

# Live Simply February 2023

## Live Simply

### Tyres and microplastics: Time to reinvent the wheel?

Vehicle tyres are probably the biggest source of plastic pollution in our rivers and seas, according to a Friends of the Earth report by Paul Quinn <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/sustainable-living/tyres-and-microplastics-time-reinvent-wheel>

As cars and trucks pound along our roads their tyres wear and gradually shed tiny bits of tyre material. When it rains, the tiny tyre particles – essentially microplastics – are washed off the road surface into drains and waterways. They are the single biggest cause of microplastic pollution in rivers, lakes and wetlands and they ultimately pollute the oceans.

It's estimated that in the UK an astonishing 68,000 tonnes of tyre-wear fragments are released every year with up to 19,000 tonnes of that getting into our waterways, rivers and seas. The microplastics from tyres behave and persist like other plastics in the environment. Once in the ocean, tyre particles absorb and concentrate toxic pollutants from seawater which makes them even more poisonous to animals that eat them or absorb them through their gills or skin.

Airborne microparticles are a worry on land too. Up to 10% of tyre wear is generated as airborne particles, which contribute to air pollution and lung problems in UK cities. The sheer volume of particles that tyres create is a big cause for concern.

### How government and local authorities can cut tyre pollution

- **Improve the tyre labelling rules** to include how resistant each type of tyre is to wear and tear as well as the tyre's effect on fuel efficiency.
- **Test tyres** and ban those with the highest rates of wear and tear.
- **Introduce a tyre levy** to help pay for further research and to implement the best solutions to the problem of microplastic pollution.
- **Capture tyre pollution from roads** e.g. more efficient use of roadside gully pots – which are used to catch debris, sediment and microplastics before they get into the drains or waterways. These can be up to 80% effective if they are emptied regularly.
- **Increase road sweeping** to mop up tyre particles from the roads and adjacent paths.
- **Encourage less driving** by providing better public transport, cycling facilities and walking routes.

### How industry can help cut tyre pollution

- Make tyres more resilient to wear and tear
- Find alternative tyre materials that biodegrade safely and effectively in the environment.
- Develop devices to capture tyre particles.
- Include the tyre-wear-rate on tyre labels.

### How we can all help

- Buy tyres that are resilient to wear and tear.
- Choose to walk, cycle or take public transport
- If you have to drive, drive gently and adopt eco-driving methods eg.
  - Drive smoothly and avoid aggressive manoeuvring and abrupt cornering and braking
  - Drive with the correct tyre pressure.
  - Remove unnecessary weight from the vehicle.
  - Choose to drive smaller, lower-weight vehicles.

## Live Sustainably with Creation

**Good News:-** Single-use plastic plates, trays, cutlery and certain types of polystyrene cups and food containers from retailers, takeaways or food vendors will be banned in England from October 2023. (Scotland and Wales already have similar bans)

**More good news :** - The government published **new legally binding environment targets** on Dec 16th 2022 that will be included in the Environment Act. We will be one of the first countries in the world to have legally binding targets!! <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legally-binding-environment-targets-set-out>

The targets require the UK Government to:-

- Halt the decline in species populations by 2030, and then increase populations by at least 10% to exceed current levels by 2042.
- Restore water bodies to their natural state by cracking down on harmful pollution from sewers and abandoned mines and improving water usage in households.
- Deliver net zero carbon emissions and boost nature recovery by increasing tree and woodland cover to 16.5% of total land area in England by 2050
- Halve the waste per person that is sent to residual treatment by 2042
- Cut exposure to the most harmful air pollutant to human health – PM2.5.
- Restore 70% of designated features in our Marine Protected Areas to a favourable condition by 2042, with the rest in a recovering condition.
- Restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat. It will help the UK to meet its commitment to protect 30% of its land and ocean by 2030.

### Reservations:-

The targets are a start, however environment campaigning groups say that the targets don't go far enough and the timescale is too long allowing nature to flatline for 20 years.

## Live in Solidarity with the Poor

### Cancel the Debt Campaign

**Pray** and campaign for people in the UK who are being forced into debt by the cost of living crisis. Many people are juggling bills, delaying payments, and borrowing just to try to make ends meet.

**Pray** and campaign for low income countries whose economies are crippled by debt. More than £63bn will be paid by 75 of the poorest countries in the world on debt repayments this year. Many of them are being forced to go into more debt just to pay the interest on the loans. 54 countries are now in crisis including Sri Lanka, Zambia, Ghana and Pakistan.

The crushing weight of debt means that many countries can't rebuild when hit by disasters such as floods and hurricanes. They haven't enough money to spend on tackling food and energy price rises, education, health, Covid-19 and the climate crisis. They have little room to adapt or transition to a greener economy. It's a huge injustice at the heart of the climate emergency.

Debts must be reduced to a sustainable level. Funds are being drained from the poorest countries in the world by repayments on high interest loans. Some of the world's richest banks and speculators are making a fortune; they could be making up to 250% profit from these loans if paid back in full.

Some countries are trying to get debts cancelled. Sri Lanka is in crucial negotiations with lenders right now. Please pray for success of the negotiations.

For more information go to <https://debtjustice.org.uk/>