

Subject: EU Interreg 2Seas Project FACET - supporting a Circular Economy within the tourism & leisure Sector

Report to: Environment Committee - 25 May 2022

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SUBJECT MATTER

This report provides members with an update on the EU funded Interreg 2Seas project called FACET which seeks to support tourism, leisure & hospitality businesses in the borough of Great Yarmouth move to more resource efficient business models by adopting 'Circular Economy' practices. The project runs to March 2023.

Recommendation:

That the Environment Committee notes the contents of this report and endorses the continued development of this project.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Committee will recall that the FACET project was first explained in a report tabled at the Environment Committee on 25 November 2021 when the Committee endorsed the implementation of the project. Subsequently, a verbal update was given at Committee on 16 February 2022 .
- 1.2. 'FACET' stands for: *Facilitate the Adoption of Circular Entrepreneurship in the Tourism and Leisure Sector*. Project FACET is part of the wider Interreg 2Seas Programme which is a European Territorial Cooperation Programme covering England, France, The Netherlands and Belgium.
- 1.3. FACET involves supporting and testing how, in sustainable terms, a shift to a more Circular Economy could be achieved to benefit the tourism & leisure sector, residents and visitors. The partner business organisations in Project FACET, are therefore either tourist resorts or companies/public sector organisations promoting the visitor economy:
<https://www.interreg2seas.eu/en/FACET>.
- 1.4. The previous report on FACET set-out that through extensive research and speaking directly to local tourism and hospitality-related businesses, that four pilots Circular Economy solutions were proposed for testing: (1) Plastic waste (2) Food waste (3) Single use takeaway packaging waste and (4) Behaviour Change/Educational support. Each of these pilots are now underway and this report provides members with an update on each pilot.

2. CIRCULAR ECONOMY PILOT PROJECTS

2.1 **Plastic waste** – Norfolk County Council for the FACET project has commissioned a locally-grown Community Interest Company (CIC) based in Great Yarmouth known as WasteSmiths CIC. WasteSmiths is a newly formed entity set-up to work with local communities and businesses to collect using a form of green transport and re-manufacture post-consumer take away plastic packaging materials, and develop other new plastic products made-out of recycle. The intention is for these recycled products to be used within the borough thereby supporting Circular Economy principles.

2.2 The aim of this pilot is therefore to divert plastic material from disposal and turn it into valuable products that can be used locally. Trading as 'Precious Plastics East', the CIC has secured a base on Estcourt Road, Great Yarmouth, with the aim of being operational by June 2022.

2.3 To aid the CIC's research and design stage, the Borough and County Council introduced Precious Plastics East to the design department of East Norfolk Sixth Form College. Together, with input from design students, the College and the CIC have been exploring the possibilities for future re-manufactured products which utilise locally collected post-consumer plastic as a secondary raw material. To date, preliminary studies suggest that a mixture of high value items, such as jewellery and high-volume products, such as pallets, planters, furniture etc. (a prototype of a bench is shown here) , to be the most sustainable business model for the CIC beyond the life of the FACET funding. The thought being that this would enable large amounts of plastic to be collected and re-manufactured, whilst also ensuring the financial viability of the project longer term. Initial conversations with businesses indicate a strong interest, with collections due to take place using an e-cargo bike to avoid vehicle related emissions.



2.4 **Food waste** – FACET has bolstered the existing network of Community Fridges with the opening of Great Yarmouth Community Fridge at Sally's Store on Peggotty Road and Hemsby Community Fridge, which is due to open at The Barn Room towards the end of May. Community Fridges allow local food business to donate 'in date' items for redistribution to the local community. This will increase the ability to redistribute surplus chilled food in order to save tons of food from being needlessly thrown away each year. Food business with unopened produce still within the best before date can donate to a Community Fridge with the food items being used by the local community.



- 2.5 FACET has also partnered with the agency Garden Organic to be able to deliver a composting business support package for up to 10 interested businesses wishing to reduce organic waste. The support package includes an initial consultation, development of a food waste reduction plan and the purchase of suitably identified composting units to be used on-premises. Follow-up training, guidance and monitoring and evaluation is also included via Garden Organic working closely with each hospitality business.
- 2.6 **Single use takeaway packaging waste** – FACET has launched a reusable cup scheme in Hemsby called the ‘Hemsby Cup’ to tackle single use takeaway packaging waste. Customers pay a £2 deposit which they will get back when the zero-waste cup is dropped off at any of the 7 participating cafés. Although many businesses are switching from polystyrene to paper cups, these are often not recyclable due to the wax lining. Therefore, many of the on-street general litter bins are filling up quickly with bulky cardboard chip trays and paper cups. Hemsby was identified as a suitable location for an initial trial due to the density of food & drink outlets and willingness of local cafes to co-operatively take-part, thereby making it easier for consumers to find a local drop-off point. Similar schemes exist elsewhere (in Holt and Shrewsbury) and work within environmental health food hygiene guidelines.

