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EDITORIAL VIEWPOINT

By **Brendan Gilligan**

Electric e-bikes are making cycling easier, faster and more accessible. They already play a significant role in reducing the environmental impact of transportation.

However, when an e-bike is scrapped, its battery must also be disposed of, and these batteries can be particularly hazardous and tricky to handle. As a result, the growth of e-bikes is contributing to a related environmental problem: an increase in electronic waste, also known as e-waste. To understand why we need to focus on making e-bikes more durable and using fewer resources, please read pages 36-37.

E-bikes and e-scooters are becoming very popular. Many people, city centre cycling schemes and delivery companies like Uber Eats and Just Eat choose them as affordable, healthy and low-carbon alternatives to cars. Just Eat notes that charging an e-bike costs only 12 pence per day, while charging a petrol moped costs £6.

In the UK, legal e-bikes can go up to 15.5 mph and must stop providing motor assistance when the rider stops pedalling. The minimum age for renting and riding an e-bike or e-scooter is 16 years old.

These vehicles are great for commuting or sightseeing in the city centre because riders can use cycle paths and roads. However, some riders do not follow the rules. How many times have you seen an accident involving an e-bike or e-scooter on the pavement?

Recently, while I was collecting a pizza and leaving the shop, I almost got hit by a boy on an e-scooter (probably illegal) riding on the pavement at about 20mph. He looked about 13 and was not wearing any protective gear.

Are today's children not worried about the potential life-threatening dangers? This was highlighted earlier this year when a teenager tragically died after an e-scooter crash in Manchester. The e-scooter, carrying two 14 year-old boys, crashed into a car. One boy died a week later from his injuries.

The accident occurred on 19th March when the e-scooter was travelling through a junction and collided with a car. The scooter then came to rest on a third vehicle. The 14 year-old who died was not driving the e-scooter.

We need to question parents who buy these products and let their children ride them unsafely on the streets. This puts both their children's lives and the lives of others in danger due to a lack of awareness of road safety. Parents should teach their children safe e-scooter riding practices, including traffic rules and the importance of wearing protective gear. This way, we can all walk around without having to look over our shoulders.



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A LOVE OF JCB MACHINES

Discover how a teenager's passion for machines in the construction industry has enabled him to become the UK's youngest qualified digger driver at just 13

A global treaty to limit plastic pollution is possible – will countries take action?

Representatives from 175 countries will meet in Geneva, Switzerland, from 5th-14th August to negotiate a legally binding UN treaty to end plastic pollution. Non-governmental organisations, academics and industry lobbyists will also be present, hoping to influence what could be the world's first global agreement on plastics.

This summit, called 'INC-5.2', follows an unsuccessful meeting in Busan, South Korea, late last year. That meeting did not resolve key issues, despite hopes for progress. Now, countries must overcome their political divisions or risk the entire process falling apart. The key question is whether countries will take action.

In 2022, the UN Environment Assembly agreed to create a legally binding treaty to combat plastic pollution. Since then, progress has been slow. Negotiations have repeatedly stalled over issues such as limiting plastic production, regulating chemicals, defining terms and securing funding for implementation.

Lobbying by the plastic and petrochemical industries has also influenced the negotiations. At the last talks, industry lobbyists formed the largest group, outnumbering representatives from the EU, Latin America, the Pacific Islands, independent scientists and Indigenous communities. This imbalance can weaken the needed science-based action.

Although agreement was not reached in Busan, discussions continued using the



'chair's text', a draft treaty with multiple options available. This document will serve as the starting point in Geneva, but it remains uncertain if enough common ground can be reached to finalise it.

This treaty presents a unique opportunity to address a significant environmental crisis. More than 450 million tonnes of plastic are produced annually, and this amount is expected to double by 2045 if current trends continue.

Currently, only about 9% of plastic is recycled; the rest is either landfilled, incinerated, or pollutes the environment.

An estimated 139 million tonnes of plastic contaminate our oceans and waterways, and this number could be significantly higher when considering land pollution and microplastics.

Plastic is found everywhere - from the deepest oceans and tallest mountains to inside the human body. Scientists are still learning about the long-term effects of plastic on human health, biodiversity and the climate, but harmful effects on wildlife and ecosystems have already been documented.

Plastic pollution knows no borders. It moves through rivers, oceans and the air,

affecting countries far away. Global trade and waste exports make this a problem no country can tackle alone, which is why a global treaty is essential.

Despite the growing urgency, divisions among countries have slowed progress. Some nations, such as those in the High Ambition Coalition, seek robust rules to limit plastic production, phase out toxic chemicals and hold polluters accountable. Others, especially those with strong petrochemical industries, prefer a weaker, voluntary approach that focuses mostly on recycling and waste management.

If these divisions are not addressed, the treaty may become too weak to be effective. A fragmented agreement would fail to reduce rising plastic production and could harm global efforts.

Since the last meeting, countries have held smaller discussions to seek common ground. That momentum needs to carry into the final negotiations.

Key articles in the draft treaty dealing with chemicals, plastic production and funding remain disputed. Whether these sections are strengthened or weakened will significantly influence the treaty's effectiveness for years to come. Countries that support a strong treaty must be firm and work to bring others along.

As we approach these final negotiations, we find ourselves at a crucial point.

The world has an opportunity to make significant progress in addressing plastic pollution - let's not waste it.

The Skip Yard

Royston



UK ETS takes steps towards incorporating waste incineration with a new monitoring framework

The UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) Authority has announced a Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) period that will begin in 2026. This initiative could potentially include waste incineration within the carbon pricing framework.

On 21st July, the UK ETS Authority published its interim response to a consultation regarding the expansion of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme to cover waste incineration. The MRV period is scheduled to commence on 1st January, 2026, initially applying on a voluntary basis.

The MRV framework will assess combustion and process emissions from energy-from-waste facilities, as well as emissions from clinical waste incineration. However, high-temperature hazardous waste incineration will remain excluded due to the challenges associated with reducing emissions in that area.

Additionally, the Government has confirmed plans to align the ETS with the Extended Producer Responsibility regime for packaging (pEPR). This alignment means that local authorities' additional carbon costs for disposing of packaging materials through incineration will be reflected in pEPR payment calculations.



Although no implementation date has been finalised, the MRV phase is expected to run until at least 2028. This timeframe will allow for the collection of reliable data and the development of a robust, cost-effective approach to carbon allocation.

A spokesperson from the waste management company Viridor commented "We welcome the Government's announcement regarding the expansion of the ETS, which is a significant step forward for the UK's waste sector. Developing and

testing carbon factors is crucial to drive decarbonisation and ensure that waste producers are rewarded for reducing their emissions.

"Utilising the MRV period to test and develop this approach will help ensure effective full ETS implementation by 2028.

"We look forward to continuing our close collaboration with the Government during this period and are committed to playing our role in achieving a net zero, more circular economy."

WRA hails 'a big step forward' for BECCS and net zero

The Wood Recyclers' Association welcomes the Government's announcement that the UK's Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) will include engineered greenhouse gas removals (GGR) by 2029. This is a crucial step for Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) and achieving net zero.

This announcement means that negative emissions from sustainable biomass, known as BECCS, will be part of the main carbon trading scheme. This creates rules and a market that will encourage demand for, and investment in, technologies that can effectively remove carbon.

It is clear that to reach its net zero goals, the UK must significantly increase the deployment of carbon removal technologies. The WRA believes this development is a major step toward a self-sufficient GGR sector, with BECCS playing a central role.

Some key takeaways from the announcement include:

- *GGR integration to be legislated by 2028, operational by 2029;*
- *UK-only removals will be eligible initially;*
- *Projects must meet a 200-year minimum carbon storage requirement;*
- *Monitoring, reporting and verification will align with the upcoming UK GGR Standard;*
- *No artificial limits on how removal allowances can be used for compliance;*
- *The Authority is still weighing woodland inclusion, with new evidence expected soon.*

Commenting on the announcement, Richard Coulson, Chair of the WRA's Biomass Advocacy Group, said: "We welcome the clarity and momentum, especially the commitment to domestic

removals and the move to keep removals within a single carbon market - this ensures confidence and a level playing field - supporting investment into high-integrity removals.

"As the regulatory environment for GGRs develops, it's crucial that the UK supports the existing assets that are capable of delivering negative emissions and moves forward with the implementation of these developments as quickly as possible. The end of ROCs means there is a significant risk that by the time GGR regulations are in place, the UK will have no BECCS sector left.

"We will continue working with policymakers to ensure that BECCs for sub-100MW biomass assets is achievable and that these plants can fulfil their potentially huge contribution to net zero."



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£1.1 billion boost to improve local recycling services across England

The Government has announced a £1.1 billion funding initiative to assist local authorities across England in implementing nationwide reforms to household recycling services.

This funding aims to facilitate weekly food waste collections and improve the consistency of recycling efforts across the country, in line with upcoming regulations concerning waste management.

Under the new regulations, all homes in England will be required to have access to weekly food waste collections by 31st March 2026.

The funding will support councils in establishing or expanding the infrastructure necessary to deliver this service. This includes the purchase of new food waste bins, collection vehicles and staff training.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) stated that making weekly food waste recycling universal will significantly reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill.

Food waste is one of the largest contributors to methane emissions from landfill sites, making this initiative a vital part of the UK's net zero strategy.

Additionally, the £1.1 billion investment will help councils meet new requirements for household recycling collections. These reforms will standardise the types of materials that need to be collected kerbside across England.

All local authorities will be expected to separately collect glass, metal, plastic, paper, card, food waste and garden waste from general rubbish.

Defra stated that this initiative aims

to simplify recycling for households and improve the quality of materials for reprocessing.

The funding will enable local authorities to adapt their existing collection systems and invest in essential infrastructure, such as sorting facilities.

Ministers believe that improved recycling services and the implementation of separate food waste collections will alleviate pressure on landfill sites and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Environment Secretary Steve Barclay described the investment as a step towards creating "a simpler, easier and more effective recycling system."

These changes are part of the Government's broader Resources and Waste Strategy, which encompasses reforms to packaging waste and producer responsibility.

The funding will be allocated directly to local authorities based on their needs and current service levels. Councils will have the flexibility to determine how to deliver these services, as long as they meet the core requirements set out by Defra.

Executive Director of the Environmental Services Association, Jacob Hayler, said: "Our members stand ready to invest billions, alongside local authority partners, in the next generation of recycling services, infrastructure and jobs, which will provide a rapid boost to England's stalled recycling rates. The new producer responsibility regime for packaging, alongside other measures to simplify recycling services, will unlock this investment and support our ambition to achieve a circular economy in the UK over the next decade."

