource such as Instagram. Do your research into your local area on where to find you markets and zero waste shops for example.

@20.25 What are some immediate actionable steps students could do to cut down on plastic consumption?

Start by reflecting on where and how you use plastic in your everyday life. An area to start is your clothing that can release plastic microfibre into the water cycle. A way to mitigate this is to get a washing bag designed to help stop the fibres getting into the water system.

Avoid buying a plastic bottle , or re use it if you have no other alternatives.

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/plastics/microfibres-plastic-in-our-clothes>

<https://www.plasticfreeme.org/>

Questions comments from the audience? 24:38 – 46.00

@24:38 Advice on experiencing shift in washing machine and clothing distribution with Guppiefriend

@26:04- 33:40 What are other material alternatives to plastics?

@33:43 ideas and advice on recycling and reusing products especially through creating policy for companies

@37:17 social stigma around being environmentally conscious

@41.30 How do you communicate and get your information from (pure science or maybe social media). Are they reliable?