

Ditching Disposables Stirling Case Study: Café Scheme



The Ditching Disposables project piloted a borrow cup scheme for reusable cups across 3 different activities in Stirling over a six-month period. You can find the full [Ditching Disposables Stirling Report here](#).

A total of 17,800 SU cups were displaced, saving 1.136 tonnes of CO₂e and achieving combined cost savings of £2,250 for participating businesses.

The pilot has served to identify several logistical and practical learnings which could be adopted by other organisations to improve, inform and advise their own journey into reusable cup loan schemes.

The café scheme established a network of 20 organisations, comprising 18 cafés and two shops, to adopt stocks of Ditching Disposables branded, reusable, returnable cups and lids.

No. cups & lids saved	CO ₂ e saving	Cost saving	Cup waste saving
3,987	243kg	£465	64kg

Recommendations



Broader promotion leading up to the launch

- A common point of feedback from the cafés was that customers were often not aware of the scheme, and this had to be proactively promoted to them.
- A broader promotional campaign leading into the launch would help to address this issue and quickly build scheme recognition and momentum moving into a launch.



Simplifying data handling

- Data capture is important for reuse schemes as it is the reuse of the cups overtime that demonstrates the saving on carbon emissions over time.
- One method of data handling could be using the till EPOS system to capture information. Alternatively, information could be collected using manual data capture sheets, although data collection could be compromised if transactions are not recorded properly.
- A system to simplify this, using QR codes on the cups and scanners, would make for more accurate data capture.
- This would also make the process of managing the cups much easier for the cafés in terms of stock checks and understanding the savings they are making on disposables.



Service charge

- In order to contribute towards the ongoing management costs of the project, a business could introduce a service charge for running a permanent scheme.
- Rather than a flat fee, this would need to be a scaled charge related to the level of ongoing cup return activity.



No deposits

- An alternative approach to cash deposits could be considered by using a digital reusable cup system.
- Some suppliers offer an App-based system which customers can download and register with.



A dedicated part-time member of staff

- To successfully launch and operate an expanded scheme would require someone to regularly manage communication across the network, troubleshoot issues, proactively market the scheme, recruit new cafés, redistribute cups (from time to time), gather/monitor data on performance, and promote its successes.



Extend the scheme coverage

- It is suggested that any similar schemes being implemented seek to include any relevant key destinations which would help join up the scheme across the entire area and encourage wider engagement of these key customer types. For example, tourist sites, universities/colleges.



Messaging

- The prevalence of refill activity during the pilot was very encouraging. However, the intention is for customers to use and return the cups at their convenience.
- Targeted messaging, referring to the cups as 'returnable', or 'borrowed' cups may help to adjust customer understanding of their purpose.



A new cup design

- The cup itself should appeal to a wide audience, with the potential to generate a natural buzz about the scheme, whilst treading the fine line of not making them so attractive that people want to keep them.



Electronic payments

- A few cafés accepted cash only payments for deposits, which presented a significant barrier to customers.
- This can have a negative impact on scheme perception if customers want to participate but find they cannot.
- Any future scheme would need all its membership cafés to allow electronic payment for deposits in and out of the scheme.

