Northamptonshire Waste Partnership

Recycle For Northamptonshire Group Annual Report September 2014

Joint Campaigns

Waste Focus and Slim Your Bin Groups.
1.0 **Recycle For Northamptonshire**

1.1 The Recycle For Northamptonshire Group is a meeting of Northamptonshire’s Recycling Officers representing the each of the District and Boroughs of Northamptonshire and the County Council. They meet every other month and their meetings are chaired by the NWP Executive Officer.

1.2 The aim of the group is to run and promote a series of county-wide waste minimisation and recycling initiatives and campaigns to reduce waste and increase recycling, with all of the environmental, social and financial benefits that ensue.

1.3 The name of the group was changed in 2013 from the Slim Your Bin Group to Recycle for Northamptonshire Group so that it links in with the NWP’s web site ([www.recyclefornorthamptonshire.co.uk](http://www.recyclefornorthamptonshire.co.uk)) and also with national recycling promotions and campaigns.

1.4 This is the third annual report produced by the Group. The aim of the report is to inform Members of the NWP of the work being carried out across Northamptonshire on promoting the waste reduction and recycling message and the successes that have been achieved. It does not detail all of the work of the NWP.

1.5 In order to put the work of the group into context the following table shows the latest recycling and waste minimisation performance of each of the NWP Partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>2013/14 Recycling Composting Rate %</th>
<th>Residual Waste Per Household kg/household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>497.85 kgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDC</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>515.02 kgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENC</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>367.75 kgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KBC</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>478.90 kgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>476.16 kgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NCC</strong></td>
<td><strong>45.7%</strong></td>
<td><strong>575.34 kgs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNC</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>441.53 kgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCW</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>548.58 kgs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nb – the NCC figure is the figure for the whole county – including materials collected by the District and Boroughs as well as that collected at the HWRCs.

1.7 Whilst some authorities have improved their recycling and composting performance in 2013/14 compared to the previous years (SNC and CBC), the rest have fallen for a variety of reasons. Nationally the amount of residual household waste produced fell during the economic recession,
which made recycling rates better. Residual waste now seems to be growing slowly as the economy recovers, which has had an impact on recycling rates. Within Northamptonshire there have also been contamination issues which have impacted on the amount collected for recycling. These have now been resolved and we are confident that figures for the current year will rally. The overall impact of this on the Northamptonshire combined recycling and composting rate was a very slight reduction from 46.2% in 2012/13 to 45.7 % in 2013/14.

1.8 There has been much work so far this year to improve recycling rates for the next reporting period, including residual waste being treated prior to disposal, tackling contamination, promotions of food waste collections, local campaigns carried out by our Recycling Improvement Officers, our on-going waste minimisation and education activities and full year effects of new schemes.

1.6 This report will be presented to the NWP Board by members of the Recycle For Northamptonshire Group and so there will be an opportunity to ask them questions at the meeting.

2.0 Junk Mail

2.1 In the UK, half a million tonnes of junk mail are generated each year – 90 % of which ends up in the bin. The Recycle for Northamptonshire group has run a successful junk mail campaign for a number of years. Northamptonshire residents are encouraged to register with the Mail Preference Service by picking up a business card. Registration with this service means that your address is taken off mailing lists used by companies to target potential customers and the amount of junk mail you receive should reduce. Since the start of the campaign here have been over 160,000 registrations with the MPS in Northamptonshire.

2.2 The business cards are available in council offices, libraries and are handed out at any events attended by waste officers. There is a link to the MPS website on the Recycle for Northamptonshire website and a campaign banner also travels the county and is regularly displayed in ‘one stop shops’ and borough and district council offices.

2.3 Figures from the last 12 months are listed below

**Junk Mail figures for 13/14**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Total</td>
<td>5573</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: P: Person registering their own details M: Householder registering another member of the household. X: Householder registering a previous resident. R: Householder registering a decreased resident. G: Other
2.4 Officers will continue to promote the Mailing Preference Service at every opportunity and are considering the production of door stickers asking the Post Office and other organisations not to deliver junk mail or free newspapers. These would be given out to the public at publicity events and roadshows.

3.0 Composting of Organic Waste

3.1 Collection Services Offered by District and Borough Councils

3.1.1 Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Northampton Borough and South Northants Council all operate a fortnightly garden waste collection scheme. Residents are provided with a wheeled bin for their garden waste, which is collected throughout the year at no additional cost. East Northants offers an optional garden waste collection. For an annual fee residents can hire a wheeled bin for their garden waste, which is collected fortnightly. Wellingborough Council operates at seasonal garden waste collection running between March and October. The brown garden waste bin is collected alongside the green recycling bin.