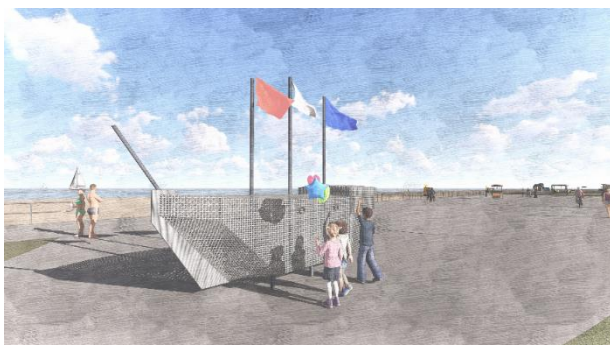


- 2.7 **Behaviour change project ‘BottleShipsGY’** – Inspired by the now famous ‘Goby the Fish’ plastic waste collection sculptures around the world, consumers will soon be able to deposit their empty plastic bottles into Great Yarmouth’s own eye-catching artistic drop off bins, in the form of 3 iconic vessels which represent the borough’s maritime heritage. The plastic bottle recycling points called ‘BottleShips’, will encourage positive behaviour change by creating a strong, visual experience which will capture attention. Each sculpture will be accompanied by an interpretation board which provides information on the ship’s history, how to use the bin correctly and wider facts around waste, plastic pollution and circular economy principles. Installation of the BottleShips is planned for the end of June.

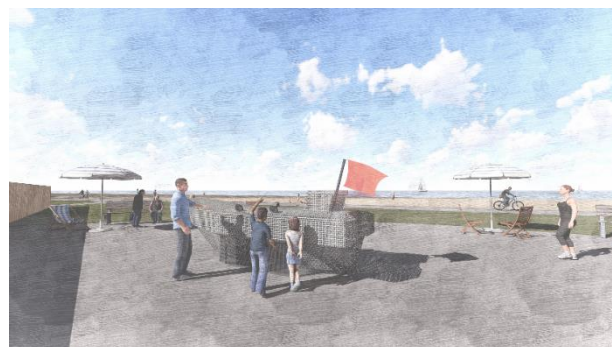
- 2.8 In March, members may have spotted the BottleShip interactive build that took place as part of the Paint the Town Festival. This involved local primary schools helping to construct a boat out of plastic bottles in St. George’s Park to highlight the problem of plastic waste and to explain the aim of the BottleShipsGY initiative. These primary schools will be invited to help launch the actual BottleShips art sculptures when they arrive.



2.9 An artist's impression and locations of the three Bottleships are shown below:



Great Yarmouth, Jetty – Bottleship: HMS Elephant



Hemsby, land adjacent to Beach Café – Bottleship: Sea Weaver



Gorleston-on-Sea, lower promenade – Bottleship: Lydia Eva

- 2.10 A generic Circular Economy toolkit is also in development and will be provided to all businesses signed-up to FACET in order to encourage the adoption of circular practices.
- 2.11 The council's in-house design team is supporting the FACET project with marketing and awareness-raising campaign which has started to promote the 'Hemsby Cup', Great Yarmouth Community Fridge and on street litter bin improvements. This includes a new local CE brand which highlights the principles of the Circular Economy as shown below. This brand will appear and be promoted on all pilots, street bins and at the point of sale of participating businesses.



3 FACET TARGETS

- 3.1 Since the last Committee report, the joint county and borough council officer team has been focused on building local ownership and buy-in, which has included listening to the ideas emanating from local hospitality, tourism and food-related businesses wishing to be part of FACET, exploring practical and logistical barriers to finding circular solutions and consequently undertaking procurement of equipment and provider contracts needed to operate the four pilot project interventions.
- 3.2 With installation of equipment now underway across all workstreams, the officer team is focusing on sharing learning with other FACET European partners as well as making ready for the monitoring & evaluation phase to commence. Great Yarmouth will be hosting the FACET Partnership meeting with European partners on 22nd & 23rd June 2022, for a study visit and information exchange.
- 3.3 Working with the local Circular Economy businesses and GYB Services Limited, baseline measurements of waste quantities, volumes and collection costs have been identified with each business agreeing to provide feedback throughout the monitoring & evaluation phase between June to December 2022. FACET now has 16 businesses actively participating and willing to share their experience and impact knowledge to the broader tourism sector. We expect this number to increase significantly in June as the composting support and plastic recycling scheme are rolled out.
- 3.4 The overall targets for the Interreg 2Seas FACET project in Great Yarmouth are summarised in the table below, together with progress to date on how these will be delivered:

Circular Economy Targets	Actions to date (May 2022)
Reach 40 unique SMEs overall (broken down below): *Please note we cannot double count SMEs for reporting purposes, even though they may fall into more than one category.	
20 SMEs will undertake a shift towards circularity by June 2022.	6 businesses have been involved so far through our innovative ballot bins: Bar 1 – Ballot Bins The Green Bear – Ballot Bins Bell View – Ballot Bins The Forum Café – Ballot Bins Uptown – Ballot Bins Peggotty's – Ballot Bins This will be further enabled by the launch of a CE Toolkit for businesses wanting to embrace the circular economy.
Involve 10 SMEs in the pilot studies.	10 SMEs have been involved in our pilots: Hemsby Beach Café – Hemsby Cup

	<p>Vegan & Veggie Hut – Hemsby Cup</p> <p>Benny’s – Hemsby Cup</p> <p>Oasis – Hemsby Cup</p> <p>Madisons Coffee & Donuts – Hemsby Cup</p> <p>Richardsons Hemsby Beach Holiday Park – Hemsby Cup</p> <p>MB’s Leisure Bar & Lacon Arms – Hemsby Cup</p> <p>Mill Farm Eco Barns – Compost Support Package</p> <p>The Edge Café – Compost Support Package</p> <p>Populate – Plastic Recycling Scheme</p>
<p>Have at least 10 additional SMEs committed to join one of the pilots upon success of the pilot studies by December 2022.</p>	<p>Additional SMEs will have the opportunity to join the pilots at the end of the trial period.</p> <p>Great Yarmouth Market Place has been identified as a suitable location to build on Hemsby’s reusable cup scheme.</p> <p>The Composting Support Package has an additional 8 spaces for businesses to participate.</p> <p>Once the plastic recycling scheme has started collecting plastic from their initial intake of businesses, they are required to partner with a minimum of 25 businesses overall between June and December.</p>
<p>15% reduction in amount of single use packaging by the actively participating businesses.</p>	<p>Enabled via the Hemsby Cup Scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline data captured 11/04/2022 - measures total units of single use takeaway cups bought from May to December 2021. • Measurement period is May to December 2022. • Strength of data varies from businesses to businesses based on their reporting systems.
<p>15% waste reduction and/or valorisation of otherwise generated business waste by actively participating businesses.</p>	<p>1/2 Enabled via seed funding to a new Community Interest Company known as WasteSmiths trading as Precious Plastics East which is working with East Norfolk Sixth Form College.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection via e-cargo bike of post-consumer plastic packaging from business to commence in June 2022. • Measurement and prototyping of re-manufactured & secondary products take place June to October 2022. <p>2/2 A 15% reduction in business waste will be achieved by the businesses who participate in the composting support scheme. This will allow us to show the amount of waste diverted from disposal into compost.</p> <p>*Exact method to collect data being considered by Garden Organic e.g., Overall tonnage before and after composting begins.</p>

50% reduction in number of on street waste/litter collections in the geographic area(s) where street waste initiatives have been implemented.	<p>Enabled via the installation of smart litter bins in Hemsby, additional on-the-go recycling and litter facilities in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston and behaviour change campaigns using the FACET logo.</p> <p>This target will be measured by calculating the difference in the number of litter collections per day, after the implementation of the improved bin infrastructure vs before from May to December, to determine the % decrease in collections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Yarmouth on-the-go recycling bins are installed. • Overall litter bin capacity has been increased. • Hemsby smart bins scheduled for summer 2022. • Gorleston bin improvements being explored. • 6 x novel Cigarette Bins being trialled by public houses in Great Yarmouth & Gorleston with a further 14 available to be hosted by businesses.
A reduction of at least 10% purchase costs where CE business waste solutions have been implemented as part of the pilot(s).	<p>Enabled via the Hemsby Cup Scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline data captured 11/04/2022 - measures total £ spent on single use takeaway cups bought from May to December 2021. • Measurement period is May to December 2022. • Strength of data varies from businesses to businesses based on their reporting systems.
20% visitor engagement with CE waste solutions.	<p>Visit Great Yarmouth, the Town Centre Partnership & individual Circular Economy businesses to support feedback from visitors aided by the recycling art sculptures known as BottleShips and CE advice, promotion of the brand etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 x BottleShips in Hemsby, Gorleston & Great Yarmouth due to be installed in June 2022, to stimulate awareness of plastic pollution and the need to avoid, reuse or recycle this product. • 3 x Community Fridges being set-up; the first Fridge is operational at Sally's Store, Great Yarmouth; the second will be placed at The Barn, Hemsby and the 3rd in Gorleston high street. Exact location tbc.

- 3.5 With the final investments in equipment being made in May/June, monitoring & evaluation will take place between June and December 2022, with lesson learnt, further information sharing and analysis from January 2023 to March 2023.

