

Recycling: We are making a di

Over 30% of all household rubbish in West Wiltshire is now being recycled - and this looks set to rise even more in the coming year with the introduction of alternate weekly collections across the district.

Thanks to the support of local people, we exceeded the Government target of 21% recycling for 2005/06 by some way and we have already achieved our 2010 target of 30% recycling four years early. Virtually all households now have black boxes and green bins for recycling everything from paper

to cans, and textiles to garden waste. Collecting these from the kerbside every fortnight has helped us to quadruple our recycling rate in just four years. Before we started kerbside collections, the average rubbish bin contained some 36% paper, 19% green waste, 9% plastics, 8% glass, 7% cans,

3% textiles and 18% other material - so over 70% of the rubbish generated by households can now be recycled instead of being sent to landfill. All of West Wiltshire's recycling is taken to the Hills Recycling facility at Compton Bassett for processing - read on to find out what happens there.

What happens to your recycling

You've got your black box and you recycle everything that you can - but what happens to it after it gets collected by the red Hills lorry?



- **Paper** - you can recycle newspapers, magazines, catalogues, junk mail and white printer paper through the kerbside scheme. This is baled up at the processing centre and sent to Aylesford Newsprint in Kent to be turned into newsprint. Making new paper in this way reduces the use of trees, water and energy by up to 70%.



- **Glass** - glass bottles and jars are sent to British Glass in Northumberland to be turned into new bottles and jars! Doing this leads to a massive saving in raw materials and energy.



- **Steel and aluminium food and drinks cans** - Alcan in Warrington uses steel cans to make a variety of other steel products, while the aluminium recycling (including foil) makes new cans. Doing this has huge environmental impacts - for every ten tonnes of iron made from raw materials, around 15 tonnes of carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere, while around 25 tonnes of carbon dioxide is created for every ten tonnes of aluminium. Using recycled cans reduces the amount of energy used by between 75% and 95%.



- **Textiles** - Devizes Textiles takes the textiles, clothes, pairs of leather shoes, leather belts/handbags and blankets, sending them for re-use wherever possible. In some cases, they will produce new materials such as cleaning cloths.

What happens to your green bins

The compost produced by Hills Recycling is a fine grade, particle size, peat-free product, certified by the Soil Association.

To achieve the required quality, the waste thrown away in your green bin has to go through many stages before it ends up on a flower bed.



Collection

The Council's refuse collection contractor, Cleanaway, empties the green bins on a fortnightly cycle. The insides of the vehicles have to be cleaned before the green waste is collected, to avoid any contamination from the general household rubbish collected from the grey bins.



Arrival at Compton Bassett

The bins are emptied onto an open concreted yard area, so that the material can be monitored for contamination - for example, plastic bags, large aggregates, wire, tyres etc.

The compostable waste is then shredded and 'batched' before being laid as a primary windrow (i.e. laid out in rows to dry). The shredding is set to a relatively fine particle size - this is important, as it accelerates the processing time and provides a better quality end product.



Processing

The primary windrows are moved during the first week to ensure an even process; a further eight weeks of composting then follows, with batches moved every week. This movement promotes aerobic conditions, mitigates odour production and speeds up the process. During this stage, the amount of material can shrink by up to a quarter.

The compostable material is screened to remove anything oversize (this is one of the areas where cardboard causes a problem) - where possible, anything removed in this way is fed back into the start of the process to be reshredded.

Screening also enables one size of 'mulch' to be removed - this can help with market supply, as agricultural and land reclamation projects often require a 'greener' compost.



Packaging

Once the composting process is complete, most of the compost (some 95%) is delivered directly to point of use by skip. Some is packaged for sale in 30 litre bags, which can be bought from the household waste recycling centres or direct from Hills.

