

Steve Quinn | Chief Executive - **Cucina Restaurants Limited**

We have always carefully selected our food stuffs, and now purchase the majority of our ingredients from within the UK; this not only supports our economy, but also reduces food miles and carbon significantly. The introduction of multi-temperature delivery vehicles has also helped to reduce our carbon impact.

Through waste oil recycling schemes, we have created enough bio-diesel in the last 12 months alone to remove the equivalent of 113 family cars from the road.

We support the “Drop 4 Drop” charity, which has resulted in the building of two new water wells in the developing world through sales of Life Water. Our first in India and our second in Uganda, give families access to a sustainable source of clean drinking water, improving both their health and the future opportunities of their children. We plan to build 20 wells by 2020.

One of the challenges for a fast-flowing food service, catering for hundreds of customers in a very short time frame, in restaurants with limited seating space, is there will always be a need for speed. Pre-packaged, ready to serve and eat foods are therefore essential to a large degree, so we have taken the following steps to ensure our packaging is environmentally friendly:

- We use packaging only where needed and reduce this to a minimum;
- Our sandwich packaging already uses less than 50% of the plastic of previous versions such as sandwich cassettes;
- We use compostable and biodegradable packaging already for much of our range...and as more becomes available and affordable, this will be introduced too;
- We use thin recyclable water bottles in our restaurants, and refuse to buy coloured plastic bottles that cannot be recycled;
- We use paper cups for our regular hot drinks and pure fruit slushes. We will introduce small paper cups too shortly, as well as paper straws to replace plastic ones;
- We are about to launch a “use your own cup” initiative for teachers and sixth formers.

This is just a snapshot of the steps we have taken so far...but now we need your help too.

Whilst the waste already collected from your school does not end up in our oceans and is destined for landfill sites or incineration facilities, reducing non-recyclable waste is the challenge ahead of us! Together with you, our school partners, we want to introduce robust recycling schemes in each of our restaurants, as simply collecting and segregating waste inside the restaurant that then gets thrown back together in the external bins, makes no sense at all. We need your investment into facilities to change this please.

We will be commencing trials after half term, introducing a range of initiatives and tracking the benefits and costs of launching these as permanent programmes within our 50 restaurants. These will involve, but are not limited to:

- The addition of plastic bottle, paper and in some cases, cardboard recycling where this is not already present;
- The investment in paper cup and can collection points within the restaurants;
- The introduction of several more biodegradable, recycled and recyclable packaging ranges and even edible packaging when available;
- The introduction of paper straws;
- The introduction of wooden or starch based disposable cutlery; or investment into traditional metal varieties and magnetic bins;
- The introduction of our cupless coffee card for teachers, encouraging them to use their own cups for hot drinks.