

Plastic free events guide 2022/23

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We're Wasting Away!

Events generate lots of waste – most of it being Single-use plastics, such as bottles, cups, cutlery to name a few. However, with some creative planning and practical steps, we can bring people together on a journey to reduce their plastic footprint. Creating low – or zero – plastic events.



What's The Problem

Plastic is really useful, and we use it every day. The problem is what happens after we throw it away. It is thought that more than five trillion pieces of plastic are in the world's oceans. Experts believe that by 2050, the amount of plastic in the ocean will weigh more than the amount of fish!*

Most plastic doesn't break down. It doesn't rot, like paper or food, but hangs around in the environment for hundreds of years. Each year, 400 million tonnes of plastic is produced and 40% of that is Single-use plastic that we only use once before it's thrown away!

Although it might sound difficult to eradicate the existence of plastic, there are many tried and tested ways to control and reduce the use of single-use plastics, especially at events.

* World Economic Forum, 2016

Communicate Your Policy

Inform all stakeholders and the public about your plastic-free event. Identify clear expectations of stallholders/attendees to avoid the use of known single-use plastic items. Make sure staff and volunteers, vendors and suppliers understand the policies.



Go Digital

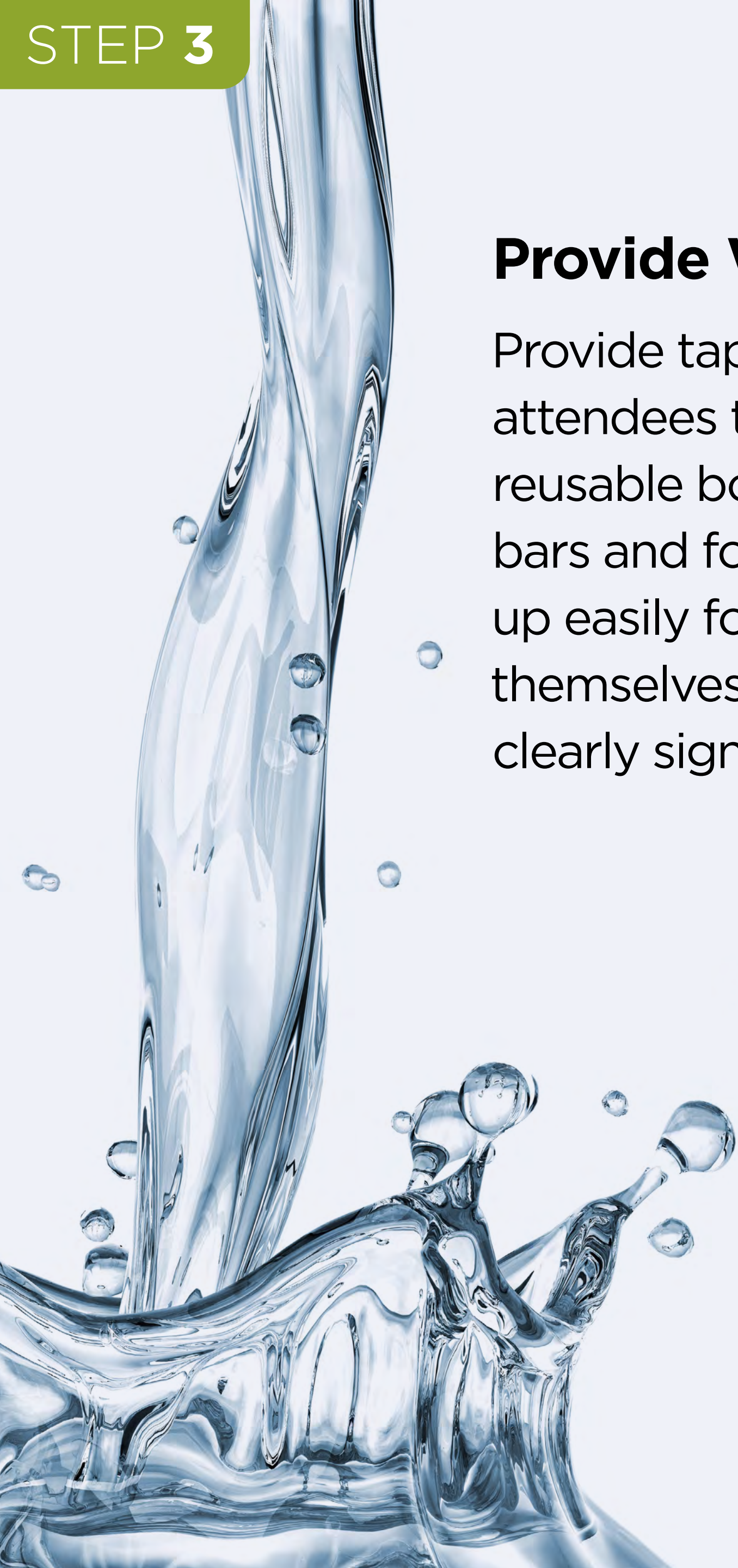
Send e-invites/digital tickets. This reduces costs, saves time and it's better for the environment.



STEP 3

Provide Water on Tap

Provide tap water and encourage attendees to bring their own reusable bottles and cups. Water bars and fountains can be set up easily for people to help themselves. These need to be clearly signed and accessible.



STEP 4

Use Durable Items

If catering is provided at the event, use durable dishes, cutlery, and glasses, which can all be reused.



Recycle If Possible

Ensure all food and drink vendors provide only recyclable, reusable or 100% compostable foodware (cutlery, plates, containers, cups, etc.) to the public.



