

Why Recycle?

Recycling Champions Newsletter

What do you call an elf that can sing?’

‘A wrapper’.

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the recycling champions newsletter. This edition is mostly about how to make Christmas a bit more sustainable. How can we go through the festive season with less stress and stuff?

We have the annual Arthur Rank Christmas tree recycling info available as well as the changes in the green bin calendar from December 2019-March 2020.

The champions will share stories from abroad and how to stay sustainable when travelling. Don't forget to bring bags with you when shopping abroad. A lot of countries still hand out plastic bags en-mass.

We will also discuss wipes and how things are slowly changing for the better. I'd still stay far away from them as they are expensive and unnecessary. We don't want to be giving things to landfill this Christmas do we?!

I hope you all have a 'tree-mendous' Christmas and a 'fir-tastic' New Year.

Oh and don't forget to recycle your wrapper for next year.

It's Time to Spruce Things up Again

The Christmas Tree Recycling Scheme is back and bigger than ever! Arthur Rank Hospice Charity will be running their annual Christmas Tree Recycling scheme once again in January, along with the support of the council, Just Helping and numerous local businesses and volunteers.

On Thursday 9, Friday 10 and Saturday 11 January 2020 their team of volunteers will be collecting trees from postcodes CB1, CB2, CB3, CB4, CB5, CB22, CB23 and CB24 and in exchange they welcome a donation to the hospice. The trees are then taken to the waste management park near Waterbeach for composting. If you would like your tree to be collected, or if you can spare a few hours to volunteer, visit www.arhc.org.uk/treerecycling or call the Hospice fundraising team for further information on 01223 675888.

After costs, 90% of the monies raised will go to the Hospice and the remaining 10% will be donated to other local charities. Last year the Hospice's volunteers collected 1800 trees and raised over £26,000! So, this year feel good about saving yourself the hassle of disposing of your tree and take part in this most 'tree-markable' initiative. Registrations will close at 1pm Wednesday 8 January 2020.

Wipes. What a Waste of Time.

Britain is one of the biggest consumers of wet wipes in the world using a whopping 11 billion a year. They either end up landfilled, incinerated if lucky, or in our sewage system as part of fat bergs that block the pipes and cause major disruption.

The champions visited Anglian Water recycling centre in April witnessing the blight of wet wipes in our sewers across East Anglia with their very own eyes.

However, it's not all doom and gloom. There are some new wipes on the market which are completely biodegradable. Natracare wipes, sold by Waitrose, Ocado and independent pharmacies, are 100% paper tissue and completely biodegradable.

Look out for the 'Fine to Flush' mark, which means that wipes have passed stringent tests to be awarded this logo/mark.

I'd still ditch the wipes and only flush the 3 p's down the loo: pee, poo and paper. Or why not moisten toilet paper and use it as a wipe? It does the trick as good as an expensive wipe and it will disintegrate in the toilet once flushed.

Leila's Travels Around the World

During my visit to Morocco in the spring this year, we stayed at Marrakesh in a hotel in the Medina. Whilst visiting the shops in the souk and shopping, we noticed that there were no plastic carrier bags! Shops gave out reusable carrier bags that are made from wood and are biodegradable. When you are finished with the bags you are asked to return them to the local shops.

The country is very keen on recycling and since 2008 it has worked towards changing its ways of collecting and disposing of general waste. In 2016, Marrakesh was the chosen location for COP 22, the 22nd session of the conference of parties, the discussion to move towards a multilateral cooperation of how to stop climate change. Morocco aims to eradicate the use of disposable bags in the entire country. You will no longer see waste tips with people rummaging for things to reuse. People now run these tips as cooperatives and share the benefits of recycling.

What do you know about reusable nappies?

Cambs Reusable Nappies are looking for committed, knowledgeable volunteers to help them dispel myths and give accurate, free information to parents and care-givers about using washable nappies. Could this be you?

Disposable nappies make up around 9% of household waste in our area, which equates to about 22.5 million nappies going to landfill every year. Using reusable nappies, even just for some changes, can reduce this and save parents and the council money too.

If you have used modern reusable nappies and would like to help raise awareness of the options available and support other parents in choosing the right nappy for them, please contact info@cambsreusablenappies.uk to find out more.

Green garden bin collections

Don't forget the green food and garden bin collection will switch to monthly collection from week commencing 23 December 2019. It will go back to fortnightly collection week beginning 2 and 9 March 2020 depending on your calendar.