4 ON STREET LITTER IMPROVEMENTS

- 4.1 In addition to the pilot studies above, FACET aims to support the improvement of on-street litter, recycling and general waste facilities. New bins and supporting infrastructure have begun to be rolled out across Great Yarmouth Seafront which increase capacity and ability to cope with extra pressure during the summer months. These improvements aim to keep the seafront and beach free of litter.
- 4.2 In conjunction with 4.1, on-the-go recycling bins have been introduced alongside the general waste street litter bins, to start capturing plastic and glass bottles and aluminium cans. This will divert a significant portion of waste away from disposal to be recycled. Insights from other areas who have introduced on the go recycling successfully are reflected in the signage on the bins, to ensure the correct waste is disposed of. Early signs show low contamination levels.



- 4.3 In addition, 'Smart' sensor bins are due to be installed in Hemsby over summer which will alert the waste collection team when each bin is reaching capacity, thereby preventing overflowing and increasing the collection efficiency to reduce vehicle related emissions.
- 4.4 FACET has also begun the installation of novel 'Ballot Bins' <https://ballotbin.co.uk/#find-out-more> working across the borough in an effort to reduce cigarette butt littering, to help keep our streets clean and tidy for residents and visitors alike. Further Ballot Bins are due to be installed in the coming months.

5 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 With the new reuse, re-manufacturing, composting & recycling infrastructure due to be installed and all operating from June 2022, the next phase of the FACET project is to monitor the impact of each intervention and assess impact. Baseline data has been gathered to enable GYB Services, Precious Plastics East and Garden Organic to support each business participating and County and Borough Council officers working together will continue to raise awareness through vibrant and eye-catching public-facing marketing campaigns.
- 5.2 Data capture will take place throughout June to December 2022 after which time, a further impact report will be tabled at Committee. It is proposed that the outcomes and impact of

these pilots will help shape other on-street recycling solutions across the borough. It is also hoped that the current Circular Economy Businesses will act as ambassadors to promote the benefits of a green pound and grow participation within business sectors.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The complete Interreg 2Seas FACET Project totals 3.9 million euros (£3.3million) across all partners in the programme over two years. Each FACET partner contributes 40% of the funding as part of the EU Interreg 2-Seas Programme with the fund providing the further 60% match. The Borough Council's contribution as part of this is £80,000 which has been funded from the existing resources and the Norfolk Strategic Fund.
- 6.2 The borough, as a prime tourism area, will receive the full benefit of the UK's portion of this investment which is € 790,701 in total (£678,714).

7 RISKS

- 7.1 The bold and innovative nature of our pilots including the reusable cup scheme in Hemsby, bring challenges in relation to meeting our targets as it requires a fundamental shift in consumer/tourist behaviour. Although businesses have shown strong support with marketing assistance from the Borough Council and Visit Great Yarmouth, society is accustomed to using single use takeaway packaging. The Hemsby Cup scheme has been designed to make it as easy and convenient as possible for customers to participate, to give the pilot every chance of succeeding.
- 7.2 Providing an on-the-go recycling service has proved challenging for many local authorities due to high levels of contamination found. This is especially prevalent in areas with low household recycling rates and high transient communities. To mitigate this, each bin features clear messaging on what is accepted and will have bottle apertures fitted to reduce contamination in the recycling bins. These recommendations emanate from the work of the environmental charity Hubbub which has provided evidence of successful behaviour change case studies in other parts of the UK. Continued co-operation is required between Great Yarmouth Borough Council and GY Borough Services Limited to ensure the target to half collections is achieved.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 FACET has begun to pilot solutions which seek to reduce the amount of food, plastic and packaging waste being produced in Great Yarmouth, by supporting businesses to shift operations based on circular economy principles, with the support of public facing behaviour change campaigns. This includes the launch of Great Yarmouth Community Fridge, the 'Hemsby Cup' and the Precious Plastics East Venture. These will soon be joined by composting support for businesses, BottleShips and the Hemsby Community Fridge. This, coupled with the improvements to on-street waste management facilities through adopting smart technology, increasing bin capacity and introducing novel ballot bins, will reduce the amount of waste produced and associated emissions while increasing the capture of recyclable materials to be used to support the local economy. Early indications show the improvements in waste

infrastructure are performing well, with low levels of contamination. This, along with all other interventions will be closely monitored moving forward against FACET targets.

- 8.2 Being cleaner and more environmentally aware can only help to improve the borough's standing as one of the UK's main tourist destinations.

Area for consideration Comment	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation	Yes – via ELT
Section 151 Officer Consultation	Yes – via ELT
Existing Council Policies (See background papers)	Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025 A Quality and Sustainable Environment Sustainability Strategy
Financial Implications e.g. within existing budgets or funding identified	In budget for 2020/21 & 2021/22
Legal Implications (including human rights)	No
Risk Implications	As above
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment	No
Crime & Disorder	No
Every Child Matters	No