Anger from glass industry as Defra confirms EPR fees for packaging producers

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has announced the base fees for the extended producer responsibility scheme for packaging (pEPR) for this year, using a weight-based fee structure that has angered glass businesses.

The pEPR scheme aims to hold producers accountable for the entire lifecycle of their packaging. The fees, managed by PackUK, apply to obligated packaging producers and are additional to existing environmental regulations. They are calculated by dividing management costs for household packaging waste by the total amount of packaging placed on the market, resulting in fees expressed in £ per tonne.

The 2025/26 base fees are: Aluminium (£266 per tonne); fibre-based composite (£461 per tonne); glass (£192 per tonne); paper and card (£196 per tonne); plastic (£423 per tonne); steel (£259 per tonne); wood (£280 per tonne) and other materials (£259 per tonne).

Looking forward, large producers are required to report their packaging data for the period from 1st January to 31st June 2025 by 1st October 2025. These figures will be used to calculate base fees for 2026-2027, which will focus on recyclability.

The glass sector has voiced concerns, claiming the new fees will disproportionately affect them compared to lighter materials like plastic, which are exempt due to the forthcoming Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). This scheme will require consumers to pay a deposit on certain drink containers, effective October 2027.

A spokesperson for glass manufacturer Encirc said: "The Government needs to hit the pause button on this scheme before British glass manufacturers are unfairly hit with these disproportionate costs.

"Sadly, the Government's pricing structure has not taken into account that glass is far more sustainable than plastic and weighs considerably more.

"Ministers must continue dialogue with the British glass industry before implementing pEPR. It is in the best interest of consumers, businesses and glass factories for this scheme to be put on ice."

Meet the team for a chat at the
RWM Expo at the NEC Birmingham
on 17th-18th September.
Stand Number: **RS-F126**.



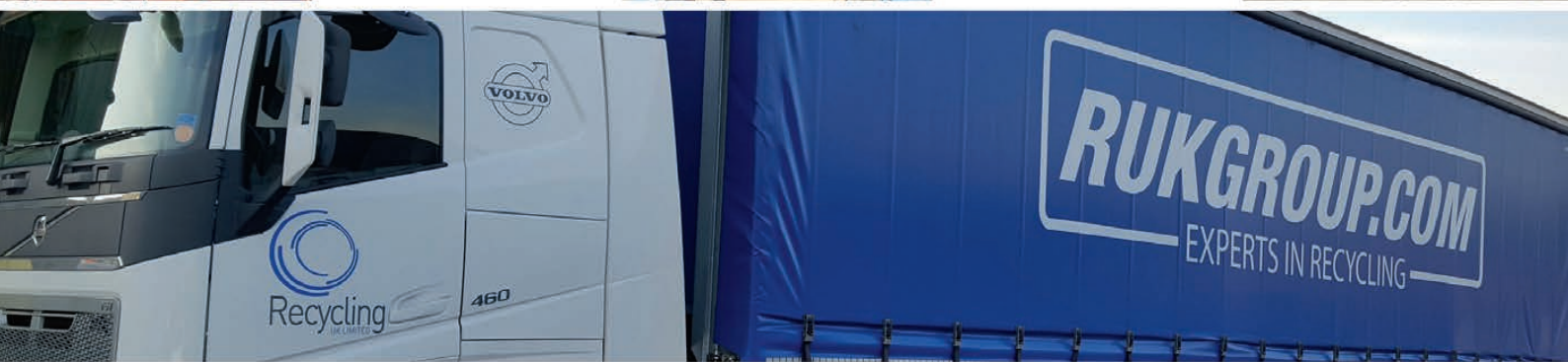
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Picture credit: TOMRA Recycling

Welsh Government wants black bin bags to be collected just once every month

The Welsh Government recommends that households have their black bag waste collected once every three to four weeks. This approach aims to maintain the effectiveness of recycling services.

The *Collections Blueprint 2025* states that a weekly limit of 60 litres of black waste per household is enough, as a standard wheelie bin holds 240 litres. It suggests that councils work together to manage recycling and waste services cost-effectively.

There are variations in collection schedules across Wales: Cardiff collects every two weeks, while Newport, the Vale and Rhondda Cynon Taf collect every three weeks and Conwy residents wait four weeks.

The guidance also addresses nappy collections, garden waste and food waste management, recommending weekly food waste collections with free bags provided. For 'dry recycling' items, like paper, plastic and glass, sorting at the kerbside is preferred, with weekly collections.

Items should be inspected to prevent contamination, and unsuitable items will be rejected on the spot. Households should receive three or more reusable containers for recyclables.

Wales excels in recycling, leading the UK and ranking second globally, just behind Austria.

Wales brings forward DRS to 2027

The Welsh Government is accelerating the implementation of its deposit return scheme (DRS) to align with UK timelines, while maintaining provisions for glass inclusion and reuse.

Following industry feedback about operational complexities from varying UK approaches, Deputy First Minister Huw Irranca-Davies confirmed that Wales will include glass containers in its scheme, unlike England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, which plan to exclude them starting in October 2027.

Concerns about littering, highlighted by Keep Wales Tidy's survey, which showed drinks-related litter on 43.6% of Welsh streets and a significant rise

in glass bottle litter, are driving this commitment.

Glass containers are ideal for reuse, unlike single-use plastics, aligning with circular economy principles and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

To address industry concerns about operational complexity, the Welsh Government plans a phased approach to eliminate different labelling systems and reduce fraud risks, also accommodating small and medium enterprises with suitable arrangements.

This approach contrasts with delays in similar schemes elsewhere in the UK, particularly Scotland, which has postponed its original glass-inclusive plan.

Defra updates Digital Waste Tracking policy

Defra has updated its policy on Digital Waste Tracking (DWT) reforms, introducing a new implementation timeline and details on compliance requirements.

The DWT service is scheduled to launch by April 2026 to combat illegal waste handling, which disrupts the circular economy and harms the environment. It aims to fill the information gap caused by outdated waste movement recording systems.

Starting this autumn, the service will be available in a private beta to selected user groups. Next spring, it will be open to all permitted and licensed waste receiving sites, with mandatory reporting beginning in October 2026. Defra plans to extend the

DWT to additional operators in 2027.

By September, Defra will specify which entities will fall under the waste receiving site category and whether use of the service will be required for permit and license holders.

The waste industry comprises approximately 12,000 waste site operators, 150,000 registered waste exemption holders and 300,000 registered waste carriers, brokers and dealers in the UK, many of whom have varying levels of digital capability.

Defra emphasises the need for an incremental approach to create a stable, effective and user-friendly service.

The first phase will collect data on all waste received by waste receiving

sites, including waste with persistent organic pollutants (POPs). Future phases will expand the service to other waste operators.

Household Waste Recycling Centre operators are exempt from recording household waste, but may discuss the feasibility of tracking commercial waste with local authorities.

Defra aims to integrate the service with existing software through an API, ensuring close collaboration with companies that use commercial software to facilitate this approach.

Starting with a smaller, well-defined user group will enhance engagement and better meet the needs of businesses and regulators.

HSE statistics show work-related fatalities from last 12 months

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) annual report for work-related fatalities in 2024/25 indicates that 124 individuals died in work-related incidents during this period.

According to the HSE, three fatalities occurred in the waste and resources sector across the UK.

The agriculture, forestry and fishing industries continue to have the highest rate of fatal injuries per 100,000 workers compared to all main industry sectors, with waste and recycling following closely behind.

The statistics, covering the period from April 2024 to March 2025, show that the number of deaths remains largely consistent with pre-pandemic levels. There were 14 fewer fatalities compared to the previous 12-month period.

The construction industry had the highest number of fatalities, with 35 deaths, while 23 people lost their lives in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors. Additionally, 92 individuals who were not working - members of the public present in a workplace - were killed in work-related incidents during 2024/25.



Commenting on these statistics, HSE Chief Executive Sarah Albon stated: "Great Britain is one of the safest places in the world to work, but we must remember that each of these deaths represents a tragedy for families, friends and communities."

"Despite stability in numbers, we cannot accept that fatal accidents are an inevitable part of working life. We

are encouraged by the long-term trend but urge against complacency regarding workplace safety."

It is important to note that these figures relate specifically to work-related accidents and do not encompass deaths resulting from occupational diseases or diseases arising from specific occupational exposures.



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We're on a road to nowhere

In July, the Government published its much-anticipated roadmap for implementing the Employment Rights Bill, which is hailed as 'a core part of the mission to grow the economy, raise living standards across the country and create opportunities.' Blink and you might have missed it!

It aims, says the blurb, to 'tackle low pay, poor working conditions and poor job security.' Hooray for that then!

You can read and download the full 12-page roadmap by scanning the QR code.



Personally, I'm loving the cover page, which depicts two blokes using a mallet and a spade to, er, well, I'm not sure. They appear to be doing something with sand, so a bucket and spade would probably be more appropriate.

Anyway, if you are short on time, as most of us are, here's a summary, which I generated using AI (and a mallet).

Take the second left

The Government has outlined a phased approach for implementing the Employment Rights Bill to ensure

readiness among stakeholders.

- Key measures will be implemented in phases, with some taking effect shortly after Royal Assent.
- Major reforms will be rolled out in April 2026, October 2026 and 2027.
- Initial measures include repealing the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act and protections against dismissal for industrial action.
- Significant reforms in 2026 include 'day one' entitlements to family/parental leave, the introduction of day one protection from unfair dismissal and improvements to entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay.

Follow the road around the roundabout, then veer to the right

The Government emphasised the importance of consultation and engagement with stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of reforms. It states:

- Comprehensive consultations will occur to gather insights from employers, trade unions and other stakeholders.
- Engagement began in Summer 2025, focusing on key measures like trade union rights and protections for workers.
- The Government aims to finalise

policies based on stakeholder feedback before implementation.

If you get lost, stop at a pub and ask for Angela (Raynor)

There's a commitment in there to make sure we all get there safely, and the government has committed to the following:

- Guidance will be developed to clarify new requirements and assist compliance for employers and workers.
- ACAS will play a crucial role in providing support services, including helplines and training for employers.
- Sufficient time will be allocated for stakeholders to familiarise themselves with changes before they take effect.
- The timeline includes significant measures like the establishment of the Fair Work Agency.

Your destination is nearby

All good then? Well, who knows. Already, the House of Lords has derailed the abolition of zero-hours contracts. I'm still trying to figure out how this will grow the economy, raise living standards across the country and create opportunities because the massive, no, mahoosive, elephant in the room is the rising number of economically inactive people of working age, looming higher taxation which targets the same people and businesses (that are already propping up the economy) for those that don't pay enough, or at all, into the system. I apologise for the long sentence; you may breathe now.