Encourage Return of Items

Use a deposit return scheme where possible. A refillable system for alcohol and soft drinks involves the public purchasing (putting down a deposit) and keeping a cup for the event. No drinks can be served without a refillable cup.



Review Giveaways - Are They Necessary?

Review delegate giveaway bags. Are these really necessary? Do they add value to a delegate's experience? While the bags tend to be non-plastic and reusable, their contents typically contain plastic - key rings, pens, stress balls, USB flash drives, the list goes on. If you really want delegates to takeaway something, focus on quality and sustainability over quantity.



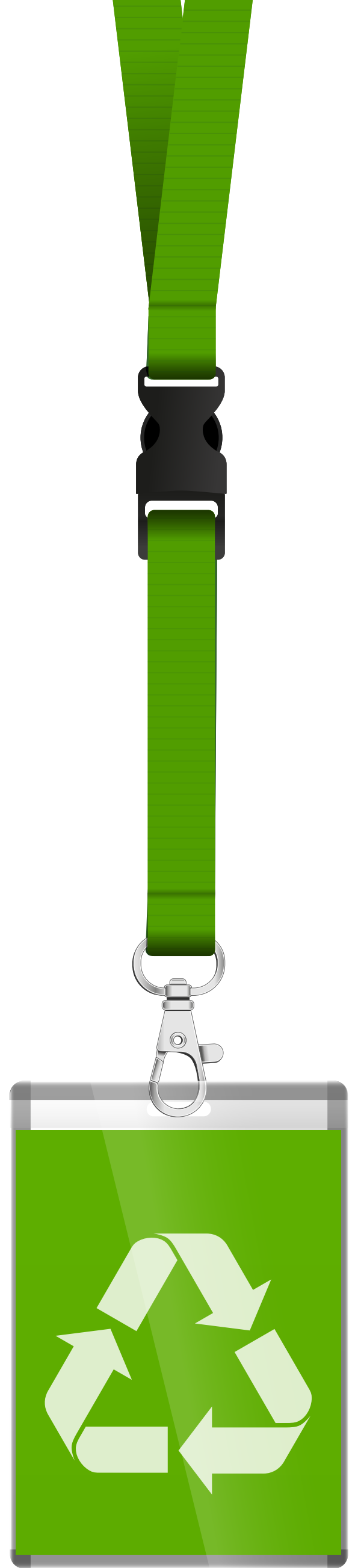
Manage Waste Disposal

Eliminating plastic goods entirely isn't always an option, but you should at least try to reduce their use, especially the ones that cannot be recycled. Where reduce or reuse isn't an option, ensure waste is separated so that proper recycling can be done.



Reuse Items Continually

Where plastic is unavoidable, try to identify opportunities to reuse rather than dispose. Delegate name badges are a great example: consider setting up a drop-off station where people can hand in their badges for reuse at future conferences. Plastic signage is another example: where possible, omit dates from your signage so that it can be reused in following years.



Collect Data and Review Event

Data collection is essential to monitor performance and improve services. It is recommended that data is kept on quantities of materials sent for recycling, composting and waste. Your waste collectors should be able to provide this data. Monitoring compliance by vendors is important, too, as well as awareness surveys and public understanding. Key lessons can be used in all future events!



Foyle Clipper Festival 2022



The Clipper Maritime Festival ran for four days from the 20-24 July 2022 on the River Foyle. The world-famous festival carried a strong environmental message, aiming to raise awareness of the importance of water conservation, sustainability and the need to reduce and reuse plastics.

A beverage return scheme was implemented for the first time at the festival bars, with 20,000 reusable cups available for £1 each and the money returned to customers when your cup was given back. Feedback from the scheme was extremely positive and 15,500 cups made their way back to the vendor for cleaning and reuse. What's more, to improve knowledge around how many times each cup was reused, the council are planning to implement a clicker system in future.

Prior to the successful 2022 edition of The Clipper Maritime Festival, Festival Co-ordinator with Derry City and Strabane District Council, Helena Hasson, said:

“We’re encouraging everyone to avail of the facilities in place, such as the water refill stations, and we are asking all our traders at the festival to minimise packaging where possible and to avoid single use plastics. Compost bins will also be provided for food vendors, and we will have Waste Champions on site reminding people to dispose of their rubbish responsibly.”

Helena Hasson Festival Co-ordinator

The Open at Royal Portrush 2019



The 148th Open Championship took place at Royal Portrush in 2019. It became **of** the first major global sporting events to completely eliminate the use of single-use plastic water bottles. 19 water stations were installed around the site and thousands of stainless steel refillable water bottles were provided to those attending. Fans were also encouraged to bring their own **refillable** water bottles and enjoy unlimited free, chilled and purified drinking water.

Royal Portrush Golf Club is on a journey to carbon neutrality through the introduction of a number of sustainable measures such as the introduction of BioLPG, solar PV and the Club has purchased their own water stations through Bluewater to continue the initiative introduced through the 148th Open Championship. It is estimated that approximately 10,000 plastic water bottles have been removed from the site annually through the provision of these water stations.

“Royal Portrush Golf Club recognises its role in the local and wider community and is committed to showing leadership in the area of sustainability. We have commenced work on a number of projects that will significantly reduce the Club’s carbon footprint and move us towards carbon neutral status. We are custodians of this beautiful site and are committed to looking after it in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner.”

John Lawler General Manager

Bonus Step

Finally, congratulate yourself on your achievements! Communicate your wins with your audiences. Plan for the future, and pride yourself in knowing that you are working to repair our environment and protect our future.

Does your business want to be more eco-friendly? Don't know where to begin?
Please get in touch we are here to help:

enquiries@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org

[#TacklingPlasticNI](#) [#PlasticPromise](#)



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