

**CONSULTATION ABOUT THE USE OF THROWAWAY CROCKERY AND CUTLERY
AT COMMUNITY BASE, AUGUST 2007**

In August 2007 Community Base consulted all groups hiring its conference room about whether to ban the use of throwaway plates, cutlery and drink containers in the conference room. Community Base provides washable plates, cutlery and tumblers free of charge on condition that they are washed up afterwards.

Groups were given two weeks to respond and 12 groups, four groups at Community Base and eight external groups, gave us their views. You can read what they told us below.

Following the consultation Community Base decided to make its conference room a throwaway free zone by banning the use of disposable crockery, cutlery or drink containers.

You can read more about Community Base's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint at www.communitybase.org/carbonfootprint.

Colin Chalmers
Community Base director

I think this is a great initiative and I believe making it a condition for groups to have to use reusable crockery and cutlery is good - as long as the crockery provided by community base remains free of charge.

Good luck with this initiative,
alex
Brighton Solfed

Hi Colin
I think that the use of plates and cutlery provided free of charge would be a terrific addition to the booking of CB rooms. They are so much nicer to use and don't involve unnecessary waste.
Agreeing not to use disposables would be a very reasonable condition to add to your terms.
Best wishes
Jennifer Drury
Volunteer Co-ordinator
My Brighton and Hove

I cannot see a problem with that - the only point I would make is that often it is hard to find teaspoons, so we try to remember to bring our own. Sometimes we have used plastic, but usually our spoons are metal.

We appreciate the use of mugs and plates, thankyou.

Madeline Peasgood Treasurer
Brighton & Hove branch of Epilepsy Action

Hello Colin,
I agree with you about the enormous waste when using paper plates and plastic cutlery, (most of which cannot even be re-cycled). The only problem with a stock of ordinary plates and cutlery is getting all of the groups to do as you ask and wash up / put away afterwards, as you say in this e mail you could make it a condition of booking with the person who signs your form taking responsibility. It might also be an idea to levy a deposit which can be retained if you have to put staff in to wash up (or re wash in some cases as not everyone's standards are the same!)
Hope this helps,
Best wishes,
Anita
(Anita Rich Centre Manager BYC)
Community Buildings Network

Good idea, Colin, but I think there will need to be a very large amount of cutlery and plates available because they will go missing quite frequently, and the constant cost of replacement might need to be factored in. So on the premise that stocks are regularly and frequently checked and replenished I think it could work.

Best wishes

Debbie Charman
Director
Carers Centre

Dear Colin

This is a great idea. We have already invested in plates and cutlery for our meetings but when we invite a large crowd to the conference room it will be very useful to have more to use.
Thanks

Zoe Brinkworth
AMAZE

Hi Colin

SIS uses the conference room quite a lot and we're completely in agreement and would wish to support CB's intention to reduce it's carbon footprint.

I do however think a compromise might be helpful. In the main when SIS uses the CR for training/meetings for smaller nos of individuals 15/20 we would generally use cutlery provided and wash up.

However where we have had events like our AGM accommodating up to 80 or 90 individuals I think the use of the cutlery as you suggest might be a 'false economy'. Using disposable paper plates and such on these occasions not only makes it quicker to tidy up the room after such events but also helps reduce the amount of hot water etc we would need to use to wash up all the cutlery.

Perhaps CB could consider a 'participant size' below which the use of the provided cutlery is encouraged and a 'participant' size over which it would be acceptable to use disposable cutlery?

Regards
Shahreen
Sussex Interpreting Services

Hi

We would fully support your decision to make it a condition of hiring the room to use the reusable plates and cutlery and are impressed by your commitment to reducing your carbon footprint.

Regards.

Sue Littleford
Expert Patients Programme Community Interest Company

Hi

Yes - we would welcome the provision of reusable plates and cutlery as 2 less things to bring. Will washing up liquid and sponge also be provided to wash up? Also a kettle would be great - as we often only cater for a few people - this would be more economical than the urn,

Thanks

Emma Houldsworth
Client Support Manager
Business Action on Homelessness

Dear Colin,

I think we in the Person Centred Community would support this idea of using reusable plates and cutlery. Generally we don't use any plates or cutlery because we only provide teas and coffees. It is possible that some of our workshop participants may bring snacks from say Pret a Manger for their lunches and disposable plates they bring from places like that may eventually be disposed of in your bins, but I guess that's not what you are talking about. Otherwise all in favour.

Peter Hunt

Treasurer

Person Centred Community

Hi Colin

We would strongly support the use of reusable utensils and crockery at Community Base

Sarah O'Dair

Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Head of Profession

South Downs Health Speech and Language Therapists

Hi Colin

Thanks for this opportunity to input to the discussion. The team have discussed this and while we support CB's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint, we do not think that restricting use of disposable plates and cutlery is viable for conference room users. Our comments on this include:

- many organisations (like the Forum) are typically under-resourced with events being run on a shoe-string, with crucially no staff capacity for organising catering and the like. It is a reality that when clearing up from events, convenience will sometimes take priority, as the staff member co-ordinating the event may well be working alone, and will already be challenged to deal with queries/questions/actions emerging from the event. At that moment in time the staff member will not be well placed to efficiently deal with washing/clearing up, which will add unnecessary stress, especially if other conference room users are waiting to access the room/kitchen.

- having access to the reusable materials in the cupboards is a fantastic opportunity and incentive for groups to make use of these resources and reduce their own waste, if they are in a position to do so. We welcome this provision and will seek to use the resources going forward. CB could helpfully promote use of the plates etc which are available and the ecological benefits of this, from which members can make an informed choice as to which they will use for their events, based on their capacity etc.

- this ban could be particularly difficult to enforce, given users access Community Base conference room without interaction with CB staff, i.e. it is difficult to imagine how it would work in practice.

I hope this is useful

Best wishes

Sally

Sally Hiscock

Chief Officer

Brighton and Hove Community and Voluntary Sector Forum