Somewhere

It all feels a bit like, well, a lot of words. I'm just not seeing the vision or where this road map is taking us. Successive governments have improved employment rights for decades, but we've still not arrived at Nirvana. Where is it, and more importantly, when is it?

Ignoring my scepticism, according to the roadmap, the Government's vision is 'to create a modern employment rights framework that empowers workers and contributes to economic growth'.

Having ditched the adjacent economic plans, including those for welfare reform, I don't see how they are going to get there.

I might see if they can drop me off at the services en route, where I'll sit and have a Greggs pastie and a Coke until they pick me up on the way home. I'll be interested in hearing about their adventures and where they got to.



Just 27% of waste crime incidents are reported

Landowners and farmers are being encouraged to assist the Environment Agency (EA) in combating waste crime, as new research reveals that only 12% of the most recent incidents affecting them were reported.

The findings come from the EA's *National Waste Crime Survey 2025*, which indicates that more than half (57%) of landowners and farmers have been impacted by waste crime.

Organised criminal groups are operating across the country, targeting privately owned property and land, especially in rural areas, to illegally dump waste collected through illicit means. The waste industry, along with respondents from the survey, estimates that 35% of waste crime is committed by these organised crime groups, primarily motivated by financial gain.

The EA is committed to stopping waste crime, protecting the environment, and pursuing criminals. To effectively address this issue, it's crucial to know when and where these offences occur. However, the survey shows that just over a quarter (27%) of all waste crimes are reported.

Steve Molyneux, the Environment Agency's Deputy Director for Waste and Resources Regulation, stated: "Waste criminals cause widespread and significant harm to people, places and the economy. The EA is determined to use all our powers and resources to combat waste crime, but we cannot do this alone.

"Our survey shows that nearly three-quarters of waste offences go unreported. Therefore, we urge the industry and the public to help us stop waste criminals more quickly by sharing any information they have about those committing these serious crimes."

To ensure that it has the best possible information to identify and apprehend the offenders, the EA is asking landowners and farmers to report every incident to its 24-hour incident hotline at 0800 80 70 60.

UK recycling rate rises to 44.6% as waste to landfill falls

The UK's provisional recycling rate for household waste (WfH), including Incinerator Bottom Ash metal (IBAm), increased to 44.6% in 2023, up from 44.1% in 2022.

Recycling rates were as follows: England 44.0%; Wales 57.0%; Northern Ireland 50.2% and Scotland 42.1%.

The amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill fell from 6.3 million tonnes in 2022 to 5.3 million tonnes in 2023. For 2024, between 64.1% and 75.2% of UK packaging waste is estimated to be recycled.

In 2020, the UK generated approximately 40.4 million tonnes of commercial and industrial (C&I) waste, with the majority coming from England at 33.7 million tonnes. The estimated C&I waste for England in 2023 is approximately 32.6 million tonnes.

In 2020, approximately 59.4 million tonnes of non-hazardous construction and demolition (C&D) waste was produced in the UK, with England generating 53.9 million tonnes.

The total waste generated in the UK in 2020 was 191.2 million tonnes, with England responsible for 85% of that.



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NATIONWIDE

Botley treatment centre approved to produce biosolids for farms

A new sludge treatment centre in Hampshire can now provide biosolids to local farms as an alternative fertiliser for crops.

The CSG Botley treatment plant, opened last year, has received certification from the Biosolids Assurance Scheme (BAS). This means the biosolids from the processed sewage can be safely used on farms that meet Red Tractor standards.

Biosolids are produced by treating sludge during the wastewater recycling process and are rich in nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus.

CSG's Botley plant currently processes 25,000 gallons (114,000 litres) of raw sewage daily from off-mains households and businesses in Hampshire. The company aims to produce 400 tonnes of treated biosolids each year for farmers, providing an organic alternative to chemical fertilisers.

James Baxter, Agricultural Recycling Manager at CSG, stated: "Achieving BAS accreditation was our goal when launching this £1.3 million treatment centre. We have already sent over 125 tonnes of biosolids to local farms. This allows them to be used where human food is grown, such as in supermarkets."

CSG uses centrifuge technology to separate wastewater from solids, creating a lightweight 'cake' for easy transportation to farms. Under the BAS programme, biosolids are tested for quality and undergo regular audits to ensure compliance.

The Botley centre increases wastewater capacity for over 8,000 off-mains households yearly. It accepts wastewater from households and businesses that are not connected to the mains sewage system.

CSG manages off-mains drainage for 30,000 households across the UK and the Botley site is fully licensed by the Environment Agency.



McBreen Environmental leading the way in sustainable waste management with CDE

McBreen Environmental is focused on sustainability in the waste management industry, helping customers achieve their environmental goals while reducing disposal costs.

Since 2006, part of the McBreen Group, the company offers services like tank cleaning, waste tankering, drain cleaning, and sludge and grease disposal across Ireland and the UK. In 2018, McBreen bought its first CDE MSU:10 unit for large tank cleaning projects, music festivals and a composting facility. To enhance efficiency, an additional MSU10:G unit was acquired in 2021.

In 2024, they invested in the versatile D:MAXTM unit, which cleans digesters,

manages gully waste and separates drilling mud solids. The D:MAX can recover up to 90% of materials, significantly lowering disposal costs. It features a dual screening system for oversized materials.

Richard Smith, Fleet Manager, noted that the D:MAX enhances production and efficiency and can be quickly deployed across sites in the UK and Ireland. From 2021 to 2024, McBreen managed waste services at numerous festivals, with the MSU:10 and MSU:10G handling significant waste loads - up to 1,400 tonnes at major events.

Recently, McBreen added the D:MAX mobile screening unit, which improves solids removal and reduces carbon

footprint through on-site processing. With rising interest in sustainability, customers are increasingly focused on repurposing waste.

Noeleen McBreen, Account Manager for Breffni Organics, emphasised their commitment to a full-circle approach, offering comprehensive waste management services that include screening and transforming waste into nutrient-rich compost, supporting a circular economy.

Fergal Campbell, Business Development Manager for CDE, expressed enthusiasm for McBreen's addition of the D:MAX, reinforcing their shared commitment to sustainability and looking forward to ongoing collaboration for industry benefits.

New 'all-in-one' company launched to support UK commercial waste industry

A new waste management company, Wastecom, has been launched to address challenges in the UK commercial waste industry, driven by stricter regulations and sustainability demands.

Offering independent, end-to-end solutions for businesses of all sizes, Wastecom aims to provide scalable and transparent services, from a single wheelie bin to managing complex waste operations for large projects.

As companies strive to improve recycling rates and meet ESG goals, the fragmented supplier market complicates

finding comprehensive waste solutions. Wastecom's approach focuses on flexibility, working with a network of trusted suppliers to ensure tailored services.

"Our strength lies in independence," said Ryan Marshall, Director at Wastecom, emphasising their objectivity in managing waste streams.

The strong leadership team at Wastecom boasts over 60 years of combined experience, addressing new requirements such as the Simpler Recycling scheme.

Marshall noted that the UK waste industry faces mounting pressure related



Ryan Marshall, Director at Wastecom

to compliance and service delays. Wastecom plans to enhance customer service with dedicated account managers, fostering real relationships to support local businesses effectively.

For more information visit
www.wastecom.co.uk



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Hiab launches all-new MULTILIFT Futura skiploader

Leading the charge in load handling solutions, Hiab, headquartered in the heart of Ellesmere, has proudly unveiled its latest innovation at the recent Road Transport Expo (RTX) - the MULTILIFT Futura skiploader and DEL Tail Lift.

The MULTILIFT Futura skiploader, a marvel of engineering, is meticulously crafted to tackle even the most demanding loads, showcasing a robust, heavy-duty rear end that promises reliability. Enhanced ram covers provide superior protection, significantly extending the lifespan of the equipment.

Safety takes centre stage with an upgraded cabin guard that ensures maximum visibility while safeguarding operators, while the ergonomically designed thicker handles offer a secure grip, standing firm against the elements of challenging weather.

The all-new DEL Tail Lift is tailored for both rigid and trailer applications, featuring a formidable, one-piece steel level ride



platform. This sturdy construction is designed to dominate the toughest working

environments, delivering unmatched strength and stability.

York-based firm celebrates 10 years in waste management

How BusinessWaste.co.uk started

David Adams and Mark Hall founded the business in 2015 to modernise the waste brokerage industry, aiming to replace the outdated image with a slick online service that connects businesses to effective waste solutions.

Their mission emphasises a positive environmental impact, having diverted 241,455 tonnes of waste from landfill over the past ten years.

Central to their model is honest customer service, ensuring that customers can always reach a real person in the York office. The team is dedicated to providing the best solutions, recognising that waste management can be complex.

How has the company grown?

The company was founded on 15th July, 2015, with three original staff members, all of whom are still with the business. Over the past decade, the team has expanded to over 100 employees across sales, logistics, customer service, accounts and marketing.

Initially, the office was a small, windowless room, but now the business operates in a 15,000-square-foot space in the heart of York.

BusinessWaste.co.uk has experienced remarkable growth, with revenue rising from £180,000 in 2015 to an expected £23 million this year, marking a 12,678% increase.

What have been the highlights of the last ten years?

The success of the company has allowed

it to give back to the local community and good causes with nearly £165,000 donated to charities so far. BusinessWaste.co.uk regularly supports the annual York Against Cancer charity golf day, made significant contributions to Kevin Sinfield's Epic 7 in 7 in 7 Challenge for MND, and supports York's The Island, which provides space and time for vulnerable children and young people.

What challenges has the business faced?

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges for the business as the UK experienced multiple lockdowns. However, BusinessWaste.co.uk adapted well, seizing new opportunities in the waste sector and continuing to grow.

Recently, the company faced another challenge with Defra's Simpler Recycling reforms, which launched earlier this year. While these new rules offered a commercial opportunity, the inconsistent information from the Government made compliance difficult. The business worked diligently to gather information to assist customers in staying compliant. Additionally, high demand for new waste streams and bins led to service interruptions, which the logistics team had to navigate creatively.

What does the future hold for BusinessWaste.co.uk?

BusinessWaste.co.uk aims to become an educator in the industry by leveraging its staff's expertise to address the knowledge gap in waste management and promote



waste reduction. The company also plans to continue its growth by acquiring smaller companies to expand its group.

