

Plastic bag project launched as charity

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A TRAILBLAZING project that has kept four million plastic bags off the streets and raised more than £40,000 has become a charity trust fund.

The Pennies for Plastic trust was formally launched at Weston Park School, Denton Road, Hornsey, on Monday.

The school was the first to benefit from cash raised when Budgens in The Broadway, Crouch End, ditched plastic bags and donated a penny to charity for every carrier saved.

Andrew Thornton, owner of Budgens, said: "I hoped we would manage to ban the carrier in Crouch End and that's what we've done, so we're very pleased.

"I think part of the reason we've had such a great response is it's not a cost cutting measure, it is a genuine best of both worlds. We're getting environmental benefits and helping people in the community."

The new trust will focus on children, sport, music and education, and is a direct result of the success of the Pennies for Plastic scheme.

More than 35,000 carrier bags a week have been saved, meaning £350 a week is donated into the fund.

Children from Weston Park joined Mr Thornton on the school's new stage which was built with the first Pennies for Plastic donation.

Also there were representatives from Action for Kids and North London Cricket Club, which have received donations, as has The London Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy who did not attend.

Trustees of the new fund include David Temple, conductor of the Crouch End Festival Chorus, and Crouch End Councillor David Winskill.

Mr Winskill said: "This is an absolutely wonderful project and I'm delighted to be involved. It's also a first class example of how an independent shop can work brilliantly in the community."

Pennies for Plastic began in summer 2007 with the aim of reducing carrier bag usage in Budgens and eventually led to a full carrier bag ban in summer 2008.