



**Rotary Young Environmentalist
Competition
2019-2020
Intermediate 11-13 years**

**Clydebank High School
Waste – There is an alternative**

Background



- ❖ Clydebank High School is a large secondary school, near Glasgow in Scotland. Currently 1225 students are enrolled here. The age range is 11-18 years old. All school subjects are taught within the academic year at all levels up to Advanced Higher.
- ❖ We are a class of 20 students and we will be working on this project with the support of our Art & Design teacher. We are all aged 12 and we will also be collaborating with the school librarian. Together we plan to raise awareness regarding plastic waste.
- ❖ Our focus is on nature, wildlife and practical outdoor skills. The aim is to encourage all students at Clydebank High School to enjoy the outdoors so that they can develop love and respect for their natural world and feel confident exploring outdoors.

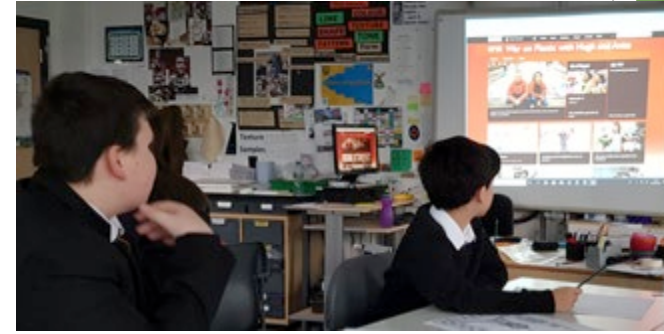
Objective; to look at single use plastic waste and research alternatives.

- We discussed the problems with single-use plastic. We looked at a simple alternatives to plastic water bottles and the practicalities and variety available.
- We looked at the work of environmental activist Greta Thunberg. We discussed the part that we can all play in helping with climate change.
- We looked at the Scottish governments website on sustainability. <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/eco-schools/ten-topics/waste-minimisation/>



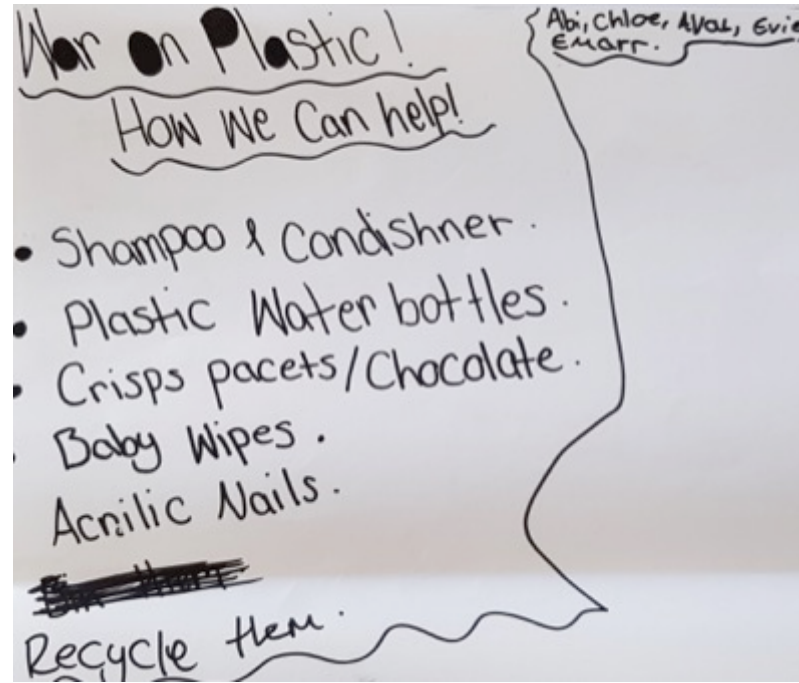
Task; to research the problem and record how much plastic waste our students produce in a week.

- **How we found out more?**
- We were introduced to the topic by showing them the emotive BBC documentary War on Plastic. This discusses the plastic problem with accuracy. It also introduces an experiment where they look at a single street in England who decide to try and go 'plastic free' for a month to see what the challenges are in our modern lifestyle.
- We then discussed what sort of disposable products we use in school which are not easy to recycle; plastic drink bottles and sandwich packaging being the main problem.
- We used the school library to research what they were made from and how difficult they were to breakdown and recycle.
- We discussed alternatives and the school librarian had examples of Vegware plates and cups - these are products which are fully compostable and could be used instead of plastic in the school dinner hall.



What we did?

- We split ourselves into groups of 4 and wrote down what single use plastic we currently use.
- We received our own recording card to write down what plastic we use in one school week.



