



BRAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

THE BRAUNTON EXPRESS

August 2021

Braunton Ban Cheap Polystyrene Body Boards!

Plastic Free Torridge, Plastic Free North Devon and Keep Britain Tidy's Ocean Recovery Project are today announcing a ban on selling cheap polystyrene bodyboards in Braunton! Every independent retailer in the village will not be selling cheap polystyrene bodyboards starting this summer. Braunton is the next coastal community to take on the challenge of banning these boards and have successfully gained voluntary bans from all independent retailers.



Cheap polystyrene bodyboards have blighted coastlines across the world for decades. Annually, hundreds of thousands of low-cost body boards are discarded on beaches across the world. Keep Britain Tidy have reported that 16,000 cheap polystyrene

bodyboards end up discarded on UK beaches every year. These "sub £10" brightly coloured boards, known to break easily often after only one or two uses, are invariably discarded on UK beaches. These 16,000 single use boards create a large amount of waste in the UK and create a huge carbon footprint. The boards, made from a block of standard polystyrene wrapped in brightly printed nylon cloth, are sourced from China, transported thousands of miles only to snap within minutes of use. Polystyrene is fragile and crumbles easily, posing danger to sea and shore life alike as animals mistake these small white polystyrene balls for food. Once in the ocean, algae and small organisms grow on each ball adding weight causing the nuggets to sink and present as food to fish. The human health threat from polystyrene comes from one of its building blocks styrene. In 2018, the World Health Organisation reclassified styrene from a "possible carcinogen" to a "probable carcinogen" – a probable cause of cancer.

Liz Spear, Braunton Parish Chair, says: "Braunton Parish Council is fully supportive of the campaign to ban the sale of polystyrene

bodyboards. Members of the Parish Council have actively worked with the organisers of Plastic Free North Devon. The official launch of the Braunton campaign is most welcome and appropriate as the holiday season gets underway and I would like to extend our grateful thanks to our Braunton shops for supporting the campaign.”

Plastic Free North Devon, alongside Plastic Free Torridge and the Ocean Recovery Project, have worked with parishes across North Devon encouraging a voluntary ban on these boards.

“Today, we are very pleased to confirm a self-imposed ban on cheap polystyrene bodyboards across Braunton”, confirmed Claire Moodie, CEO, Plastic Free North Devon. “Retailers throughout the village will no longer be selling these boards as

we move into the summer season. With Westward Ho!, Croyde, and Saunton Beach already having introduced their own bans, we are calling on all beach towns and villages across the UK to keep up the momentum and do the same.”

The campaign to ban these boards, started in October 2019, has attracted widespread support across northern Devon with both area MPs along with District, Town and Parish Councils calling on local retailers to remove these items from sale. Over 97% of 1,600 local residents polled have called for a change to be made to stop the damage these boards are causing to our natural environment. Local businesses at Saunton, Croyde, and Westward Ho! have all voluntarily signed up to the campaign, no longer selling these boards in order to protect our coastline and bring better value to their customers.

Braunton Parish Council



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Hours: The office is currently closed to the public.*

Tracey Lovell, Clerk to the Council
Angela Corner, Senior Council Officer
Jane Fewings, Admin Assistant

A parliamentary petition calling on the government to ban these boards is still live and Plastic Free North Devon would like to encourage as many people as possible to sign this before the closing date of 01 August 2021.

Anyone wanting to sign the Parliamentary Petition should visit, www.bancheapbodyboards.co.uk For further details, please contact Plastic Free North Devon on plasticfreenorthdevon@gmail.com

