



Picture
News

**Should wet wipes be
banned?**

Stephen Simpson/Stockphoto.com

Let's look at this week's story



An island of wet wipes has 'changed the course of the Thames' river in London. The island, thought to be around the size of two tennis courts, has prompted many campaigners to fight for them to be banned. Rebecca Pow, Under-Secretary at the Department for Environment, said that if members of the public need to use wet wipes, they should not flush them into drains. Fleur Anderson, Labour MP, has warned that mounds of wet wipes and waste are changing the shape of rivers and polluting the water.



Learn more about this week's story [here](#).
Watch this week's useful video [here](#).
This week's Virtual Assembly [here](#).



This week's story looks at events related to ...



How does it make me feel?



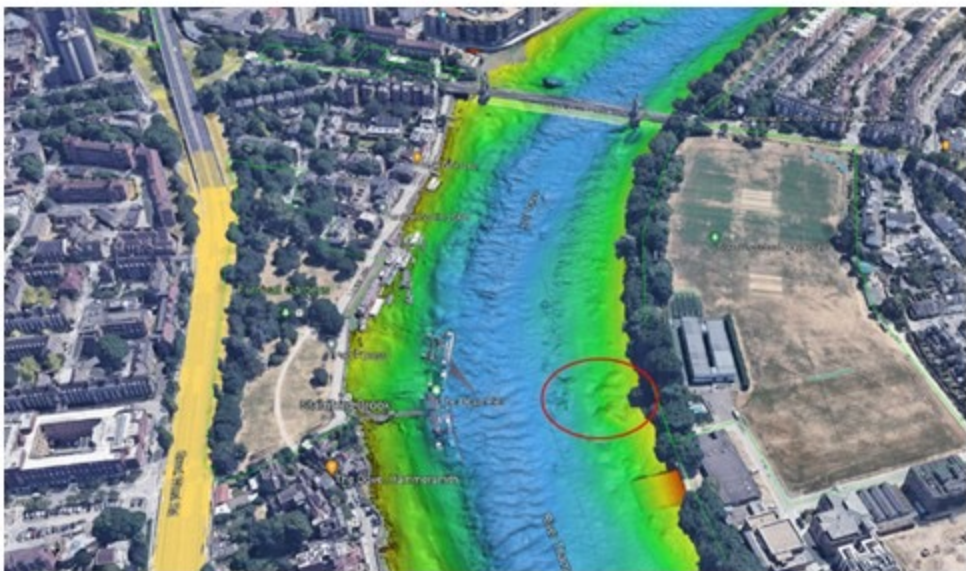
sad	angry	happy	confused	excited	worried	shocked	afraid
despondent disconsolate dismal doleful downhearted forlorn gloomy melancholic miserable woeful wretched	aggrieved annoyed discontented disgruntled distressed exasperated frustrated indignant offended outraged resentful vexed	beaming buoyant cheery contented delighted enraptured gleeful glowing joyful	addled baffled bemused bewildered disorientated indistinct muddled mystified perplexed puzzled	animated elevated enlivened enthusiastic exhilarated exuberant thrilled	agitated anxious apprehensive concerned disquieted distraught distressed disturbed fretful perturbed troubled uneasy	astonished astounded disconcerted distressed dumbfounded horrified staggered startled stunned surprised	alarmed apprehensive daunted fearful frantic horrified petrified terrified



Read through the information below about the 'wet wipe island' in the River Thames, London.

What is the 'wet wipe island'?

An island of wet wipes has 'changed the course of the Thames' river in London. The island, caused by wet wipes being flushed down toilets is thought to be around the size of two tennis courts.



Pictured above: Laser scans released by the charity, Thames 21, last year showed a mound on the foreshore in Hammersmith created by a build-up of wet wipes. **Source:** Thames21

What damage do wet wipes cause?

When people flush wet wipes, they end up in our sewers, and form 'fatbergs'. The plastic in wet wipes makes them sturdy enough to form huge lumps, and cause tens of thousands of blockages each year. Utility companies spend millions clearing these wet wipe fatbergs. Thames Water cleared 1,500km of sewer this year using shovels, hand picks and high-pressure washers.



What can be done to stop this happening?

Anna Boyles, Thames Water's operations manager, said: "We know many busy families love the convenience of wet wipes, but most are made from plastic and can take centuries to biodegrade. It's like flushing a plastic bag down the loo. Some wipes are marketed as 'flushable'. All that means is that they will disappear down the u-bend, but they're not gone for good and could end up clogging your pipes or in the river. We're working to influence manufacturers to properly label their products and, even better, to remove the plastic from the wipes altogether. If you're using standard wet wipes, please pop them in the bin instead of the toilet."

Share your thoughts on the situation and what you think should be done about it.



Look at the resource below, which shares some examples of single-use plastics.



Take away food containers



Crisp packets



Shampoo bottles



Coffee cup lids



Drinks bottles



Wet wipes



Sandwich and freezer bags



Shopping bags

Do you use any of these items? Is there anything you use instead?



