

What's multi-coloured, weighs just 200g and is completely useless?

A fortnights worth of rubbish for two city based organisations. Over the last fortnight strategic communications consultancy Athene Communications and the Greater Peterborough Partnership, who are based in the same office in Priestgate, have been taking part in a Zero-Waste challenge, doing all they can to reduce the amount of rubbish produced in the office that would usually be sent to landfill.

The challenge has been laid down to the city's businesses by environmental charity Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) as part of the Zero Waste Places project. Peterborough was selected as one of only six UK cities to take part in the project by the government last year. These six cities will go as far as possible in reducing the environmental impact of waste and their findings will be used to help development future waste management strategies for the UK.

Ian Tennant, project manager at PECT explains, "The zero waste fortnight that we are challenging local businesses to get involved in, is part of the wider Zero Waste Places project. We're also working with Opportunity Peterborough to minimise the construction waste from the city centre redevelopment, and are interviewing all the retailers in the city centre so we can increase the city's recycling rates."

Staff at Athene and the Greater Peterborough Partnership have been sharing just one small bin for non-recyclable waste, rather than having one bin each that is emptied daily and the results are astonishing. By reducing, reusing, composting and recycling and their waste materials the organisations have produced just 200g, that's the same as a sachet of cup a soup!

The most difficult challenge the team came up against was food packaging, which meant many shop bought lunches were replaced with meals bought in from home in reusable containers. Staff also found that preparing lunches at home is not only better for the environment but often cheaper and healthier too.

Richard Astle, Director of Athene Communications said, "This fortnight we have all realised just how much non-recyclable material goes into the packaging of food, even fruit is now often found in an unnecessary plastic bag or box. If we are trying to reduce our waste, it is really important that supermarkets join in with the campaign by providing goods in packaging which can be recycled or reused."

GPP were pleased to take part in the challenge and demonstrate their commitment to Peterborough creating the UK's Environment Capital. Nick Goodman, GPP Environment Capital Officer said, "Taking part in the initiative has been a thought provoking experience in the office, with staff thinking creatively about how waste products can be reused rather than being thrown away. We were amazed to see how much of our office waste can be reused, recycled, composted or even not be created in the first place"

Both organisations plan to continue to reduce the amount of waste produced in the office and will be encouraging other local business to become zero waste.

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Other organisations taking part in the zero waste fortnight challenge include Opportunity Peterborough, Scott Wilson, Anne Corder Recruitment and BBC Radio Cambridgeshire.

There is still time to take part in the zero waste fortnight challenge:

All you need to do is select the two-week period before the end of March that you would like to hold your challenge, then contact Ian Tennant for a copy of the guidelines to help you get started- ian.tennant@pect.net, 01733 569875.

ENDS

Notes to Editor

1. **Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT)** is a charity set up following Peterborough's designation as a UK Environment City in 1992. PECT carries out research and implements practical projects to protect and improve the environment. Our mission at PECT is to lead and support the city in delivering growth and regeneration in a truly environmentally sustainable way. As a successful charity we work with a wide variety of stakeholders to make a difference for our environment – through innovation, enterprise and commitment to action on the ground. PECT has a strong track record of delivering projects of regional and national significance. It has a staff of 35 working on initiatives from green spaces to business environmental management to sustainable communities and lifestyles.

For further information please contact:

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