

# Use of disposable plastic cups Policy Proposal

## Contact details

Your name (Proposer of the policy)	Conner Kearey
The name of a person who supports the policy (Secunder of the policy)	Ryan Skidmore

## Student Impact

Have you consulted students about your proposal? Please explain how many students you have engaged with and how.	I have consulted a number of students and VP Alex Doyle. This engagement has been both verbally and via social media. All the students consulted agree with proposal.
How does your proposal impact the students at the University of Plymouth, what difference will it make to students?	The proposal will reduce UPSU's contribution to climate change and plastic waste. This proposal will not make a direct change to students in their daily lives at university however it will reduce the footprint of all students that use the venue. The policy will help to increase UPSU's profile as a sustainable student's union.

## Policy Proposal

**The Union Notes (Facts)** This section should include facts, not reflection or opinions. Please provide references where possible.

1. The UPSU bar serves beverages, both alcoholic and not, in glassware until the evening.
  2. After this time, beverages are the served in single use Polypropylene plastic cups.
  3. Most of these cups are thrown away after their use and not recycled.
  4. This contributes to significant waste.
- UPSU must pay for waste removal services.

**The Union Believes (Opinions/Beliefs)** This section requires reflection on the facts stated in 'The Union Notes'

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1. Plastic waste is a significant problem for the whole planet, students at UPSU have already started reducing waste by removing plastic straws from the night club venue.
2. The university has won multiple awards for sustainability, 8 in total. See link below - <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/sustainability>
- 3.

**The Union Resolves (Actions)** Here you will describe the action you want to be taken, be specific.

1. UPSU nightclub venue should stop using Polypropylene cups and replace them with reusable plastic cups, such as used by other venues around the city.
2. These new reusable cups will help reduce plastic waste produced by the venue and will still be adequate for safety.
3. The disposable cups can stop being used immediately or phased out over a set time, say 3 months, to reduce the financial cost of purchasing new reusable cups.
4. Cost of cups and design/capacity must be decided. This can be decided in partnership with the managers of the venue.

**Appendices/supporting information** Please include any supporting information relevant to your motion, this could include; consideration of how you would achieve any points in 'The Union Resolves', links to news articles or online publications

- To assess the amount of plastic waste produced using these cups, sale figures for drinks served after plastic is used in the evening should be collected. This data should be easily collected from the management of the UPSU nightclub venue.
- Cost of purchasing new cups
- The cost of purchasing the cups should be collected.
- Cost of plastic waste removal.
- Sustainability awards won by the university - <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/sustainability>

#### EXTRACT OF MEETING MINUTES – 13<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2018

##### Disposable plastic cups (appendix 1)

Conner Kearey explained that he had originally submitted the policy proposal for debate at Union Council. As the proposal had operational impacts in terms of the running of the venue and financial implications, the proposal was deferred pending a meeting with staff to discuss the issue further.

Conner reported that they had met with the Bars Manager and Deputy Bars Manager as well as Velu Balasubramanian, Director of Commercial Services. UPSU staff explained the cost of buying new cups and the additional staff time required.

It was noted that the bar used to have hard plastic stacking cups that were reused. Lowri Jones – President, commented that they were left over stock from a specific event.

Lowri went on to explain that they had asked themselves the same question regarding reusable cups when they started the role and found out that the hard plastic cups do become a health and safety issue when broken. Unlike the disposable cups that are soft and flatten when stood on, the hard cups are easy to slip on and can break into sharp, jagged pieces which become a hazard.

In other venues that use hard plastic cups, such as Przym, patrons are not allowed to take cups onto the dance floor but, due to the layout of UPSU, it is very difficult to monitor that.

Gina Connelly – UPSU CEO, reiterated what Lowri had said regarding the risks from the hard plastic and explained that changing over to that style of cup would likely have an impact on insurance premiums as they do pose additional risk.

Conner explained that the bar staff gave an estimated additional cost of £3,000 to buy the cups and an extra £24,000 in staffing costs.

Maja Smith – VP Education, noted that they had worked in the bar and at the end of each shift the reusable cups need to be dried individually to stop them going mouldy so there would be additional staff time to do so.

Conner had been shown around the bar area and suggested that it could be possible to buy updated machinery to negate the need for additional staff time. Conner appreciated the need for additional resources regarding funding and staff time but, in his opinion the waste of resources used in one use, disposable plastic cups outweighs the difficulty in finding a sustainable solution.

Part of the issue is regarding lack of space, both the store cups and for the additional machinery required to wash the cups. Conner added that the glassware is generally provided, free of charge, from the brewery.

Gina Connelly – CEO, explained that the proposed changes have a significant impact on operations and costings would have been seriously considered. Expenditure needs to balance with income and without additional revenue to cover increased spending, resources will need to re-allocated from elsewhere. The profit made from the bar goes to funding non-revenue making membership services.

Conner suggested that the re-usable plastic cups could be phased in bit by bit so as to minimise initial outlay. Alex Doyle – VP Activities agreed more could be done to mitigate the impact of single use cups. Alex suggested a policy which sets the time to switch from glass to plastic, with

glass being used for as long is safe to do so. This should also cover future plans so if there is opportunity to install new machines due to change in layout/new premises, then the policy could commit to seriously evaluating that option at the time.

It was acknowledged that policies currently only last for two years but that they can be renewed when they have lapsed.

Gina Connelly noted that plans to refurbish the area are being considered, dependant on funding, and if the opportunity does arise that space becomes available, then it will be evaluated.

Conner acknowledged that there are challenges regarding the implementation of the proposal but felt that there is a balance to be struck between reducing one-use plastic cups and managing resources to make that possible.

The motion is still at proposal stage and is not to be voted on at this time. Alex Doyle – VP Activities and President elect noted that he would be happy to work on the proposal with Conner.

The motion will be amended and brought back at a future meeting