3.1.2 All Districts and Boroughs are part of the Northamptonshire Waste Partnership and promote the benefits of home composting, in addition to any form of garden waste collection they provide.

3.1.3 Corby, Daventry, East Northants, Northampton Borough and South Northants also offer weekly food waste collections.

3.1.4 Since April 2014, officers in Daventry and Corby have been working with WRAP (Waste and Recycling Action Programme) to identify and then rectify barriers to participation in the food waste collection schemes, fully funded by WRAP. Early indications are that collection rates in the trial areas are much improved.

3.2 Northamptonshire Get Composting

3.2.1 The Northamptonshire Waste Partnership has been promoting home composting and running offers and promotions through Straight Plc since 2003. The partnerships aim is to encourage residents of Northamptonshire to compost as much as possible to avoid unwanted waste going to landfill. The scheme has been well received by residents and has included the introduction of a Master Composters volunteering scheme.

3.2.2 The Northamptonshire Get Composting scheme is supported by the partnership and operated by Straights Plc. This scheme assists residents in being able to obtain home compost bins at an affordable rate to either get started or continue in their composting activities.

3.2.3 In the past the partnership have subsidised compost bins to offer them at a reduced price. The decision was made in 2011 to withdraw the subsidy and instead promote Straight’s own offers, currently buy one get one half price. This is beneficial to customers as they can operate a compost cycle at home, using the two bins, or they can split the costs with a family member or friend who is also interested in home composting.

3.2.3 The scheme continues to be promoted by the districts and boroughs through a dedicated website and promotional leaflet, which is funded by the partnership. The leaflet can be used by all authorities to distribute to local libraries and council offices, posted to new residents as well as be handed out at road shows/events by staff and Master Composters.
3.2.4 The Northants Get Composting Website (www.northants.getcomposting.com) is a very useful tool to refer people to so they can view the compost bins as well as other products and accessories. Other products available on this site include kitchen caddies, water butts and wormaries.

3.2.5 The website is advertised on the promotional compost bins offer leaflet and is linked to from the Council websites. The majority of end sales are made using this website.
3.3.0 Northamptonshire Waste & Energy Education Team

3.3.1 The Waste & Energy Education Team’s (NWEET) objective is to increase waste and energy awareness, including the need to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost waste among all school age children, with the broader aim of increasing the County recycling rates by encouraging active recycling of household waste, through child to parent education.

3.3.2 Various composting activities are offered to schools throughout Northamptonshire including: composting assemblies, which introduce the children to the idea of composting and why it is so important; composting workshops which allow a more in-depth session and can take place in either the classroom or on the Waste Education Bus; or even a composting SOS, which schools can arrange for an eco-group or gardening club and which offers practical help and advice with the schools actual compost bin to ensure its working effectively.

3.3.3 These sessions are available all year but the team make a point of promoting them in the Autumn and Spring, and especially for Compost Awareness Week in May.

3.4.0 Master Composters Scheme

3.4.1 Master Composters are volunteers who encourage and support householders with composting at home. These volunteers come from every age group and a wide variety of backgrounds and this helps with the scheme being so effective. Master Composters can reach parts that other compost promoting activities cannot reach, they talk to their friends, family and neighbours, write in their parish newsletter and attend village fairs.

3.4.2 The Northamptonshire Waste partnership introduced the scheme to Northamptonshire in 2010 and there have been six more intakes since then with more interested volunteers on the waiting list.

3.4.3 The following number of Master Composters are operating in each area:

- Corby 2
- Daventry 3
- East Northants 1
- Kettering 5
- Northampton 4
- South Northants 9
- Wellingborough 2

3.4.4 Each District and Borough includes Master Composters in their activities, including local compost giveaways, community days and eco days. Some of the activities this year alone have included the Northampton Umbrella Fair, the Towcester and Oundle Food Festivals, Compost giveaways at Kettering as well as Barnwell Eco day where an MC offered invaluable support to Northamptonshire County Council in spreading the composting message.

3.4.5 Our Master Composters are active in their local communities and have done some excellent independent work to promote and support local composting. Married couple and retired teachers, Mike and Jill Langrish have been especially prolific in their role, clocking up in excess of 100 volunteer hours between them. They have conducted many talks and interactive composting sessions with several schools and have helped set up composting bins with at their village community centre as part of an ongoing project with the Nether Heyford Youth Group.
3.4.6 Other Master Composter activities have included talks at local libraries, lectures to gardening and allotment groups and writing articles in local magazines and newsletters and occasional compost giveaways.

3.4.7 Currently a group of Master Composters are working on a Compost Lab at Brixworth Country Park. This will serve as a helpful educational element for both training and exhibiting to the general public.