Look at the resource below, which shares more information about plastic and how it harms the environment.

Plastic is a material that is made by people. There are many different types of plastic and they can be formed into a variety of shapes. Most plastics are made from chemicals that can come from oil and coal. Plastic items can be very useful but they can cause many problems for the environment. Most plastic cannot biodegrade, which means it doesn't rot like paper or food. Plastic waste can last for hundreds of years.

Plastic that cannot be recycled often ends up in landfills. Whilst it breaks down, it can leak many of the potentially toxic chemicals used in its manufacture into the ground, which can kill plants, harm wildlife and pollute water.



Some plastic is incinerated, which can be used to generate electricity. However, as it burns, it releases potentially harmful gases into the environment, which can harm health and contribute to the greenhouse effect.



Most of the plastic found in oceans comes from the land. Animals in the ocean can become trapped in plastic or mistake it for food. This can cause them to become ill or die. As plastic breaks into smaller pieces, these are eaten by fish and other sea creatures. The chemicals, which can cause harm, are passed along the food chain and can end up in food we eat. Animals living on land can also be harmed by plastic in the same way.

'Trash islands' or 'garbage patches' can be formed in the sea. This is a huge island of plastic that has been created by currents in the ocean clumping it together.



Were you aware plastic caused this damage? Who is responsible?

Being the best we can be for ourselves, for others and for God's World.

What can you do today to help reduce the use of single use plastics or disposable plastics?

One of the reasons we stopped headteacher prizes was because they were made of single use plastic.

How can we persuade others to do the same?

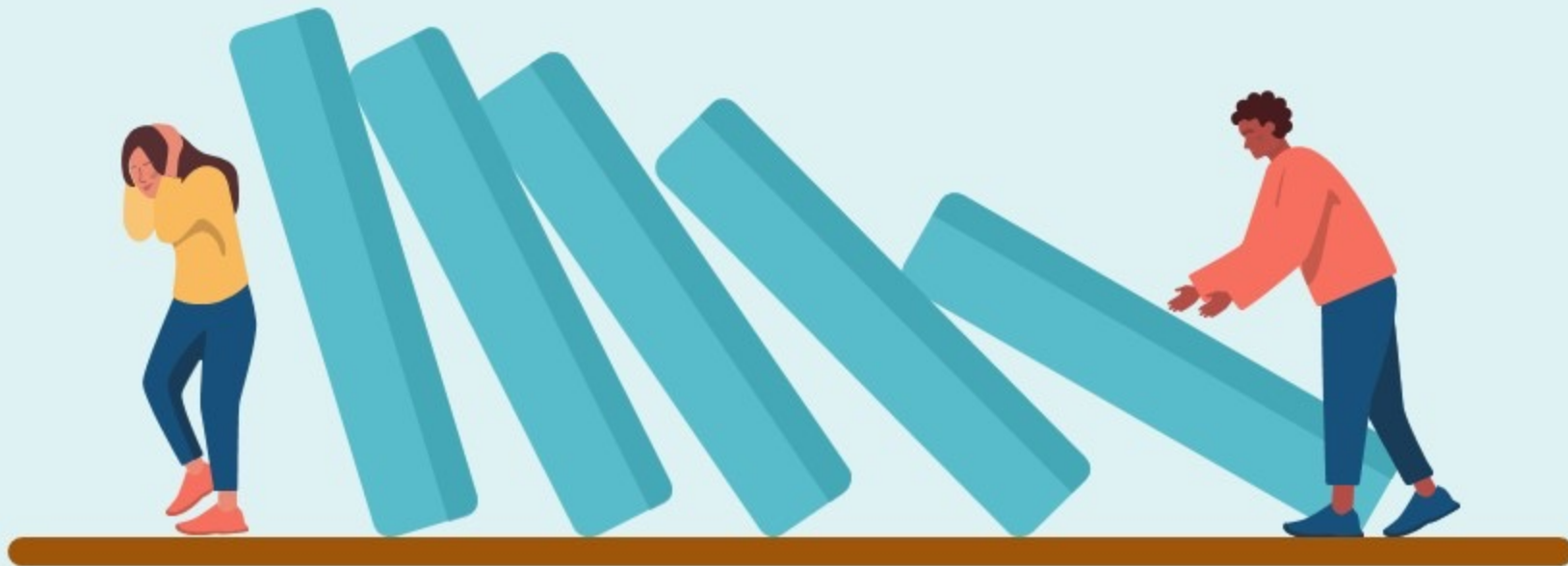
Have a look in your lunch box – is there more plastic being used than necessary – what is an alternative?

How will we know if our advocacy has worked?

Reflection



It is important for us to learn and understand how our actions affect the world around us, this will help us make informed decisions as responsible citizens of the world.





Rule of Law

Sometimes items can be banned. This means a rule or law is put in place to forbid this item being used. It is important to remember that rules and laws are there to protect us.





UN Rights of a Child



We all have the right to clean drinking water, healthy food and a clean and safe living environment. We must try to take care of our world so that we do not poison or harm it.

