

Club President JULIA BRADBURY kicks off 2018 with a message about the health of the great outdoors - something we all have the ability to influence

# First lady



**WELCOME** to 2018 everyone.

Everybody will have been glued to their small screens recently on Sunday nights watching the incredible ocean documentary series Blue Planet II. What they will have noticed sadly in every episode is the abundance of plastic in the ocean. In one of the early episodes on coral reefs there was a sad moment where clownfish were searching for a surface on which to lay their eggs, and were considering using an old plastic bottle that floated by. It was difficult to watch.

What some folk may be surprised to learn is that some statistics suggest that as much as 80 per cent of the plastic litter that ends up in our oceans comes from land, either leaking from landfill or rivers. Even more worrying – it's estimated by 2050 if we carry on like this there'll be more plastic in the ocean than marine life.

It's sometimes difficult to connect with these stats, and some of you may even be asking 'why does this matter to me?' But it's so important because of the way we see and interact with our natural world. As campers and walkers and people who generally love the outdoors, the scene we're confronted with is one of nature and natural survival, and it's that amazingness that keeps us coming back for more. If we're slowly choking that and killing it, we're not going to have anything left to enjoy.

Plastic particles have now been found in the food chain, in salt, in tap water. We are consuming it because marine life is consuming it. We should care about this stuff anyway but knowing it's potentially in our own bodies must surely be enough to make people care more?

Plastic does not go away. It's such an incredible product because it's so hard-wearing and durable. The side effect that

perhaps wasn't thought about when it was created is that it will last forever. The toothbrush or the pen you discard is hard to get rid of, and it probably won't get recycled because we're still very bad at recycling most things.

That's the reality of plastic.

So what can we do about it? Well I think we have to keep it simple – we can't expect everyone to ditch everything plastic from their lives instantly. However, if we can encourage people to refuse a plastic straw (Wetherspoons, one of the UK's major pub chains, has stopped offering plastic straws and has replaced them with paper ones), say no to plastic carrier bags and re-think some of the items we buy because they are wrapped in plastic, perhaps we can all slowly force a change.

An easy one for us all is to stop using plastic bottles. Instead get yourself a refillable steel bottle to take with you on camping trips or to your favourite coffee shop.

There are plant- and vegetable-based alternatives too. A company called Vegware makes compostable cutlery. EcoForLife makes plant-based water bottles that biodegrade, and even some camping gear is

biodegradable – just look at Outwell's Bamboo range of crockery, which my kids use at home.

It's not an easy problem to solve – it's about businesses changing the way they package goods,

rethinking product design, and it's about harmonising recycling across the country.

If we can slowly turn people to this way of thinking, we as a large army of good, honest folk and nature-lovers can do much to help. So I'm suggesting we, and our whole families, get involved in thinking what we can do to reduce our use of plastic. We need to think about the fact the items we're using will never go away and asking ourselves whether things can be disposed of in a productive way or upcycled.

I'd like us all to think about this as we go out camping and caravanning this year. Share your small successes with us by writing to [forum@myccc.co.uk](mailto:forum@myccc.co.uk) – we want to know what you're doing to help.

By 2019 I hope we'll all be able to say we've done as much as possible to reduce our use of plastic. Enjoy your camping.

## WHERE AND WHEN YOU'LL SEE ME NEXT...

**For the New Year I'll be back on the box again. My £10k Holiday Home is a brand new series on ITV in the early part of the year. The average British family spend £5,000 annually on holidays. The idea of the show is to demonstrate that with double that amount you can buy your very own holiday home abroad! We look at everything from treehouses in Portugal to boats in Ireland and houses in Bulgaria, as well as a very funky caravan re-design.**

**Also, in spring, I'll be working with Strictly Come Dancing Champion Ore Oduba to reveal what the public have voted for in Britain's Favourite 100 Walks.**

**I'll also be revealing what tent, caravan and motorhome owners told the Club in its annual Owner Satisfaction Survey. I'll be presenting the findings in the middle of January in Manchester. Look out for the results next month!**

