

PUBLIC TOILETS UK A MATTER OF URGENCY



CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE OUR HEALTH & WELLBEING

April 2015: Newsletter 1-3

*[*Clipart accompanying the articles does not constitute a logo *]*

We hope you all enjoyed a Happy Easter! And welcome to those who've joined our campaign this month. Here's the latest *PTUK* news. Feedback and topics for future issues are always welcome

Baby changing: What do Dad's – and Grandad's – do when out and about with a baby that needs changing? Where do they go? Are there facilities available for baby changing in your public conveniences? Actor Ashton Kutcher is calling for more baby changing facilities in gent's loos [The Cleanzine 23 March] and *PTUK* believes that with more male relatives taking an active role in childcare there should be equality when it comes to baby changing facilities. What do you think?



Think before you go! If you need a loo urgently and none is available, take care before finding the nearest bush! Offenders in Eastleigh, Hampshire [Daily Telegraph 30 March] caught urinating in public have the option of either cleaning up the mess or face being fined in court. They will also have the opportunity to meet with a Business Improvement District representative who will explain the trouble of cleaning up the mess. Is this a good idea? Is it right to criminalise people who are fulfilling a basic need? If toilets are closed what do you do? What are your views on this issue?



Revamp of toilets in Ellesmere Port: Good news if you are in the area as the public toilets have had a £60,000 makeover [Chester Chronicle 24/3]! *PTUK* couldn't resist writing to congratulate the council's efforts which include using vandal resistant materials and received a very positive response in return. This project is just one of several across the borough and they want all visitors to the towns and city to feel welcome. How refreshing is that!



New Loos in Bath too! The idea of welcoming people into the area is catching on. Bath's improvement plan for new loos [Bath Chronicle 24 March] around the city is nearing completion and it includes parks – an area that is often ignored! The cubicles can accommodate 'a parent with a couple of small children and a pushchair to use together'. Good news indeed



Campaigns do work! Goring Station now has an accessible toilet ['disabled' toilet] after a long campaign [Henley Standard 23 March]. This is part of a station upgrade. All parties concerned should be congratulated for their efforts. Having toilets available at stations encourages us to travel by train more easily and comfortably but unfortunately this factor is often forgotten or ignored when plans for revamping stations are made – Crossrail being a prime example.



Wet wipes: However did we manage without them? That said once used they should not be flushed down the loo – because, to put it bluntly, they bung up the works! There should be 3 things to flush down the loo [YumaSun 18 March] and they are: pee, poop and paper! Public toilet cubicles closed



because of wipes and other oddities down the loo are definitely not good news!

Do we respect our public toilets? *PTUK* was interested to read [The Cleanzine 29 January] that Singaporean children in a programme called 'Sustaining Toilets As Restrooms' [STAR] were taught not only about hygiene but also to respect toilet facilities and those who clean them. Perhaps we should teach something similar in the UK? It would certainly help to combat the toilet taboo and would contribute to better health! Comments from any educationalists welcome.



Talking about incontinence: David Baddiel did just that when he spoke about childhood incontinence problems on behalf of ERIC on the BBC Radio 4 Appeal slot [Sunday 5 April]. He spoke about a little girl who was bullied at school because of her wetting problem. Once she and her parents received help and support from ERIC they were able to work with the school to give her better care. Children feel embarrassed and humiliated by their condition – and their peers can be very unkind - but support and information are available so if you or your family is in similar distress don't hesitate to contact www.eric.org.uk



Constipation awareness: ERIC has also launched a constipation awareness campaign – another topic we don't like to talk about! The aim of 'Let's Talk About Poo' is to *raise awareness of childhood constipation among parents of 2-4 year-olds and health and education professionals working with this age group. Constipation is most common in toddlers and pre-school age children; it is important to tackle it at this early stage to prevent it becoming chronic and having a long-term impact on children's health and wellbeing.* [from press release 10 April]. For more information do visit www.eric.org.uk



Hidden disabilities: A letter in a Blog headed to '*The woman who tutted at me using the disabled toilet*' [So Bad Ass 17 Feb] brought home to many the issue of having a 'hidden' disability. Following on from the article in the March edition of *PTUK* on the subject there appears to be a growing need for a revamped logo for the accessible toilet. Changing the word 'disabled' to 'accessible' is not enough. A competition perhaps?



Toilets in shops: After the article on Greggs in last month's issue, *PTUK* asked whether there should be customer toilets in shops. Two main comments were made: (1) that shops selling food and drink to be consumed on the premises should have a customer loo available – nothing fancy just a clean, loo and wash basin with toilet roll, soap and drying facilities and (2) that supermarkets such as Lidl and Aldi should consider having customer toilets as this would encourage shoppers to stay longer, spend more and enjoy a relaxing shopping experience. *PTUK* will follow up these excellent ideas.



Ending the tampon tax Update on the petition 'George Osborne: Stop taxing periods. Period' established by Laura Coryton. An email received by our Ed on 16 April was headed 'Ed Miliband *coined sanitary tax "ridiculous" live on BBC 4's Woman's Hour, and offered his support for our campaign*' [Note: 'our' relates to the Taxing Periods campaign not the *PTUK* campaign – yet!] And UKIP has done the same! Good news indeed for women in the UK. If you haven't signed, please ensure you do to give the campaign that extra boost! *Breaking news! Nicola Sturgeon also supports the campaign – P23 of SNP 2015 Manifesto.*



To pay or not to pay? At major railway stations it's generally 30p. Some public toilets are 20p, 10p or even free! Others charge 50p or more. Is it better to pay with coins or should there be a token system? Would it be better to have an agreed charge throughout the UK? *PTUK* will be asking for your views during May so do pay a regular visit to our Facebook campaign page www.facebook.com/PTUKcampaign and contribute to the debate



Do you have or know someone with IBS? Our *PTUK* Ed is very aware of IBS having had it for 15 years. It is, she says, a right pain in the proverbial! The IBS Network www.theibsnetwork.org has launched a petition to 'Recognise it's not "just" Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)'. If you've not already, do take a moment to help create awareness and add your name:
https://www.change.org/p/all-political-parties-and-the-national-medical-director-recognise-it-s-not-just-irritable-bowel-syndrome-ibs?recruiter=27127791&utm_source=share

Anxiety UK: *PTUK* welcomes the support of *Anxiety UK*. Toilet phobia is very common and can be caused by a variety of factors including anxiety, fear, specific experience or trauma and learnt behaviour from someone close. Causes of Toilet Phobia can often be a combination of the following factors: Agoraphobia, Social Phobia, Panic, OCD, Paruresis and Parcopresis. If you or someone close to you suffers from Toilet Phobia or in fact any kind of anxiety condition, there is help available! Do get in touch with *Anxiety UK* on 08444 775 774 or email the support service:

*Next issue of Public Toilets UK newsletter will be May 2015
Gill & Laus*



IN THE MEANTIME.....

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