



Packaging-free: Maxine Klein takes a doorstep refill delivery from Daniel Helman.

A week living without plastics... well, I tried

By Maxine Klein

At the last meeting of the NO2PLASTICS group I rashly said I would try to live plastic-free for a week. Spoiler alert: I failed. And as the week went by I felt more and more angry and frustrated at the amount of plastic that comes into our lives without our permission.

For example, the plant I ordered online arrived wrapped in so many layers of plastic that I could practically fill the bin, and the seedlings came in a hard-plastic container with a lid. After that, I went to the garden centre and bought my bulbs loose but subject to availability.

There is more: nail glue came in a box covered in plastic with another hard plastic box inside. A spare part for the dishwasher had so much plastic packaging that the parcel was about 20 times larger than the spare part (which was the wrong one anyway).

When I visited someone in a care home I was covered in plastic from head to foot and the person I was visiting was asleep and wouldn't wake up! So frustrating on many levels!

Food purchase

This was easier. I bought fresh fruit and vegetables locally, mostly at Tony's, taking my own bags with me. Only salad and grapes came in plastic bags so I did without. I couldn't buy yoghurt as the carton has a plastic top and I suspect the cardboard has some kind of plastic preservative. I asked the fishmonger to put my fish in my own bag, which he did.

I could live without some

things, but hummus (in a plastic pot) is one of my staple foods, so I tried making my own. The recipe called for dried, not tinned, chickpeas but they come in plastic packaging. So I went to Planet Organic in Muswell Hill which sells them loose.

Another way

Then N2REFILL sent news that Daniel Helman would be selling refills of pastas, dried fruit, chocolate, rice, cereals and nuts outside East Finchley Methodist Church that Saturday. Just what I needed. I took along a pile of old plastic containers, stocked up and was given some delicious dried apricots by his daughter and a complementary box of herbal teas. Perfect to tide me through Sober October. Not quite the same as a glass of wine but...

N2REFILL are offering a new refill-at-your-door service. I completed a simple online order form and Daniel came to my house for an easy, convenient and safe way to help reduce plastic during this pandemic. The products are all organic and very tasty and you can refill as much as you need in your containers or the brown recyclable bags they offer. If you're interested, email REFILL to N2REFILL@gmail.com

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Gift shop pops up for a sustainable seasonal sale

By Lizzie Tomlin

Artist Alex Wheeler is turning his studio off Huntingdon Road, N2, into an art gift shop in time for Christmas. He tries to make his work as up-cycled and eco-friendly as possible and runs a certified carbon-positive business.



Treats in store: Alex Wheeler's studio

Eye-catching items created by Alex, as well as by other artists and small manufacturers, will be available. The event will be managed in a Covid-safe way and, if customers prefer, they can choose items from the website and collect them from the studio instead.

Before the pandemic, Alex worked as a designer and theatre artist, designing music videos and costumes for numerous artists like Paul Weller and Kate Nash, as well as designing sets for theatre tours.

His gift shop runs at Huntingdon Works, at the High Road end of Huntingdon Road, on 5-6 December, 12-13 December and 19-20 December. There will be art, gifts, accessories and stocking fillers for sale. Updates and full details of the sale can be found at: www.wheelermadeit.com

Stand-up comedy at the Bald Faced Stag

Latest London coronavirus rules allowing, Mark Maier's Comedy Night will take place at the Bald Faced Stag, High Road, N2, on Sunday 13 December (not as printed in our last edition). Tickets are available by searching for Bald Faced Comedy on www.wegotickets.com. If you want to be added to the email list for comedy shows exclusively, please email markmaier@icloud.com.



Gift: A banner by Alex

Your right to make decisions about your care

By Daphne Chamberlain

Covid-19 pandemic has triggered issues about not resuscitating an elderly, ill or vulnerable person. There have been disturbing reports of such instructions being put on medical files without consultation; and also of the vulnerable being pressured to sign consent forms without proper discussion.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) is an instruction that, should the heart stop or the patient stop breathing, resuscitation should not be attempted. Following a legal decision in 2014, and under current NHS guidelines, patients must be consulted beforehand as to whether they agree to this. If they are not capable of making this decision, next of kin/legal guardian, family or carers should be consulted.

The charity Age UK has stated: "Whether or not to sign a DNA-CPR form is an individual's decision, and they have a right to make that decision without feeling pressurised."

We have also heard of some older people being called on the phone out of the blue by their GP surgeries, being asked if they would agree to DNR, and/or ambulance paramedics not attempting cardio-pulmonary resuscitation if they are having

a heart attack.

The majority of patients and practitioners have thankfully not been involved in these very distressing incidents, but it has become clear that we need better advance communication.

Advance Decisions and Statements

Anyone can draw up an Advance Decision, registering their wish to refuse medical treatment, even if life is at risk as a result. It must be in writing, signed and witnessed. It is legally binding, but will only be used if the patient can't make or communicate a decision at the time.

It should be discussed with a healthcare professional who knows your medical history. Your GP and medical team must know, so they can include it in your notes. Written copies should be given to your loved

ones and carers.

It should be reviewed regularly, and can be changed at any time. Changes must be communicated, dated and signed. It's best to seek legal advice about setting up an Advance Decision.

You can also make an Advance Statement, which is not legally binding. This gives your preferences about how and where you would like to be cared for.

Helpful reading matter

Guides called 'Thinking About End of Life' and 'Advanced Decisions and Living Wills' can be downloaded from www.ageuk.org.uk. Printed copies can be ordered by calling 0800 678 1602, 8am - 6pm, 365 days of the year. Support and specialist advice are available on the same phone line.