

Frequently asked Questions:

Polzeath Marine Conservation Groups Water Bottle Refill Station

“Fill your bottles with free, clean drinking water instead of buying more water in plastic “

1. Why do we need a refill station?

We believe this is an innovative project to reduce the number of single use plastic bottles in our environment. It complements the ReFill scheme (See Q.17 & Q.18 below). The council owned bins soon overflow with waste people leave behind, so with the action of gulls and the tides it ends up in the sea. This waste joins the 4.8 to 12.7 million tons of plastic that ends up in our oceans every year.

2. Who will pay for the installation cost?

South West Water has offered to make the connection free of charge in return for some PR. A water supply exists at the top of the beach. An Outdoor Tubular Bottle Filling Station will be sited there with its own water meter, drain off tap and soak away.

3. Who will pay for the maintenance cost?

The units have very low maintenance. We have 2 references; one from a yacht club in Cowes in a similar marine environment to ours who have had theirs for over 3 years; and a council in Wales, who have had theirs for over a year. Neither has had to maintain their units so far. The components have up to 10 years life and the unit up to 15 years. These units have been in the UK for 4 years so it is a bit of a leap of faith but we think well worth the risk bottles”.

4. What is the total cost of the unit?

The total capital cost is £2,425 (Inc. VAT) excluding installation.

5. Who is going to pay for it?

We have 3 grant applications in process at 27/10/17 each for £1,000-£2000. At the end of its life we aim to replace it.

6. Who will pay for the running costs?

The running costs have been estimated at £ 40- £70 p.a.
Water usage based on estimated 9000 litres =£20 (100 people filling up 1 litre bottles a day over 90 days of the summer)
Standing charge depending on the tariff set on installation £20-50 pa.

The Group will pay the above and take responsibility for maintenance, monitoring and management of this project. If our funds become inadequate in the future, specific targeted fundraising will cover this cost.

7. What about repair cost

If necessary the Group will fundraise to form a £500 restricted fund in our accounts by our year-end and this can be increased as appropriate. We have previous experience of this; we have raised £5000 for a Major Works Fund for Council owned property. This has been raised since we became independent in 2011 (see Question 19 below).

8. What is the cost of the water to users?

The unit will provide free, quick easy drinking water for visitors and locals alike

9. There will be a queue at the water fountain causing congestion on the pavement!

One of our target users includes the families on the beach in the summer. People will be able to access it from the grass area as well as the pavement. If there are a few people on the grass waiting it means more single use bottles saved from our beach.

10. How do you know it will be a successful project?

There will be a water meter installed so we can measure usage. We anticipate as advertising and word of mouth take effect we will see an increase in consumption. It is very close to our new interpretation board, we can promote them together.

11. What about water quality?

The Water Regulations Officers we met on the beach had previous experiences with MIW units and they were happy with them being installed. The Operations Director of Drinking Water Services will give further advice when we have planning and funds in place.

12. What about Council permission?

At present we are working towards this and hope we can satisfy their concerns. We also hope that this project will be the start of a partnership with the Council. We have met with our local councillor and proceed with her support. We are committed to making this project zero cost for the Council and if we look at the litter picture (below) and extrapolate this through the summer it's possible there will be some savings.

13. What about vandalism?

These units are virtually vandal proof and the references above have had implied this. The unit will be installed in a very public place, which should deter vandalism.

14. What is to stop someone filling up a very large container?

The output nozzle is designed to be vandal resistant and has a stainless steel shroud around it. It is impossible to connect a hose. The button is a slow push; it takes about 20 seconds to fill 500ml. So someone would have to hold the button for well over a minute. We envisage our users to be families on the beach, locals, walkers etc. and there are accessible water taps on Polzeath campsites, we don't anticipate this will be a problem.

15. How do we know your Group has the ability to see this project through and into the future?

We are one of the most proactive marine groups in Cornwall and this is an innovative project aimed at protecting our environment and delivery on our key objectives. Below are some of our other successful projects:

We take part in, and gave £2,500 to fund, boat surveys along the north Cornish coast. We aim to continue this next year. These record data on nesting sea birds, cetaceans, seals, plankton levels, human activity/disturbance and ghost gear. All the data goes to national databases.

We engage in public events all year round and additional summer activities specifically for families and children. We have recruited two beach rangers, who support us in our work with schools and increase our contact with our many summer visitors.

We work in conjunction with the local community, the National Trust and other conservation groups so we are all working towards keeping our beautiful spot on the north Cornwall coast for future generations to enjoy

16. What about other units installed in Cornwall?

This will be a first for a Cornish beach and hopefully will be an example to encourage other beaches. Polzeath thrives because we have a beautiful beach and ocean. Our economy is based on water sports and related activities. This project is one small step to reducing single use plastic. This project and our interpretation board will be advertised widely using social media, radio and TV and ourselves.

17. What is the ReFill Scheme?

ReFill is an original concept created by BeachCare (Keep Britain Tidy). The aim is to encourage people to buy a reusable flask and refill it with tap water at various locations. An app can be downloaded which then shows locations around Cornwall where people can obtain free drinking water from businesses.

18. How does this project fit with the Refill campaign?

It will complement the Cornwall Wildlife Trusts ReFill Campaign. We have been part of this for 3 years and sold 200 reusable stainless steel bottles. We aim to sell 200 in 2018. Our businesses are few in number and so busy during the summer with our huge numbers of visitors they would struggle to refill water bottles on request. During the busy summer, people can refill their bottles free of charge instead of buying more water in plastic bottles. In the winter it is hoped businesses will have the time to join in the ReFill scheme

19. Insurance?

Our Group will insure the unit both for damage e.g. high tides and for Public Liability. During freezing conditions the unit can be safely isolated. A Risk Assessment will be submitted prior to installation.

