

1st October Wales will officially become the first country in the UK to introduce a charge for carrier bags.

The 5p charge, which will apply to all single use bags, will see shoppers across Wales reusing the bags they already have in an effort to avoid any extra cost. This will help to reduce litter and avoid unnecessary damage to the environment.

The Welsh Government predicts that as a result of its charge, carrier bag use in Wales will reduce by a massive 90%.

The net proceeds of the charge, which are estimated to be up to £3million in the first year, will then be passed on by retailers to environmental and other good causes.

Speaking about the carrier bag charge, First Minister, Carwyn Jones said:

“Tomorrow is a great day for Wales. The introduction of our carrier bag charge demonstrates that Wales is a country that genuinely cares about protecting its environment.

“The Welsh public have always been very supportive of the introduction of this charge and I look forward to the dramatic reduction in unnecessary waste that it will bring”.

Environment Minister, John Griffiths said:

“The carrier bag charge is all about encouraging people in Wales to change their behaviour. It will help us to dramatically reduce the litter problem caused by carrier bags, cut down on waste and encourage us to take much better use of the world’s natural resources.

“We know from experience in other countries that a charge for bags works. Last year in Wales we took home on average 273 bags per household from the major supermarkets alone. This is shocking waste or resource and one that the bag charge will help us to reduce.

“The charge delivers an important message, to people living in and visiting Wales, about the need for us to live much more sustainable lives. “

Last year people from Wales took home an estimated 350 million carrier from major supermarkets. This figure does not cover high street shops, local shops or shopping outlets.

Local Authorities estimate that they spend £1 million per year clearing up carrier bag litter. The charge will help to dramatically reduce this cost.

The Environment Minister added:

“It is important to remember that anyone can avoid the charge by taking their own bags with them when they go shopping.”