**H20 on the go**

What’s the message from H20 on the go? It’s simple really – drink more tap water and bring a reusable bottle with you if outside the home for any length of time. Businesses and other outlets across Causeway Coast and Glens will be encouraging the refilling of water bottles as we endeavour to reduce the amount of single use plastic bottles in circulation. We want children to enjoy the many benefits that flow from drinking water. These bottles are often not recycled causing problems on both land and ocean environments.

H20 on the go is an exciting partnership between Cloughmills Community Action Team and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. The project is funded by the Children’s Health Fund which provides grants to projects that are improving access to drinking water for children. The Children’s Health Fund was set up by the charity Sustain and Jamie Oliver as part of a campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of sugary drinks in our children’s diets.

Grant money is raised by restaurants around the UK who are voluntarily implementing a 10p sugar levy on soft drinks with added sugar on their menus. For more information visit www.childrenshealthfund.org.uk

We are extremely lucky to have a free flowing, safe tap water in the UK yet we don’t make the most of it. Although water is a necessary component of various bodily fluids and functions many of us simply do not drink enough. Mineral water companies cannot make any claims about how their product is better for you. Those who chose mineral water generally do so because of apparent convenience and personal taste not necessarily because of quality.

Drinking water can improve concentration and alertness, particularly amongst younger children and especially in the afternoons so it makes perfect sense that many schools now allow children regular access to water during the day. Water is best taken at regular intervals depending on the level of activity engaged in. It is perfect at mealtimes because it is neutral so it doesn’t compete with other flavours in your food.

There are about 1 million plastic bottles bought across the world every minute. In 2016 480 billion were sold and this is expected to increase to 583.3 billion by 2021. Bringing this slightly closer to home:

* We use 13 billion plastic bottles per year in the UK with just over half of these recycled.
* Approximately 5.5 billion become litter, are landfilled or incinerated.
* Around 700,000 plastic bottles are littered on our streets and in our countryside every day in the UK.
* Plastic bottles make up a third of all plastic pollution in the sea.
* Bottled water can cost up to 500 times more than tap water per litre.
* Typically only 7% of recycled plastic bottles are used to make new bottles.
* If marine plastic pollution continues to rise at its current rate, the amount of plastic in the sea will outweigh fish by 2050.
* Plastic bottles are an easily avoidable source of marine plastic pollution.