

# World's First Fully Recyclable Paper Cup to Hit UK High Streets

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*Inventor Martin Myerscough and the Green Your Cup, which has a thin film liner which separates easily from the paper. Photograph: Jane Mingay/Green Your Cup*

[Rebecca Smithers](#),

The world's first fully recyclable paper cup will soon make its debut on the UK high street, in a packaging breakthrough that could eventually divert millions of cups away from landfill.

More than 2.5bn cups are thrown away in the UK every year – enough to go round the world five and a half times. But few are recycled and nearly all end up in landfill, creating 25,000 tonnes of [waste](#) – enough to fill London's Royal Albert Hall.

Conventional paper cups are made from paper laminated with plastic, making them difficult to recycle. Under EU health and safety regulations, coffee cups cannot be made from 100% paper or cardboard alone. A thin layer of plastic is bonded on to the cup to keep the drink warm and stop the paper from getting soggy. But it is attached so tightly that those cups need special facilities to separate the linings, with almost all [recycling](#) plants rejecting the cups and sending them straight to landfill.

The British entrepreneur and engineer Martin Myerscough, founder of the 'cardboard' bottle now being used for milk and wine, has devised an alternative to make recycling easier.

The [Green Your Cup](#) has a thin film liner that is designed to separate easily from the paper in the recycling process, leaving 100% paper which can then be recycled.

The cups can be thrown into paper recycling bins, which will help consumers who are confused about which bins to use.

The company is currently in talks with coffee shop chains and supermarkets in the hope that the product can be rolled out nationally before the end of the year.

The consumer group Which? has criticised [retailers' use of "mixed materials"](#) in coffee cups, and urged providers to take more environmental responsibility by giving consumers clearer information about recycling.

The world's largest coffee chain, [Starbucks](#), which hands out 4bn disposable cups worldwide, recently admitted the scale of the recycling challenge, after failing to meet some key targets, including getting customers to start using personal reusable cups. The company set a seven-year goal of serving 25% of drinks in reusable cups by 2015. In 2011, they were being used for just 1.9% of beverages.

Myerscough said: "I always thought it was such a waste that disposable coffee cups couldn't be easily recycled. In these times of limited resources and diminishing landfill space, a single-use cup that can't be recycled is an indulgence we just cannot afford. I hope Green Your Cup will make a difference to how people think about the wastefulness of some of our everyday habits.

"You can recycle Green Your Cup with your paper and cardboard and it comes back as a newspaper several times, extending the life of such high quality paper well beyond the half an hour it takes to drink a coffee."

Stuart Singleton-White, of the environmental charity Rainforest Alliance, said the product was "a major innovation in the beverage industry and we look forward to seeing it become the standard cup that coffee shops and cafes use for those takeaway drinks we all love. This goes to the heart of sustainable business practice and gives us all the chance to make better choices when we buy our favourite drink".

- This article was amended on 1 July 2014. Stuart Singleton-White is from the Rainforest Alliance, not the Rainbow Alliance as an earlier version said.

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