Mark Hall, Director at BusinessWaste.co.uk, said: "We are excited to celebrate ten years of Business Waste. When we started in 2015, the waste industry was very different. Over the past decade, we have faced many challenges, including the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020.

"Our dedicated staff and our commitment to putting customers first have helped us grow and stay strong. Looking ahead, we want to educate businesses on how to reduce their environmental impact while also saving money."

David Adams, Managing Director at BusinessWaste.co.uk, added: "We can't celebrate our tenth anniversary without mentioning how proud I am of our team's growth. We've grown from a small office with just three staff members to a successful company, and many of those original staff are still with us.

"It is thanks to our key team members that Business Waste has succeeded. I look forward to continuing to support our staff so the business can thrive and showcase their many talents."

A1 Group cuts driver distraction with CTrack fleet technology

A1 Group, a leading waste management company, has implemented an AI-powered video system from Ctrack in 110 commercial vehicles to enhance driver safety and comply with the Direct Vision Standard (DVS) requirements. Since the beginning of the year, driver distraction events have decreased by 40%. Vehicles over 12 tonnes operating in London are equipped with Ctrack's AI Progressive Safe System (PSS) to meet DVS regulations.

Stuart Cawthorne, Transport Manager at A1 Group, noted that the AI cameras enhance fleet visibility, improve driver behaviour, and reduce road risks by monitoring distractions and fatigue.

The cameras feature both forward-facing and driver-facing lenses, capturing collision footage and identifying risky behaviours like mobile use or smoking. Additionally, the system aids in performance tracking and keeps customers informed about scheduled work.

Ctrack's PSS kit also helps ensure the company's heavy goods vehicles meet 2024 DVS standards, improving visibility of vulnerable road users.

Cawthorne emphasised the importance of a reliable telematics partner, noting that Ctrack's quick installation causes minimal disruption.

Steve Thomas, Managing Director of Ctrack UK, highlighted the value of customised fleet technology solutions that enhance safety and efficiency.



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New College Swindon appoints Hills Waste Solutions

New College Swindon has appointed Swindon-based Hills Waste Solutions as its waste and recycling contractor for three years, following a competitive tender process.

Darren John, Sales Manager at Hills Waste Solutions, commented: "We are delighted to have been successful in our tender for the New College Swindon contract. Having beaten national businesses in the tender process, it's a fantastic local business success story. This deal brings two of Swindon's most respected organisations together in a working partnership."

Daniel Bedford, Director of Estates and Facilities at New College Swindon, added: "We were impressed with Hills' hands-on, partnership approach, which includes a dedicated account manager, open access to recycling data, and the social value they can add with work experience opportunities for some of our students. Working with a Swindon-based business also helps us to reduce the carbon impact of waste and recycling operations, so it's great to have Hills on board."

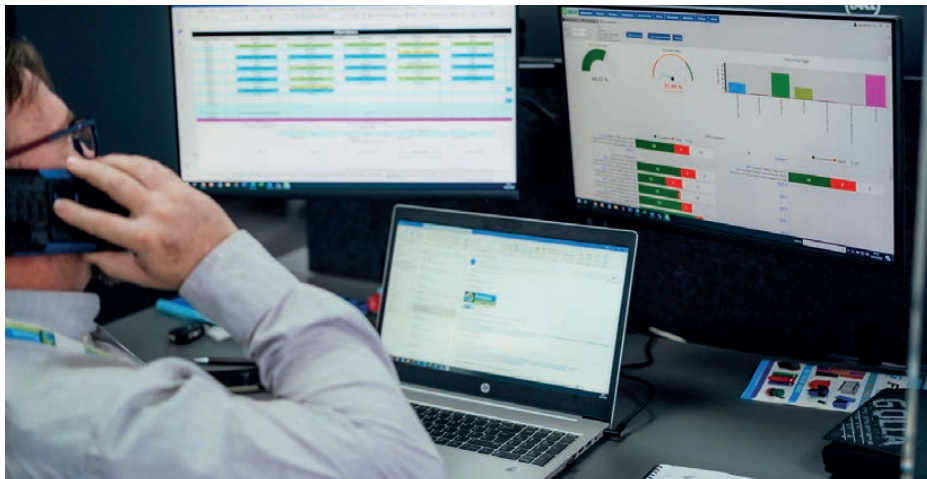


*Pictured L-R:
Hills Waste Solutions' Tula Welsh - Key Account Manager; Steve Willis - Assistant Depot Manager; Darren John - Sales Manager and Daniel Bedford - Director of Estates and Facilities, New College Swindon*

Steve Willis, Assistant Manager at Hills' Purton depot, said: "To mobilise the New College Swindon contract, we have delivered a suite of new bins and containers to the North Star and Queens Drive campuses. This has included everything from skips and rear-end loaders through to internal bins to help segregate recycling and food waste bins to support the training kitchen."

Tula Welsh, Key Account Manager at Hills Waste Solutions, added: "New College Swindon's Facilities team will also benefit from access to Hills' customer portal, which gives them real-time data about their recycling, recovery and reuse rates. For organisations serious about sustainability, the transparency of our service really seems to resonate."

Experience PurGo in action!



As businesses in the waste and recycling sector scale up, they often encounter the same challenges: data gets harder to track, processes become disjointed and operational blind spots appear. That was exactly the case for one waste company that found itself struggling to maintain efficiency as its customer base grew.

Drivers were returning with incomplete records. Weighbridge data had to be manually matched with job reports. Invoicing was falling behind. And the customer service team was often left chasing answers from multiple systems just to handle a single query.

The business needed a solution that didn't just patch these problems; it required a platform purpose-built for the realities of waste management.

They found it in PurGo, the waste management ERP system developed by VWS Software Solutions.

Purpose-built, not repurposed

PurGo isn't adapted from generic business software. It was designed specifically for the waste and recycling industry by a team that has worked in it. Every feature and process reflects the real challenges operators face, on the road, in the yard and in the office.

One of the first major differences was how effortlessly it connected with the company's existing weighing systems. Collection weights, timestamps and job data were no longer entered by hand. The information was captured instantly and sent directly into the system.

Suddenly, managers had access to live data. Collections could be monitored in real time. And billing, which previously involved manual checks and corrections, became largely automated.

Driving better operations

Field teams began using PurGo's Android-based app to guide them through their rounds. With integrated navigation, live updates, and easy issue logging, drivers spent less time on paperwork and more time doing the job. Missed bins, blocked access, overloaded skips, anything out of the ordinary could be recorded on the spot and flagged to the office.

This immediate visibility changed the way the back office worked. They could keep customers informed and prevent minor issues from escalating into complaints.

For the operations team, it brought a new level of control. "We always felt like we were catching up before. Now we're ahead of things," one team member said.

Transforming customer service

In waste management, customer service teams often serve as the bridge between what's happening on the ground and customers' expectations for clear answers. Before PurGo, handling a customer query meant checking with the driver, reviewing logs and digging through different systems.

Now, everything is in one place. With PurGo's built-in CRM and issue tracking, customer queries can be resolved in minutes rather than hours. The system

holds a full service history, along with real-time status updates, digital signatures and photographs if needed.

Customers can also access their own service records through a web portal, which reduces the volume of incoming queries and gives customers more control.

Billing that works in real time

One of the most noticeable improvements came in the finance department. With data flowing directly from the field into the system, invoicing was no longer delayed by paperwork or manual entry. Pay-by-weight billing became simple, and the risk of human error dropped significantly.

"We used to spend the first week of every month chasing weights and job sheets," a finance team member recalled. "Now we can invoice almost as soon as the job is done. Cash flow has improved, and disputes have dropped off."

This kind of speed and accuracy doesn't just help internal teams; it also builds trust with customers.

Ready to grow

As the business expanded, so did its use of the system. New modules were added to support vehicle maintenance, hazardous waste tracking, subcontractor coordination, and detailed KPI dashboards. Each addition was straightforward to implement, with no need to disrupt existing workflows.

That's one of the strengths of PurGo. Its modular design allows businesses to start with what they need today and expand as operations grow. There's no pressure to adopt everything at once, and nothing gets in the way of customising the system to fit the business.



"We've taken on more work since moving to PurGo," the operations lead shared. "The software hasn't just kept up. It's helped us plan and manage growth with confidence."

Real support from real people

Another factor that made the transition successful was the support from the VWS team. Based in the UK, the support and training staff understood the industry and the company's specific needs. They provided tailored guidance, hands-on setup and post-implementation training sessions.

This ongoing relationship continues to add value. Whether it's refresher training, helping set up new reports, or general housekeeping to keep the system running efficiently, the support has remained consistent and responsive.

"They know us. They know how we work. We're not just another customer on a list," said one senior team member.

Results that matter

Since implementing PurGo, the company has seen clear results. Missed collections have decreased. Response times to customer queries have improved. Billing cycles are shorter, and the business now operates with greater clarity and control.

Managers can monitor performance in real time. Finance has more accurate forecasting. Operations are more responsive and proactive - the entire organisation benefits from having one source of truth for all data and decisions.

Across the UK and Europe, stories like this are becoming more common. From small family-run firms to local authorities and large-scale hauliers, hundreds of operators are choosing PurGo to run their businesses more efficiently and reliably.

A system that supports the industry

Waste management isn't static. Regulations change, routes evolve, customer expectations grow. PurGo is designed to keep pace, not just by managing current demands, but by helping businesses prepare for what's next.

It's a system built on experience, developed with flexibility and delivered with the kind of support that makes a difference.

For teams that want more control, better insight, and room to grow, PurGo isn't just a tool. It's part of the operation.



Gaskells' transformation with VWS Software Solutions

Gaskells, a major player in commercial waste management, has improved its operations through a partnership with VWS Software Solutions.

They needed to make their waste management more transparent and efficient. The company required a system to track and record the weight of every collection. This would provide their clients with full visibility and ensure they adhere to environmental management standards.

To meet these needs, Gaskells implemented the ENVIROWEIGH bin weighing system and PurGo software. This integration helped modernise their waste management. The PurGo software, designed for waste management operators, provided a complete solution that included sales, operations, route scheduling, administration, billing and reporting.

The results of using VWS's solutions



at Gaskells were very positive and had many benefits. The company is very satisfied with the PurGo system. They appreciate how easy it is to use and how well it integrates with their operations. The system has had a positive impact on staff and customers, demonstrating VWS Software Solutions' focus on meeting customer needs.

The partnership between Gaskells and VWS Software Solutions highlights how custom software can improve waste management. With PurGo, Gaskells not only improved its operations but also raised the bar for customer service and environmental care.