3.4.8 The volunteers are administrated by Rebecca Short at NCC, having been brought back in house from Garden Organic on 1 April 2014, (realising a saving of £7,000 per year). Volunteers are required to commit to at least 30 hours of volunteer work per year. On completion Master Composters “graduate” with most continuing to volunteer after this point. They receive a quarterly newsletter from the Recycle For Northamptonshire Group which aims to inform them of local events, showcase the work of other MCs and also keep their interest and enthusiasm alive.

**Composting Display at this year’s Umbrella Fair, Racecourse, Northampton.**

3.5.0 Compost Awareness Week

3.5.1 National Compost Awareness Week (NCAW) aims to encourage more people to realise the benefits of home composting and the great results that can be achieved by using peat-free composts containing recycled material.

3.5.2 Throughout this week a variety of organisations, including the Northamptonshire Waste Partnership, encourage people to give new composting activities a go. This includes events and activities such as road shows and compost giveaways to press releases and promotion using the individual Borough and District websites as well as the Recycle for Northamptonshire website.

3.5.3 This is the perfect opportunity for Council staff and Master Composters to promote Northants Get Composting.
3.6.0 Trends and changes

3.6.1 During 2007/2008 the Partnership took the opportunity to subsidise home compost bins following the availability of a grant through WRAP. All Districts and Boroughs decided to take advantage of the subsidy and purchased a large supply of compost converters to either sell on to the public themselves or to use for giveaways.

3.6.2 Following the funding from WRAP the Partnership decided to continue subsidising the bins for a further three years and the sales remained steady throughout. The subsidy was used to reduce the cost of the 220 litre and 330 litre compost converter.

3.6.3 The decision was made to withdraw this funding in 2011/12 and the partnership instead would promote the same bins at Straight Plc cost prices and include their own offers. Residents can now purchase the 220 litre converter for £19.98 when it would normally retail at £39 and the 330 litre at £22.98, RRP £49. Sales have gradually reduced over the last three years and sales have remained the same in 2013/14 as they did the previous financial year.

3.6.4 This could be attributed to factors such as new interest in composting stagnating but also the introduction of food collections in five of the seven district and boroughs.

![Sales to date](image)

Sales to date: A peak can be seen during 2007/2008 when councils took advantage of the introduced subsidy. Sales remained steady during the subsidy but have diminished since.

3.7 Means of promotion and media

3.7.1 Straights Plc monitors and records the means of how customers have been directed to the Northamptonshire scheme and they provide us with this information on a monthly basis. Direction through local council websites continues to be the most popular form of promotion and media.
3.7.2 Advertisement and promotion through each authorities own website continues to be the most valuable media type by far, outweighing greatly any other means of promotion.

3.7.3 This is then followed by people using their search engine to locate home compost bins. By doing this they would more than likely find themselves at a council website or the Northants Get Composting webpage.

3.7.4 This is closely followed by the NWP promotional leaflet which continues to be a valuable tool, especially at road shows and events. This year Straights provided 10,000 copies of their own promotional leaflets, along with posters and leaflet stands, which were distributed amongst all authorities.

3.7.5 The Northants Get Composting website is proven to be the most valuable tool in compost bin sales with almost 80% of sales being made on line. This is followed by 19% being made over the telephone and 3% by post.

3.8 Summary

3.8.1 Factors such as the withdrawal of the subsidy and the introduction of food waste collections locally have seen a considerable drop in compost bin sales over the years. However, the scheme continues to be used by residents, with sales appearing to find a baseline over more recent years.
3.8.2 Master Composters continue to be a valuable recourse and can make a difference in changing people’s attitudes and behaviour and they are an essential part of the national strategy to increase environmental awareness and to reduce the amount of waste that could end up in landfill.

3.8.3 The Northamptonshire Get Composting scheme and the Master Composters scheme remain a valuable recourse for the partnership, which requires little funding.

4.0 Website

4.1 The Recycle for Northamptonshire website is a one-stop interactive partnership website, which promotes reducing, reusing, recycling and lots more. It offers residents a chance to answer all their queries in one place, and then has comprehensive links to other sites with specialist advice, such as LoveFoodHateWaste.com.

4.2 There were over 5300 users of the website, which is a similar level to last year. These users accessed the site more than 16,000 times. The way residents are interacting with the site suggests it mainly used to ‘find out’ some information, on what can be recycled, or how to home compost.

4.3 Visitors are most commonly coming to the site from Google; using search terms based around recycle for Northamptonshire. This shows good recognition amongst members of the public, even if they are unsure of the full URL for the website.

4.4 The next most common way to visit the site is from a link at another page, namely other council webpages. This again highlights good partnership working by cross promoting each other’s sites.

