

PRESS RELEASE

Got the bottle to help prevent plastic pollution? Hertfordshire has!

Refill Hertfordshire is on a mission to make refilling your water bottle easy, convenient and totally free, by introducing Refill Stations in as many places as possible.

The new scheme encourages cafes, bars, restaurants and any other public-facing business with a tap, to register themselves as a Refill Station for free on the Refill app and put a sticker in their window alerting passers-by to the fact that they're welcome to fill up their bottles for free.

Refill is an award-winning campaign which was launched by the not-for-profit organisation City to Sea in 2015 and is now being rolled out nationwide with support from Water UK and local water companies, such as Affinity Water in Hertfordshire. As part of this national campaign Refill Hertfordshire has now been launched.

Melanie Parr from WasteAware - The Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, who are working to launch Refill Hertfordshire locally, explains why both businesses and their customers should get involved: "In the UK 13 billion single-use plastic bottles are used each year - this includes all fizzy drinks, milk and toiletry bottles. A shocking 60% of these are water bottles – that's 7.7 billion bottles that could be easily avoided, if only we were refilling our reusable water bottles instead of buying single-use ones".

Melanie added, "We are all well aware of the problems that single-use plastic pollution is causing in our oceans, as well as being littered in our countryside too. Refill Hertfordshire gives us all the opportunity to help make this type of litter a thing of the past, at the same time as saving money. It's good business sense as well, as customers view businesses that provide free water refills more favourably and are more likely to return to them to make future purchases."

There are over 300 Refill Stations registered throughout Hertfordshire, but we are keen on signing up as many as possible - so if you have a tap that could become a Refill Station, please register yourself on the app or via www.refill.org.uk.

Refill Hertfordshire builds on the success of Refill around the UK, which now boasts a network of over 20,000 Refill Stations. Mala, the Refill Regional Coordinator, says "We're so excited that Hertfordshire is joining the Refill movement and making a real difference by reducing reliance on single-use plastics. Every time we refill a reusable bottle we save our own money and the planet's resources, and all those individual refills add up to a huge impact. It's great to see so many local businesses supporting Refill Hertfordshire by signing up to provide free refills."

If just one in ten Brits refilled once a week, we'd have 340 million less plastic bottles a year in circulation! It's estimated that nationally the Refill scheme will cut plastic bottle use by tens of millions each year, as well as substantially increasing the availability of high-quality drinking water.

Water UK Chief Executive Michael Roberts who has helped to support the Refill revolution says: "As an industry with a strong focus on the environment we are passionate about tackling the problems caused by plastic bottles, which clog up rivers and drains, and pollute our seas. By refilling water bottles, we can all help turn this harmful tide of plastic waste. This country has some of the best drinking water in the world and we want everyone to benefit from it. This scheme will do that by making it easier for people to refill their bottles wherever they work, rest, shop or play."

Make sure that before you leave your house you remember your reusables, so that you can easily refill your drinks bottle on the go.

Find out more about Refill Hertfordshire and how you can help reduce your plastic use further at www.wasteaware.org.uk/reusables. You can also visit the Refill website at www.refill.org.uk to download the free Refill app, register as a Refill Station and find out more about the Refill movement.

Notes to editors

- Refill Hertfordshire has just launched by WasteAware, the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership. WasteAware work to promote campaigns to Herts residents to help them to reduce, reuse and recycle as much as possible.
- Refill is one of several campaigns from City to Sea, the not-for-profit organisation running campaigns to prevent marine plastic pollution.
- Refill launched in Bristol in 2015, and there are now over 20,000 Refill Stations around the UK registered on the free Refill app which shows you where you can refill your water bottle for free.
- Web: www.refill.org.uk www.citytosea.org.uk
- Twitter: @refill
- A Press Pack with logos and images is available at <http://bit.ly/RefillMediaPack>
- Water UK is supporting the national roll-out of the Refill Scheme, alongside local water companies, with the aim of having tens of thousands of Refill Stations in every major city and town in England by 2021.
- Water UK is a membership organisation which represents and works with the major water and wastewater service providers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Water UK brings people together to create better policies for the future of water. Water UK Communications can be contacted on: 0207 344 1805.