The adoption of PurGo at Gaskells marked a significant step forward in its operational capabilities, enhancing efficiency, transparency and customer satisfaction.

If you would like to learn more about how PurGo can help improve your business, then contact VWS Software Solutions.

T: 0151 909 2009 E: sales@vwssoftware.com - or

meet the team for a chat at the RWM Expo at the NEC Birmingham on 17th-18th September. Stand Number: **CT-I220**.

For more information, please visit www.vwssoftware.com

- details are also available on the inside back page of this edition.



AI-powered intelligence: a catalyst for material circularity



Terry Keyworth, Segment Director Metals at TOMRA Recycling, explores the evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) and highlights how AI-powered intelligence, through advanced sorting and material identification, is a catalyst for material circularity.

AI is rapidly transforming how we work, live and interact with the world. The global recycling industry is also increasingly embracing AI to optimise sorting processes, enhance data analysis, improve quality control, increase recycling rates and identify new material streams.

A fully circular economy relies on consistently high-quality recovered materials, which is not yet possible with today's processes. Many recovered

materials are still downcycled. To avoid this, sorting must become more granular. And this is where AI is a game-changer.

Addressing the misconception that AI is a recent trend

The distinction between AI and deep learning is important because there is a common misconception that AI is a recent phenomenon. In fact, AI has been integral to our industry for decades, since it is the broader concept of



creating intelligent machines. It refers to any technique that enables computers to 'mimic' human intelligence using logic, if-then rules and machine learning.

Machine learning has been a standard feature of our **AUTOSORT™** machines for decades. Our early machines, dating back some 30 years, employed basic AI principles. Even back then, our machines were capable of making decisions about which materials to reject and then eject. This fundamental ability to mimic human judgment is the essence of AI.

So, while AI has been used in global recycling for years, deep learning is the cutting-edge advancement that is propelling AI to new heights today. Deep learning is a specialised approach within machine learning that focuses on a specific type of algorithm called artificial neural networks. These neural networks are trained by huge amounts of raw data to recognise and store certain intricate patterns and later apply them to new data.



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To understand the differences between AI, machine learning and deep learning, imagine you're a chef. AI is the entire kitchen, including all the tools, ingredients and the chef's knowledge. It's the overarching concept of creating something intelligent. Machine learning is a specific cooking technique, like a recipe. You follow a set of instructions, adjust based on feedback and learn to cook a specific dish better over time. Deep learning is a more advanced cooking technique that involves learning from experience. Imagine a chef who doesn't follow a specific recipe but learns by observing and tasting different dishes. They adjust their techniques based on the results, becoming more skilled over time.

How TOMRA has embraced the opportunities deep learning presents

TOMRA's commitment to technological advancement has driven us to explore the potential of deep learning in recent years. Our team of AI experts feed thousands to millions of images into the network as training material until it learns to distinguish certain visual characteristics of material types, such as specific bottle caps or packaging shapes.

The network can apply this knowledge to new images from the sorting system's sensors, making it possible to solve some of the most complex sorting tasks which are currently impossible with conventional optical sorting equipment. Furthermore, it enables TOMRA's sorting systems to continuously improve output purity thanks to the simultaneous integration of real-time data from multiple sensor-based technologies.

Here are just a few of the benefits our customers gain from our deep learning-based solutions:

- **Flexibility:** With the ever-changing composition of waste, sorting systems need to be agile enough to continuously learn and adapt to new market requirements. Instead of replacing hardware components or even machines, modern deep learning technologies can be retrofitted with software updates as soon as they have been trained by our experts. This allows us to respond more quickly to customer needs.
- **Creation of new material streams:** AI-powered deep learning enables



operators to not only enhance sorting granularity but create new material streams and markets with higher value outputs.

▪ **Improved sorting:** By combining existing optical sorting systems - which are based, for example, on near infrared (NIR) and visual information sensors (VIS) - with deep learning technologies, we can achieve the highest sorting granularity currently available. This allows us to sort by material type and colour and now, thanks to deep learning, also by shape, size, dimensions or other details.

▪ **Advanced plant automation:** The value of deep learning lies in object recognition using full-colour cameras.

In other words, systems like our **GAINnext™** see what the human eye can see. We can automate sorting tasks that previously had to be carried out manually, enabling us to process larger quantities of recyclable materials quickly and efficiently.

▪ **Process optimisation:** AI-powered sorting systems generate huge amounts of data on material composition, sorting efficiency and equipment performance. By analysing this data, plant operators can identify optimisation opportunities, streamline operations and make informed decisions to improve overall recycling processes. Additionally, the possibilities reach beyond sorting systems. Cameras based on deep learning can be placed at key points in the sorting circuit to keep an eye on the entire process and material flow. AI-based waste flow analysis allows plant operators to continuously monitor the quality of sorted streams, material loss and even ensure compliance with food recycling regulations.



GAINnext™ -
An AI-powered
sorting system
with deep
learning
technology.

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by scanning
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>> Continued on page 22

▪ **Solving previously impossible sorting tasks:** Deep learning solves previously impossible tasks.

AI: A catalyst for the green transition

AI is poised to revolutionise resource recovery, making it a crucial tool in the green transition. As regulations tighten and consumer expectations evolve, our industry stands at a critical juncture. Deep learning offers a powerful solution to propel the circular economy forward.

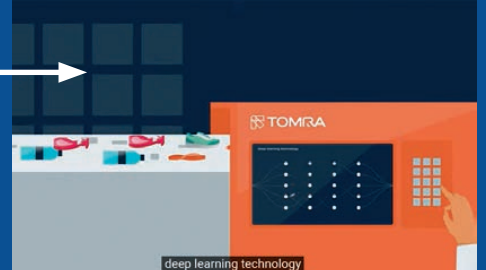
At TOMRA, we also expect advanced AI and cloud technologies to be increasingly utilised for waste analysis, enhancing transparency not only at

the sorters but throughout the entire sorting process. This is why we have developed cloud-based monitoring tools like TOMRA Insight and invested in PolyPerception with its AI-based waste

analytics platforms.

By unlocking the potential of AI, we can create new markets for higher-value products, further stimulating growth and sustainability.

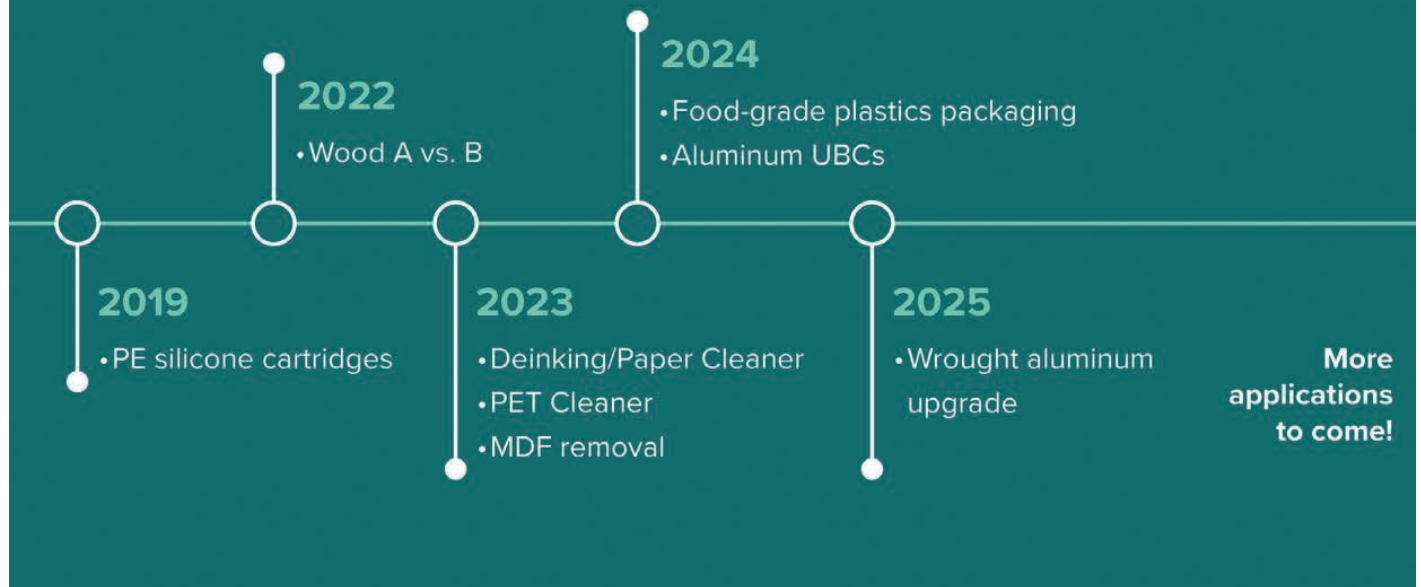
Scan the QR code to watch a short video demonstrating how AI algorithms function in recycling



A timeline of TOMRA's pioneering application of deep learning

GAINnext™: The industry's first deep learning system

APPLICATION HISTORY



2019: Introduction of the industry's first deep learning-based sorting system, GAIN (today: GAINnext™)

- Removal of PE-silicon cartridges from polyethylene (PE) streams

2022: First deep learning application in the wood market

- Separation of natural wood from processed wood

2023: Further expansion of TOMRA's deep learning ecosystem

- Deinking/Paper Cleaner application for cleaner paper streams
- PET cleaner application for even higher purity PET bottle streams

- MDF removal

2024: Launch of various groundbreaking new applications, including the industry's first solution to sort food- vs. non-food plastics packaging; renaming to GAINnext™

- PET Food vs. Non-Food
- PP Food vs. Non-Food
- HDPE Food vs. Non-Food
- Aluminium Used Beverage Cans (UBC)

2025: Launch of first application for the metal market

- Precise detection and removal of low-alloy cast to upgrade wrought aluminium scrap

More new applications to come!



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See how it sorts





Recorra installs AI-powered robotic sorting arm at MRF

Recorra, a leading commercial waste and recycling company, installed and launched a state-of-the-art, AI-powered robotic sorting arm at its Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Purfleet, Essex. The system is now fully operational and marks the first phase of a £1 million investment aimed at boosting safety, efficiency and sorting capacity across the site.

