



Spreading the message: Maxine Klein at Martin School. Photo Mike Coles

A year is a long time in plastics

By David Burgh

The May 2018 edition of *The Archer* included a letter from Ann Inglis expressing concern at the prevalence of single use plastics (SUPs) in most shops in our High Road. Ann wanted to help reduce, and in time eliminate, usage in East Finchley, after David Attenborough's TV series had vividly illustrated the danger to wildlife and the planet from the proliferation of plastics in the ocean and our environment.

Ann was overwhelmed by the positive response to her plea and, with the help of a few keen neighbours, set up the No2Plastics East Finchley group. The core team realised they needed to get local businesses on board to reduce the number of SUPs distributed and to encourage customers to refuse bags or offer their own.

In the year since, our team of street champions has launched several initiatives, including:

- Making presentations at local schools, explaining the issues and encouraging children to cut their own and their families' usage. Street champion Maxine Klein is pictured outside Martin School, which has already responded very positively;
- Visiting businesses in the High Road, issuing signs to those who commit to reduce SUPs;
- Spreading the word to local shoppers and recruiting new members with a regular stall outside Amy's, which now stocks a range of products

offering alternatives to SUPs and whose staff have been supportive;

- Raising a petition to present to local councillors, with over 300 signatures of people supporting our cause;
- Developing social media, starting with our No2PlasticsN2 Facebook page and our no2plastics@gmail.com address, where we welcome your offers of support, views and ideas.

Ann's letter captured the national mood. The government agreed in May 2019 that plastic straws, drink stirrers and cotton buds with plastic stems would be banned from sale and use in England from April 2020.

Our campaign continues, and plans include liaison with councillors and supermarkets, arranging clean-up days and creating leaflets to help you find green businesses. You may have seen the team at their stall at East Finchley Festival. Let's keep up the good work!

Plastics are slowly starting to disappear

One of the High Road stores pledging to wipe out single-use plastics wherever it can is Budgens. Its own Planet Pledge has all the same aims as the No2Plastics group.

The store no longer offers plastic carrier bags, instead offering customers a bag for life or free cardboard boxes. The thin tear-off plastic bags once used for loose produce have been scrapped too and replaced by paper bags.

Breads, croissants and as many fruit and vegetables as possible are being offered loose and there are doors on all the new chiller units to conserve electricity. Store owner Paul Gardner acknowledges they are small steps but hopes together they will make a difference. "Like everyone, I was shocked by what I saw on those TV documentaries," he said. "Our customers were too and they started asking us about things like plastic bags. The changes we've made have been really positively received so far." Still, there are limits to what local stores can change on their own. Salad bags, for example, are a popular purchase but an unnecessary use of plastic. Paul believes a real step-change in plastics use will only come when the big players like Sainsbury's, Waitrose and Tesco start putting pressure on their suppliers to remove plastic from the way they package goods.

"It's a work in progress so in the meantime we can make simple changes," said Paul. "We'll start adding signage on the shelves to let customers know what products are free of plastic; then they can make their own choices."

Five years as a Post Office

High Road stationers UOE have celebrated five years of operating as a Post Office. The store, which has been in East Finchley for more than 35 years, took on the franchise in May 2014.

Managing director Elliot Jacobs said some customers were understandably worried about the change

successfully and now employs over 65 staff and operates seven Post Offices, including Muswell Hill's.

at first but many now like the service they get and love the longer opening hours, including on Sundays. The UOE team won Post Office of the Year at the 2018 Retail Industry Awards.

The East Finchley model has become so successful that it is often visited by other store owners wanting to take on a similar franchise. Visitors have come from as far afield as Kazakhstan and South Korea. UOE itself has expanded



Winner: UOE's Elliot Jacobs at the Retail Industry Awards in 2018. Photo Fergus Burnett

RICKY SAVAGE ... "The voice of social irresponsibility"

The car you promised yourself

Back when petrol was cheap and polar bears weren't worried, a guy in Detroit came up with a brilliant idea. It was simple: the 60s generation didn't want something old and boring like their parents drove, they wanted something new and rock'n'roll.

So, in 1964, Ford gave the world the Mustang. It was just what young America wanted. And just to be on the safe side, you could get everything from a dull slow six-cylinder to the beast that Steve McQueen drove in *Bullitt*. This was cool. Seriously cool, American cool, but not for us.

Back in Britain we wanted the same and Ford gave it to us. America had the Mustang, the original pony car, so Ford decided to give us a shrunken version, to be called the Colt. You can almost hear the yelps of delight. Problem was that Mitsubishi owned that name and sent in the lawyers.

So they named it after an island instead. Unveiled in 1969, here was the Capri. This was the car you'd always promised yourself. Really, a Ford Cortina in a party frock? Actually, yes.

As always with a Ford, you got the lot. There were L, XL, GXL versions and engines went from a pathetically slow 1300, a slightly embarrassing 1600, half-decent 2000 to the one you really wanted, the 3000 V6. This was our *Bullitt* car. Mad, crazy and able to hit 120mph when the cops weren't looking. And I wanted to have one when I grew up.

The Capri 3000GT had more power than you had sense, didn't handle that well but you could take your mates out in it and scare them. What more could you want in car when you're young and crazy? So when everyone goes on about how it's 50 years since man walked on the moon, I'll be revving an engine in honour of something a lot more fun, the three-litre Capri.


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