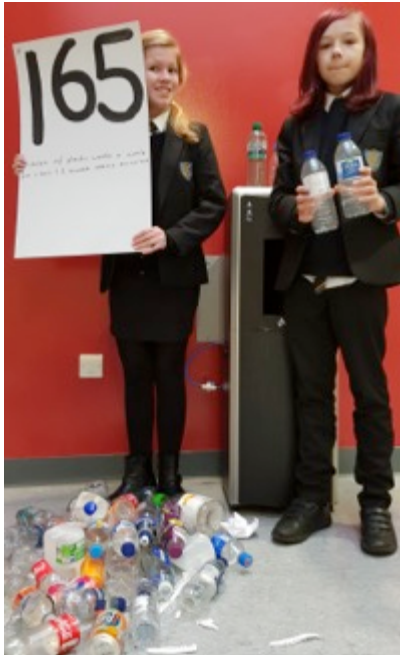
BIOPROFILES

Recording card - Categories of waste produced

Recording card		
Name	Willie Cantyle	
Class	1.2	
School	Clydebank High School	
City	Glasgow	
Day and date	Categories of waste produced	Amount
1. 28/10/19	Plastic food bag	1
2. 29/10/19	Plastic food bag	1
2. 29/10/19	Plastic water bottle	1
3. 30/10/19	Plastic food bag	1
3. 30/10/19	Plastic sweet wrapper	1
4. 1/11/19	Plastic Bottle	1
4. 1/11/19	Plastic food Bag	2

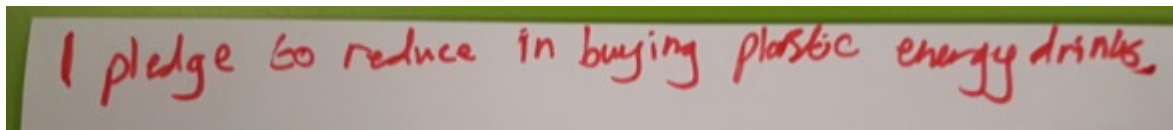
S1 Class totals for our plastic waste

Class Total for week (20 students)	Class total for year (39 school weeks)	S1 year group (13 classes)	School role is 1280 pupils which divided by 20 pupils equals 64 classes
165 pieces of plastic waste	$165 \times 39 =$ 6435 pieces a year	$6345 \times 13 =$ 83,655 pieces a year	$6345 \times 64 = 411,840$ ALMOST half a million



What action did we take

- We wrote to the local council asking to change the plastic packaging and polystyrene containers in our school canteen.
- We wrote down our pledges to show that we are serious about reducing our own single use plastic.



- We displayed our total use of plastic consumption outside the school dinner hall so that other students can think about this waste and try to change their own behaviour.



We emailed our local MP and West Dunbartonshire Council; expressing our concerns about the amount of plastic waste produced in the school canteen.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am aged 12 and in my first year studying at Clydebank High School. We are currently looking at the problem with plastic waste and pollution in Scotland.

To monitor this we have been recording our weekly usage of single use plastic so that we can see how big an issue this is in our school.

When we added up each pupil's individual record; last week my class of 20 students used 165 pieces of plastic waste just during school hours.

We multiplied this by 39 school weeks and realised our class alone would create 6435 pieces of plastic waste a year!

We researched the school roll of Clydebank High School to currently be 1280 pupils which divided by 20 students equals 64 classes.

So if we multiply our class total of 6435 pieces of plastic a year by 64 classes that equals 411,840 pieces of non-recyclable plastic waste a year in our school!

Half a million pieces of plastic just from having snacks and lunch in the school canteen!!!!

In primary school we used plastic plates that were washed and re-used in the dinner hall but in secondary school all the food is served in polystyrene or plastic tubs.

I have stopped buying the small tubs of fruit at break time, as I am trying to reduce my plastic waste.

I think West Dunbartonshire Council needs to look at supporting young people to make the right choice when it comes to buying food in the school canteen and I would like to be involved in discussing this further with someone in the council.

As pupils we want to try our best for the environment and recycle where possible but there are no recycling facilities anywhere near the dinner hall area in our school.

I would like to try to help the council to make an affordable solution as to how we provide hot meals at lunch time but still consider the impact this has on the environment.

Please can you forward my e-mail to the correct member of the council so I can discuss this further?

Yours sincerely,

Our Reflections

What did we enjoy or dislike?

"I enjoyed learning about the alternatives to using plastic"

"I liked watching the 'War on Plastic documentary' but I found it shocking when they poured all of our plastic waste in the sea"

"I was amazed when we calculated our classes use of plastic in just one week, we through away a lot of materials that are not recycled"

What are the impacts to us if we don't change?

"We read this newspaper story about how Clydebank could be totally submerged in flood water in just 30 years if sea waters continue to rise due to greenhouse gases"

<https://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/18068719.climate-change-cause-glasgow-airport-govan-partick-flooded-rising-sea-levels/>

What might be the impacts if we don't follow our recommendations?

"From the documentary I saw how all the plastic builds up in the sea and land, it has nowhere to go and we are causing problems for wildlife if we don't change"

"I am worried about the long term damage we are doing to the planet and how this might change our climate irreversibly"