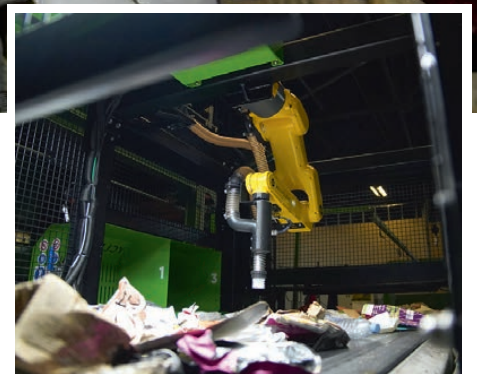
Developed by British technology company Recycleye, the new system combines artificial intelligence, precision robotics and real-time data analytics to identify and separate materials from the recycling received at the MRF with speed and accuracy. The installation includes a live analytics dashboard that tracks material composition and provides performance data, offering Recorra new insight into waste trends and MRF performance.

The robotic arm features an AI vision

unit, which uses advanced machine learning and camera systems to identify items as they pass under the machine. A high-speed robotic arm equipped with a vacuum extractor unit then uses suction to pick up and sort the items into designated bins. The system processes between 35 and 60 items per minute and operates continuously, improving throughput.

The technology improves operational safety by reducing manual interaction with waste and machinery, allowing staff to be redeployed to safer, higher-skilled roles. Additionally, while the arm is currently used to sort cardboard, mixed plastics and coffee cups, the AI can be trained to recognise new materials over time, offering long-term adaptability to changes in waste composition and recycling regulations.

This investment is part of Recorra's broader £1 million MRF upgrade, aimed at increasing capacity and accuracy. The arm installation is the first step towards making



MRF operations more automated, moving away from manual sorting to increase worker safety and improve material recovery rates.

Bill Swan, Managing Director of Recorra, said: "It's exciting to see the new AI sorting arm installed at our MRF. This represents a major step forward in how we process recyclables, integrating advanced technology to improve the accuracy, efficiency, and safety of our MRF. It's a powerful example of how innovation can drive real progress in our industry."

The robotic system was developed over the course of seven months, with the AI vision system installed in January, fabrication completed throughout the spring, and full deployment finalised this summer. With the system now live, Recorra is setting a new standard for commercial recycling operations in the UK.

Former coal storage transformed into sustainable plastic processing facility

In 2014, Umweltdienste Kedenburg acquired a sorting plant for packaging waste at a former cement works in Beckum, Germany. By 2024, Beckum Kunststoff Recycling GmbH, in collaboration with Otto Graf GmbH, had established a second plant on the site, repurposing the area once used for coal storage. This facility focuses on producing sustainable recycled plastic, demonstrating the potential of the circular economy.

Technical Director Klaus Kühlenbeck states: “Our goal is clear: to sort and process plastic films into new products.”

The modern sorting facility processes mixed post-consumer plastic packaging, with about two-thirds being polypropylene (PP) film, alongside polyethylene (PE) and various polyolefins (PO) sourced across Europe.

It utilises two STEINERT UniSort Film EVO 5.0 machines, which employ a specialised airflow system that aligns with the belt speed. This feature prevents lightweight films from swirling and allows for a belt speed of 4.5 m/s, maximising throughput and efficiency for flat materials. The facility achieves a 98% purity rate for PP film.

The process further includes agglomerating films and shredding hard plastics into flakes, followed by using the STEINERT MOH magnet separator with EddyC FINES to eliminate small metal pieces.

The agglomerated plastic is sent to GRAF for conversion into durable rainwater products, ensuring that customers receive sustainable quality comparable to new products.

Kühlenbeck highlights the need for flexibility in design to adapt to evolving packaging materials. With a combination of NIR and colour sensors, the facility can keep pace with future trends. He notes that challenges remain, such as sorting composite materials and detecting aluminised films.

Collaboration along the supply chain is vital: “Together, we can improve recycling, create better packaging and progress the circular economy.”

Partnership pilots advanced AI-powered humanoid designed for smarter recycling

TeknTrash Robotics, a UK-based company specialising in AI-powered robotics and motion intelligence for waste management, has partnered with the leading environmental services provider, Sharp Group. Together, they are beginning real-world testing of ALPHA, an advanced humanoid robot designed to revolutionise waste sorting.

The testing is taking place at Sharp Group’s state-of-the-art facility in Rainham, East London, where they currently handle and process 2,800 tonnes of waste each week, including plastic, paper, glass, metal and general waste - a perfect setting for developing new technology to assist with waste segregation.

Frontline workers at the facility are equipped with Meta Quest 3 headsets that track their movements during daily operations. Using an app developed by TeknTrash, Sharp Group workers capture detailed motion data, including posture, hand and finger movements, and synchronised video recordings. This data will be used to train next-generation AI robotic models.

The data collected will contribute to ALPHA (Automated Litter Processing Humanoid Assistant), a new class of humanoid robot designed to take over repetitive, unsanitary and hazardous waste selection tasks.

The waste and recycling sector is one of the most hazardous industries in the UK. During the 2018/19 period, 4.5% of workers in this sector experienced work-related ill health, which is notably higher than the all-industry average of 3.1%. Additionally, the rate of non-fatal workplace injuries in the sector stood at 3.4%, exceeding the average of 1.8% across all industries.

Alarming, the fatal injury rate in this sector is 17 times higher than the all-industry average, with seven fatal injuries reported in 2018/19.

Humans sort waste at an average rate of 30 to 40 items per minute, but fatigue can lead to errors. Contaminated items mixed with recyclables remain a persistent issue, particularly with single-stream recycling, where about 25% of materials become contaminated, rendering them unsellable.

In 2022, dry recycling in England declined by 7.1% (0.4 million tonnes), partly

due to quality issues affecting resale value.

In contrast, robots can achieve higher purity rates, reducing bale rejection rates and boosting profitability. ALPHA is designed to function in various waste-handling environments. Initially, it will pick up waste from conveyor belts in recycling plants and later carry the waste to trucks, as well as lift heavy weights in processing plants. Currently, ALPHA is being trained to identify waste on conveyor belts by material (e.g., paper, plastic) and brand. Unlike traditional solutions that use stationary robotic arms, ALPHA is built for mobility, dexterity and perception, mimicking human hand precision.

“Our goal is to build a smarter, more sustainable future where waste isn’t just managed - it’s understood,” said Al Costa, CEO of TeknTrash. “We plan to deploy this solution in 1,000 plants across Europe, all connected to the cloud, to build a vast dataset of recycling-related actions for ALPHA.”

“Through partnerships like this, we are turning advanced robotics into real-world sustainability impact,” he added.

Chelsea Sharp, Director at Sharp Group, expressed enthusiasm for the collaboration, stating: “We’re thrilled to be working with TeknTrash on such an innovative project. The integration of AI and robotics into waste management has the potential to completely transform the industry.

“Not only will this technology make recycling faster and safer, but it also opens up incredible possibilities for improving transparency and accountability through detailed waste data. We’re proud to be part of something that could reshape how the world thinks about waste.”



How technology can revolutionise waste sorting and separation

In England, an estimated 18% of all waste is illegally managed, amounting to approximately 34 million tonnes annually, due to inefficiencies in sustainable technological solutions to waste management.

As illegal waste activities continue to increase, costing the economy an estimated £1 billion each year, businesses are under increasing pressure to find ways to manage waste legally, sustainably and efficiently. Technologies such as AI are being used more than ever in waste management - potentially revolutionising the way we work as an industry.

Tech-specialist firm Envirovue works to implement innovative strategies in the waste sector to reduce inefficiencies and drive sustainability for companies. **Daniel Redfern (pictured), Director of the business**, discusses how artificial intelligence (AI) can be utilised to streamline waste separation, enhance traceability and combat instances of waste crime across the UK.



Using technology for waste management intelligence

AI can transform processes and drive waste management innovation by making separation faster, bolster traceability and promote reuse. From smart sensors to intelligent machine control, AI and automated technology can be used to optimise the end-to-end waste process.

These innovations reduce contamination, increase resource recovery, and lower operational costs, ultimately contributing to a more circular and sustainable economy. Envirovue ensures tracing of all waste to its endpoint, ensuring full transparency and accountability from collection to final disposal.

Combatting waste crime

One of the most significant advances in tackling waste crime is a higher level of traceability, particularly in an industry where, despite good intentions, waste can



still end up being illegally dumped without the handler's knowledge.

Daniel explains: "It's a sad fact that even when businesses think they're doing the right thing, waste can still go missing. Transparency is key and more must be done to track waste from source to the end point to prevent incorrect waste storage."

With AI-powered tools now capable of extracting and interpreting complex waste movement data from historical records, businesses can demand a new level of transparency from their waste partners. These tools unlock visibility that previously didn't exist, helping organisations make more informed, auditable and sustainable decisions.

Under UK legislation, there is an obligation on the waste producer to ensure that waste is handled and disposed of properly. This comes with the risk of high penalty fees through fines, which are becoming increasingly common across the UK.

A recent example involved a skip hire company, which was prosecuted by the Environment Agency. Just last month, the company was fined more than £48,000 for operating an illegal waste site in Birmingham without the necessary

environmental permit and for failing to provide waste transfer notes.

For companies, this reinforces the need for transparency and traceability in waste management procedures. Failing to meet these obligations doesn't just risk financial penalties, but can also damage a company's reputation and erode stakeholder trust. Businesses must invest in reliable systems to document and verify every step of their waste disposal process, ensuring compliance and reducing environmental harm.

Establishing greener processes through technology

As sustainability continues to be a priority, modern waste handling is evolving beyond traditional practices of collecting and discarding - it's about leveraging technology to optimise processes and minimise environmental impact.

From surveys that collect data to streamline reuse and challenge traditional processes, technology is supporting businesses to manage and organise waste management in a new way.

To find out more about Envirovue and its services, please visit www.envirovue.io

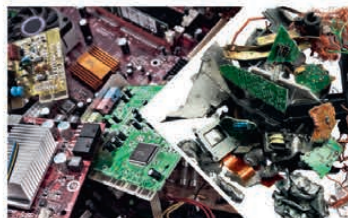


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To view the new Eriez virtual scrap yard animation, scan the QR code

Patented Eriez® eddy current technology a key force in the scrap yard

“Eriez® doesn’t believe in a one-size-fits-all approach,” explained Lloyd Williams, Sales Director for EriezEurope. “Our specialists collaborate closely with scrap yard operators to understand their unique requirements and design tailored systems that deliver exceptional results.”

When it comes to separation of ferrous and nonferrous materials, Eriez has set the standard for decades. In 1969, the company not only patented permanent magnetic separators, but eddy current separators as well.

Today, they set new benchmarks for scrap yard efficiency and profitability, continuously improving upon the technologies they introduced. This extensive portfolio of equipment has evolved to encompass virtually every stage of ferrous and nonferrous processing.

From single-line upgrades to fully integrated systems, Eriez delivers the expertise and proven technologies to keep operations running at peak performance and realise a quick ROI.