Ho ho ho to Make Christmas Greener

Want to have a hassle-free Christmas and cut down on stress as well as the buying frenzy you have witnessed year on end every December? Why not make your sustainable life a staple year around including the festive season? Here's a few tips I usually hand out at this time of year trying to make each Christmas a bit less headachy and cluttered.

1. Plan your gifts in advance rather than hit the high street in a panic. You won't find anything in that state of mind. Usually these kinds of purchases end up on the shelf and not used which is a double whammy. Pick an item which has value, meaning and purpose. Or even better, pick an experience!

2. If you feel you need to give people a thing then opt for a present that lasts, like a house plant, a tree that you can plant outside that will stick around for longer and stay as a warm memory.

3. Make beautiful less wasteful presents using recycled brown paper and tags out of old Christmas cards. Use herbs such as rosemary or twigs of thyme as decoration which can then be eaten later as well. Or make the whole present an edible one such as home-made truffles, biscuits or jam and not bother wrapping it up.

3. Favour local and independent stores over the high- street. Many gifts in today's marketplace come from halfway around the world, and the impact of transportation contributes significantly to greenhouse emissions and global warming. Local craft fairs and artisan shops are a good source of gifts that come without the added costs of transportation. And gifts made locally often have a story which goes with the gift, since the artisan and the origin of the gift are known.

5. Got an overload of candles or shower gel? Recycle unwanted gifts, re gift them to someone else or donate it to a charity.

6. Maybe the best gift of all is to be kind and do something for others without expecting anything in return. Those gifts are invaluable and makes you a good person too.

Meet the champion: Cristina

Hello! I'm Cristina Vogel and I'm part of the recycling group! I'm 26 years old and I come from Pinerolo, in Italy. At the moment I work as nurse at the Royal Papworth Hospital but the little free time I have I've been volunteering for the recycling champions for about a year now. I've recently returned from a trip to Nepal which is a fascinating country with beautiful mountains and different cultures and religions. Sadly, they don't have the facilities to recycle waste as the Italians and English do. Often "the landfill food" is found at the roadside and it is not uncommon to see someone who drops their finished water bottle or their sweet wrappers on the ground.

The use of plastic has quickly spread across Nepal but there is nowhere to dispose of it such as a sophisticated recycling facility.

But there is an air of change. The capital city Kathmandu has many community-based organizations, NGOs and private companies involved in improving the waste management (as the "Solid Waste Management in Kathmandu Metropolitan City" paper states). On top of that there are small community activities like Saturday morning volunteer street cleaning and training how to build a worm composter.

There is still a lot of work to do, but on the other hand we could learn a lot from their lifestyle. Fruits and vegetables always come without packaging and you can refill your container directly from big bags with seeds, rice or spices easily, without spending a lot of time to find that specific "zero waste" shop.

The difference in the attitude between England and Nepal regarding the approach to recycling made me think. In my opinion, recycling must be accompanied by the thought to use less, returning to the simplicity of the past where not every food was surrounded by plastic film.

The Community Action Days That Keep on Giving

The councils Streets and Open Spaces team have received funding to run an additional 12 Community Action Days within the City of Cambridge area for one year. The SOS team and Greater Cambridge Shared Waste will be working together to deliver successful days out in the community clearing away unwanted bulky items, wood, electrical items and metal. There will also be a 'Take It Or Leave It' stall present where someone's trash can become another person's treasure.

Recycling champions and SOS volunteers are needed to help out during these busy days. Some of the days will be larger and will involve other organizations and others will simply be more like skip days where containers are available in specific locations for the public to dispose of their unwanted bulky items.

The big SOS funded community action days for 2020 are as follows:

- Hobart / Suez Road – Sat 8th February
- St Matthews Piece – Sat 15th February
- Jack Warren Green – Sat 29th February
- Walpole Road / St Bedes Crescent – Sat 7th March
- Borrowdale - Thursday 12th March
- Clay Farm – Sat 21th March (subject to developer involvement)
- Colville Road – Sat 29th March (subject to where redevelopment is at)

And finally... If you know of any groups or organisations that would appreciate a talk or presentation on household recycling, please either let us know or ask them to get in touch. Also, if you know of any local events where we could have a recycling stall it would be great to hear about them. For this or any other recycling champion related issues or enquiries please contact Birgitta Laurent on 07525 213 774 or email: birgitta.laurent@scambs.gov.uk