4.5 Residents can also be directed to the site via social media, of which 52% of the social media referrals come from Facebook, 48% are from Twitter. This shows a swing from last year, where Twitter was more prominent. Referrals from social media are a very good way of tracking promotions, such as Christmas, or summer events.

4.6 The most popular pages on the website were:

1. A-Z of waste
2. Homepage
3. Ways to recycle - Map
4. Reuse Organisations
5. About us – Waste

4.7 The top three represent the most interactive elements of the site, and are proving the most useful to residents.

5.0 Social Media

5.1 Recycle for Northamptonshire on Facebook and Twitter has been a successful method of disseminating the waste minimisation message to a large audience for limited cost. Both the Facebook page and Twitter account are linked from the partnership’s Recycle for Northamptonshire website. The account is designed to be used for all news, events and comment across all eight partners. It is currently administered by Rebecca Short at Northamptonshire County Council, with input from the NWP Executive Officer.
The term ‘followers’ is used below to denote people who have opted to receive messages direct from Recycle for Northamptonshire.

Followers on Twitter August 2014: 1071

5.2 Twitter performance has excelled in the last year with an increase over 45% on last year’s figures. It is also is a good medium to get the message to younger demographics, compared to traditional media such as newspapers or council publications.

Followers on Facebook as of August 2014: 274

5.3 Although the Facebook performance has increased, it has not matched the level of Twitter. It is harder to achieve success similar to the Twitter performance; however, the content is interactive, engaging and very attractive. It may be an option to use paid for advertising through social media to extend the coverage.

5.4 The NWP Christmas song/video was produced by the Recycle For Northamptonshire Group, in particular Rebecca Short of NCC. It was a video of various waste officers and Councillors from across the county singing “The Twelve Days of Christmas” with alternative lyrics promoting waste minimisation and recycling at Christmas time. Social media was used to disseminate this video and at the last count there were 700 views of the video on Facebook and 403 on Youtube.
6.0 Real Nappies

6.1 The Real Nappy Loan Kits have proven to be very popular. Loan kits have gone out to 65 families and feedback has been generally very good. Since the original creation of the kits in 2013, additional brands of nappies have been introduced to widen choice. Around 20% of all people borrowing a kit have gone on to claim cashback.

6.2 Due to demand we have added an extra nappy loan kit to our stock this year – mainly by asking for free samples from the major manufactures or real nappies.

6.3 Efforts to promote both the Real Nappy loan kits and cashback scheme through the Keeping it Real Campaign have included a travelling display which visited twelve local libraries in the Spring and various small roadshows and talks around Real Nappy Week in April. Advertising for the campaign has also appeared in several local magazines targeted to the new parent demographic. Editorial and full page adverts have run in Toddle About, Child and Time for Tots each of which are tailored to parents of children under five years old. An advert has also been commissioned in the NHS Community Care Guide and will shortly also be promoted in the National Child Birth Trust newsletter.

6.4 Reusable swim nappies have been added to the kits in 2014.

6.5 In conjunction with the loan kits, Northamptonshire County Council runs a successful nappy cash back scheme. This has been in existence since 2005. For any purchase of real nappies over £60.00 a cash sum of £25 is awarded. Proof of purchase is necessary to receive the cash back.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of claims</th>
<th>Cost to NCC</th>
<th>Diversion from landfill in tonnes (over 2.5 years)</th>
<th>Savings in £'s of diversion of landfill (over 2.5 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>£1,700</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>£6,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>£5,375</td>
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<td>£7,525*</td>
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</table>
*estimate based on a figure of £35/tonne

7.0 Love Food Hate Waste

7.1 The Love food Hate Waste Campaign is a national campaign run by WRAP. The Northamptonshire Waste Partnership supports this campaign by promoting its core messages and holding public events within Northamptonshire.

7.2 Several events have taken place to promote the Love Food Hate Waste Campaign as part of efforts to reduce the volume of organic waste going to landfill. Stalls have been prominent at the Love Northampton Food and Drink Festival, Oundle Food Festival and the Towcester Food Festival. Visitors to our stalls at these large events have been able to pick up LFHW Toolkits containing spaghetti measures, bag clips, rice measures, shopping list and storage information packs.

8.0 Plans for the Next 12 Months

8.1 The Recycle for Northamptonshire Group will continue to promote waste minimisation and recycling in the year to come, working with national and international campaigns whenever possible. We will aim to stem the rise in residual waste and to increase what is put into the recycling containers rather than the waste bin.

8.2 Projects already started or planned to start soon will all help to achieve this – the work of our Recycling Improvement Officers, improved food waste collects in trial areas, promotion of specific recyclable materials will all contribute to this aim.