They recently illustrated just how their technology can work together in a step-by-step scrap yard process.

In a computer-animated workflow, a new

video features equipment such as the Eriez Drum-in-Housing Magnetic System and the ST22 Eddy Current Separator.

Designed for the consistent recovery of medium-sized nonferrous materials, the LT2 Eddy Current Separator divides coarse non-ferrous fractions. This is preceded by an Eriez Magnetic Pulley, which automatically removes the largest pieces of ferrous material. Any oversized material passes through the trommel to complete the comprehensive recovery process.

The animation opens with PokerSort®, showcasing its effectiveness in resolving one of scrap processing’s most persistent problems: removing long ferrous pieces from shredded material. Automating this critical step protects downstream equipment from jams and damage while streamlining material flow to eliminate costly interruptions and enhance throughput.

Next, the Double Pass P-Rex® Drum System takes over. Thanks to its robust dual-drum design and superior magnetic strength, it achieves industry-leading ferrous recovery. This boosts overall recovery and produces cleaner end products by liberating more nonferrous residue.

The Shred1® Ballistic Separator follows. Efficiently separating premium, low-copper material from traditional #2 shred, it reduces manual sorting and increases material value. Finally, the Eriez Electromagnetic Scavenger Drum separates ferrous from nonferrous and debris, further increasing the grade of the shredded scrap.

Then, Eriez Suspended Electromagnets remove lingering ferrous items from the nonferrous stream. The Eriez Dynamic Pulley Separator utilises an agitating magnetic field to enhance fine ferrous separation. Additionally, the Ultra High-Frequency Eddy Current Separator achieves unparalleled nonferrous recovery, producing a clean, market-ready mixed metals product with minimal residue.

“We created this animation to highlight how Eriez’s commitment to innovation, automation, and system integration delivers real benefits for scrap yard operations,” Williams detailed.

“Reduced manual labour, increased productivity, enhanced equipment protection and better metal recovery all contribute to a more lucrative, proficient and future-ready facility.”

Established in 1942, Eriez is a global leader in separation technologies. Our dedication to innovation has positioned us as a driving market force in several key technology areas, including magnetic separation, flotation, metal detection and material handling equipment.

The company’s 1,000+ employees are dedicated to providing trusted technical solutions to the recycling, packaging, aggregate, mining, food and other processing industries.

Headquartered in Erie, Pennsylvania, USA, Eriez designs, manufactures, and markets on six continents through 12 wholly owned international subsidiaries and an extensive sales representative network. For more information, visit eriez.com

A large industrial machine, likely an Eddy Current Separator, with a blue steel frame and orange hopper-like components. Yellow safety railings are visible on the upper levels. The brand name 'ERIEZ' is printed on the orange sections.

YOUR PROVEN SOLUTION

Invest in the Best to Maximise Revenue

Eriez patented the world's first Eddy Current Separator in 1969. Today, our full range of recycling equipment can be found all over the globe, increasing recoveries and maximising revenues.

Eriez. Always the Right Choice.

Eddy Current Separators from Eriez effectively remove non-ferrous metallics from automobile shredder residue (ASR), municipal solid waste (MSW), plastics, glass cullet, electronic scrap, and more.

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YRMR visit Bunting's Redditch facility



The YBMR tour party. (below right) Separation of lithium batteries on a Drum Magnet

The Young British Metal Recyclers (YRMR) were shown the latest in metal separation technology during the tour of Bunting's Customer Experience Centre in Redditch, Worcestershire. During the tour, Bunting's applications team demonstrated a range of metal separation technology, including the Eddy Current Separator, ElectroStatic Separator and Stainless Steel Separators.

The YBMR is an integral part of the British Metal Recycling Association (BMRA), providing purposeful and educational activities that may assist members in their own career development. Members are generally under the age of 40 and could be working in the yard, the office or the laboratory.

Effective metal separation is a key stage in the recycling process, either to purify a recycled product or to recover valuable metals. The technology continues to evolve with the application of increasingly high magnetic fields, utilising both permanent magnets and electromagnetic fields, as well as the development of new technologies such as electrostatics.

During the morning session, Bunting's Laboratory Manager, Dr Neil Rowson, introduced the extensive range of metal separators presently available, with specific reference to recycling applications.

The afternoon session focused on equipment demonstrations, assessing complex material separation challenges presently facing recycling companies.

Dr Rowson showed how separation technology commonly used in the mining and mineral processing industry is being adapted for specific recycling applications. The Magnetic Disc Separator (MDS) enables mineral beneficiation when mining coltan (a



dull black metallic ore containing niobium and tantalum) and beach sands. However, the high-strength and variable magnetic field means the technology is also being used successfully for the separation of fine metal fractions found in shredded printed circuit boards. The separated fraction had a gold content of up to 6%, highlighting the value of successfully separated and recovered metal.

The recycling of lithium batteries continues to prove challenging and Dr Rowson demonstrated the ability of the high-intensity permanent Rare Earth Roll Magnetic Separator to separate weakly

magnetic particles. This technology is part of the process developed by the University of Birmingham.

On the ferrite Drum Magnet (model APD), YBMR members witnessed the separation of flat lithium-ion batteries from non-magnetic granules. Removing such lithium batteries from the recycling process reduces the risk of fires. The poor magnetic properties of low-grade lithium-ion batteries, due to a low metal content, proved surprising.

After demonstrating the separation of weakly magnetic particles in a slurry state on a Wet Magnetic Separator, the focus turned to the ElectroStatic Separator. Bunting is a world leader in the development of ElectroStatic Separators and the demonstration showed the separation of small conductive metals, such as thin copper wire.

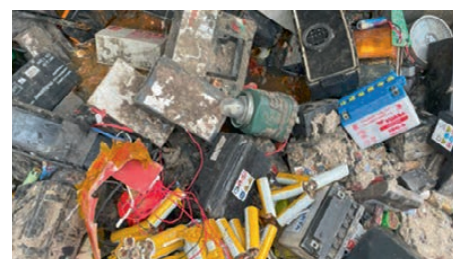
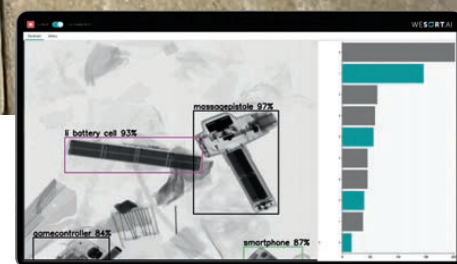
The tour then moved to the heavy recycling test area, where Bunting's Phil Tree and Michael Allen staged separation demonstrations on the Eddy Current Separator and the HISC and SSSC Stainless Steel Separators.

Finally, the YBMR group received a tour of Bunting's manufacturing facility, where they saw equipment, under construction and ready for shipment, including two laboratory-scale ElectroStatic Separators, Eddy Current Separators and Overband Magnets.

"We aimed to make the tour enlightening and illustrate how we are working on solving some complex metal separation problems," explained Ben Clemett, Bunting's Area Sales Manager and fellow YBMR member.



Demonstrating the Eddy Current Separator



Batteries and accumulators sorted from commercial waste at KORN Recycling

KORN Recycling uses WeSort.AI's AI system to prevent battery fires

KORN Recycling is a mid-sized recycling company based in Albstadt, Germany. It has recently adopted new technology from WeSort.AI to improve safety and sustainability in sorting commercial waste. The company invested in the BatterySort system to prevent fires caused by improperly disposed lithium-ion batteries.

For KORN Recycling, ensuring the safety of people and the environment is a top priority, and this technology significantly enhances fire prevention. BatterySort uses advanced X-ray technology and deep-learning algorithms to accurately find and remove hidden contaminants in waste up to 50 cm deep.

"Our facility has had several fires in the past, mainly due to improperly disposed lithium-ion batteries. With BatterySort from WeSort.AI, we can now spot these hazards early and remove them before they cause a fire," says Alexander Korn, Managing Director of KORN Recycling.

The system not only improves safety but also helps recover valuable materials, such as lithium, precious metals, and rare earth

elements, from batteries and electronic devices.

Nathanael Laier, CEO of WeSort.AI, explains: "Our deep learning algorithms have achieved high detection accuracy and continue to improve. Our AI and datasets are always evolving."

The BatterySort system uses air pressure nozzles to blow out identified batteries and other contaminants from the waste. These are then moved onto a conveyor belt that takes them to fireproof containers and back into the WEEE system (Waste of Electrical and Electronic Equipment).

Since insurance premiums for sorting plants have skyrocketed eightfold since 2004, it's clear that upgrading older facilities is essential. The technology from WeSort.AI provides a strong solution for fire prevention and tackles various financial and operational challenges.

Using this system can cut minor fire damages, which typically cost about 200,000 euros each year for every facility. It also protects against the total loss of sorting plants, which could lead to damages of up to 30 million euros.

Another significant advantage is the reduction in insurance premiums, as WeSort.AI collaborates with insurers such as Hübner Insurance.

Additionally, this system can significantly reduce downtime, allowing staff to work more efficiently on sorting and operations. This helps lower costs for contracts that might require waste to be sent to competitors during downtime. It can also reduce the increasing funds set aside for plant fires, allowing a return on investment (ROI) within just a few months.

By using the BatterySort system, KORN Recycling strengthens its leadership in safe and environmentally friendly recycling. Along with WeSort.AI, which recently won the German Founders Award, the company is setting new standards in waste management and showing how modern technology can lead to a safer and more efficient recycling process.

Significant investment strengthens UK-based testing, development and customer support

West Sussex-based BlakerTech has shared a mid-year update highlighting a series of strategic developments across product engineering, infrastructure and customer support.

Operating under the umbrella of The Blaker Group Ltd, BlakerTech draws on more than a century of engineering heritage. The group has a long-standing reputation for innovation, precision fabrication and practical, problem-solving design, all rooted in UK-based manufacturing and field testing. This foundation allows BlakerTech to combine technical expertise with hands-on understanding of current recycling challenges, ensuring that systems are engineered not just to function, but to perform reliably in the toughest conditions.

From a new R&D facility and growing team to equipment upgrades and preparations for Hillhead 2026, the business continues to invest in scalable metal separation solutions that are robust, efficient and tailored to meet the evolving demands of the recycling sector.

Highlights - product development and engineering updates

R&D facility - nearing completion

Construction of our new research and development facility is progressing well. Once operational, it will provide a dedicated space for live testing, technical refinement and product development. A live camera feed will enable customers to observe their own material samples being processed in real time, improving transparency, reducing the need for travel and lowering the associated carbon footprint.

