

NO MORE Free Carrier Bags

Free plastic carrier bags could soon be a distant memory if other supermarkets follow Waitrose's lead. The chain recently ran a successful 'no free bags' trial at one branch and may consider adopting the approach across other branches.

In a bid to encourage customers to recycle their plastic carriers, Waitrose (and indeed many other supermarket chains) offer an in-store recycling facility. With public awareness of green issues riding high, bag recycling has proved popular generally and is offered at all Waitrose stores nationally. But customers at one Waitrose branch – Saffron Walden – scored particularly highly, which led to the branch being chosen as the trial base for a new 'green checkout' where no free bags are available. Instead customers either supply their own bags or recycle.

The first of its kind, the trial ran from 14th to 27th May. In the lead up to the trial, customers were issued with free 'Bags for Life' and notified of the plan to introduce the green checkout. Last week, over a thousand Waitrose customers were polled regarding the trial and an impressive 90% said they would be in favour of the scheme being introduced on ALL checkouts in the store.

It seems likely the initiative will be tested on all checkouts before the company make a decision on how to proceed. A Waitrose spokesperson said: "As a business we are committed to reducing unnecessary packaging and plastic bag usage. Many of our customers already engage in our Bag for Life scheme and use our bag recycling facility. By introducing this initiative we hope to continue to raise awareness and have a positive influence on shopping habits when it comes to the environment."