This investment underscores BlakerTech's commitment to supporting

both domestic and international customers with robust, scalable equipment designed to meet complex separation challenges.

New offices - completion due Q4 2025

As part of a wider infrastructure upgrade, new office space is also under construction and due for completion in Q4 2025. These facilities will accommodate the company's growing team and support closer collaboration across departments.

Appointment of national sales manager

BlakerTech recently welcomed **James Ryan** as National Sales Manager. James brings valuable experience in technical sales and business development and is working across both BlakerTech and Blaker Engineering, another division of Blaker Group Ltd.

His appointment enhances the



SandFlo™ uses aerated sand to sort secondary metals by density



Customer test sample



Customer test sample

company's ability to respond to new enquiries and provide tailored support to existing clients across the recycling and wider waste management sectors.

Customer sample testing in progress

The in-house team has been processing a wide variety of customer-supplied samples. These trials are helping clients assess how BlakerTech systems can improve recovery rates, reduce contamination and deliver measurable performance gains. Recent examples include the separation of fine-shredded aluminium from plastics.

Ongoing product refinement

Product updates continue across several key equipment lines, focusing on:

- Reducing overall machine footprint;
- Crisp modern design that reinforces



SandFlo™ in action testing customer samples



MagThro™ eddy current separator at a customer site



MagThro™ eddy current shaker

- brand values;
- Improving usability and maintenance access;
 - Enhancing the high reliability standards the systems are known for.
- These refinements are driven by end-user feedback and the company's focus on practical, results-oriented engineering.

Website redesign underway
A new BlakerTech website is currently in

development. The updated platform will offer a clearer view of the product range and improve usability for both new and returning visitors.

Designed around a user-driven experience, it will make learning about our products easier and more engaging, while also improving accessibility and making it simpler to get in touch.

Hillhead 2026 - confirmed

BlakerTech is pleased to confirm its participation at Hillhead 2026, for the third event running, the UK's largest event for the quarrying, construction and recycling sectors. The show will offer an opportunity to showcase new product developments and connect with industry partners.

About BlakerTech

Part of the Blaker Group Ltd, BlakerTech is a UK-based manufacturing division specialising in metal recovery systems for the recycling sector. Known for producing durable and user-friendly equipment, including MagThro™ eddy current separators and SandFlo™ dry density-based systems, BlakerTech serves a wide range of processing environments across the UK and beyond.

TURNING WASTE INTO PROFIT

Efficient Metal Recovery. Measurable Results.

BlakerTech's UK-made metal recycling systems are built for reliability, performance and ease of operation, helping businesses recover more value with minimal downtime.

SandFlo™ is a dry, low-cost density separator that uses aerated sand to sort secondary metals by weight. It's especially effective for recovering aluminium (3mm-50mm) from heavier fractions like zinc, copper, brass, and lead.

MagThro™ eddy current uses high-strength Neodymium Rare Earth magnets to create a continuous magnetic field proven in tough conditions. It's reliable, easy to use, and ideal for extracting non-ferrous metals from shredded mixed materials including wood and plastics.

Built in the UK, trusted worldwide.



- High recovery performance
- Easy to use, reliable and robust systems
- Dry process solutions, no by-products
- Individually built in the UK
- Installation and full training provided



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blakertech.com

The right machinery matters:

Boosting efficiency and profit in waste recycling and metal separation

In today's fast-moving recycling industry, meeting tough environmental and regulatory targets demands ever-greater efficiency. At the heart of this challenge is a key decision: choosing the right sorting and separation equipment - at the right time.

Far from being more of the same or just a perceived upgrade with a new coat of paint, the right equipment offers a decisive strategic advantage - increasing throughput, improving material purity, reducing costs, and driving long-term profitability.

Efficiency is profit

Efficiency in the waste industry isn't just about processing more tonnage - it's about doing it with less time, energy and labour. Investing in the right machinery improves workflow, increases output with faster, more reliable equipment, boosts uptime and reduces servicing delays - all with less friction on your business.

The right machinery maximises efficiency, eliminates bottlenecks, increases processing speed and expands capacity. The result? More materials processed per hour, greater production capacity and lower costs from parts, repairs and breakdowns - plus the benefit of warranties and extended cover.

When margins are tight, small efficiency gains can significantly boost profit. Waste operators who consistently invest in the right technology see greater staff satisfaction, add value and flexibility to their customers and outperform competitors who fail to plan strategically for long-term success.

Efficiency is strategic, it's achievable, it's peace of mind, it's profitable.

The growing demand for high-quality outputs

Advanced handling and recycling machinery now processes greater volumes, with higher recovery rates and lower day-to-day - and crucially, whole-life costs.



Modern waste handlers and automated granulators can detect, separate and process larger volumes at speeds previously unimaginable just five years ago. Powerful machines like the Terex Ecotec range, in the hands of skilled operators, deliver higher revenue with less operator fatigue. Similarly, a mobile Terex eddy current separator - featuring a class-leading magnet - recovers more in a single pass than once thought possible, thanks to rapid technological progress.

Choosing the right equipment and service provider for your operation

Not all machinery - or suppliers - are created equal. From the start, E.H. Hassell & Son set a high bar, being known for its deep knowledge of the scrap and waste sectors, proven reliability and the quality of its in-house engineering. The proposition was simple: provide the best advice and supply the best-designed, best-engineered

waste handling and separation machinery, providing lifetime support, service, parts, repairs, even fabricating replacements for obsolete components - to keep customers working and earning.

That same ethos still drives Hassell's today, more than 50 years on - offering trusted advice, top-tier machinery from leading brands and full support from a dedicated service and parts team, backed by an experienced, OEM trained field engineering team to provide a rapid response and peace of mind.

Choosing the right machinery starts with choosing the right supplier - one invested in your business, offering expert advice and complete engineering support; one you can trust to have your back - just like Hassell's always have.

A strategic investment, not just a purchase

In today's competitive, regulated waste management industry, the machinery you choose - and who supplies and maintains it - plays a pivotal role in turning your business strategy into reality.

Every future equipment purchase should be viewed as a strategic investment, delivering immediate gains in efficiency, compliance, safety and profitability.

The right machinery and supply partner transforms waste into greater value, multiplying your return on investment as your strategy and needs evolve.

As waste and metals sectors grow more demanding and standards more rigorous, those who think and act strategically won't just stay ahead - they'll do so more profitably.

To learn how E.H. Hassell & Sons can support your waste equipment strategy for profitable growth, please get in touch with Jack Hassell or his expert team on 01782 644299 or visit www.hassells.com

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E-bikes are becoming e-waste - here's how to reduce the environmental cost

YVONNE RYAN

Associate Professor in Environmental Science, University of Limerick



Electric e-bikes make cycling easier, faster and more accessible. They are already playing a significant role in reducing the environmental impact of transportation, particularly when they replace a trip in a private car.

But when you scrap an e-bike, you also have to scrap its battery. And these batteries can be particularly dangerous and tricky to dispose of. This means that the growth of e-bikes is leading to at least one related environmental problem: an increase in electronic waste, also known as e-waste.

The sector needs stronger regulations to encourage it to cut its waste. This includes encouraging bikes to be designed for easier repair and recycling and establishing universal standards that allow parts to work across different brands and models, so components can be reused instead of being thrown away.

However, e-bikes often fall between legislative cracks, and their exclusion from the priority products under the EU Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation, introduced in 2024, was unfortunate.

At the University of Limerick in Ireland, colleagues and I have been researching the environmental impact of e-bikes. We're interested in their full lifecycle, from metals in rocks to extraction, manufacturing, years of use and eventual disposal - to see if there are ways to reduce the materials they use.

We interviewed retailers and individuals

working in waste management. They expressed concerns about the online sales of lower-quality e-bikes with easily broken components, as well as the high turnover rates of e-bikes in general.

Using data from the fleet of e-bikes loaned out at our university, we noted issues with the design and compatibility of components. Bike tyres, for instance, have become increasingly non-standard and specialised.

Additive manufacturing, such as 3D printing, may become more important for bike retailers and repairers, who could use it to 'print' themselves replacements nuts, screws or even seats. This may be particularly needed in island states such as Ireland, where there are often delays in sourcing parts.

But first, the e-bikes must be of sufficient quality to be repaired. Then, to create the replacement parts, people will need to access the necessary data - digital files



with precise designs of objects such as a bicycle tyre or handlebar.

Keeping e-bikes in use

New business models are emerging. Some companies are lending e-bikes to their employees, with a management company handling maintenance and repairs.

There is also a growing number of mobile e-bike repair services, as well as specialist training for e-bike repair and retail through manufacturer platforms like Bosch and Shimano.

E-bike brands are shifting their focus from selling bikes to offering ongoing services. For example, e-bike retailer Cowboy offers a subscription to mobile bike mechanics, and VanMoof partners with authorised repair services. But while these models work well in big towns and cities, they may not be suitable for rural and smaller urban areas.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that consumers are not disadvantaged or locked out from repair options. In the US, e-bike manufacturers have been requesting exceptions to laws designed to make products easier to repair - while

urging that the public should not be allowed to access data needed to make repairs.

E-bikes can be hard to spot

On the waste handling side, some of the innovations that have made e-bikes more accessible are also creating new problems.

For example, e-bikes have evolved to be sleeker and sometimes indistinguishable from regular bikes. This makes it easier for them to end up in regular waste management facilities that aren't equipped for electronic waste. If a lithium-ion battery inside an e-bike still holds charge and gets crushed or shredded, it can start a fire.

But this is a problem we can solve. Computer vision and other AI technologies could help to recognise e-bikes and batteries at waste management facilities. QR codes on bike frames could be used to provide information on the entire product lifecycle, including repair manuals and service history - just like the EU's proposed product passports.

Consumer awareness, choice and education are key. While it's up to consumers to initiate the maintenance and repair of e-bikes, policymakers need to ensure these options are available and affordable, and that consumers are aware of them.

Retailers need support to integrate 'repair and reuse' into their business models. This includes cycle-to-work schemes for people to buy e-bikes, as well as better access to insurance and legal protections for selling refurbished e-bikes, and a workforce with the skills to repair these bikes.

Across the world, bike libraries and 'try before you buy' schemes are helping consumers make more informed decisions, as people can test an e-bike before committing to a purchase. Moving away from traditional ownership - especially for expensive e-bikes - could make active mobility more accessible.

Policies that drive sales, such as grants and incentives for new bike purchases, can work against efforts to reduce waste. We need more policies that support the refurbishment and repair of e-bikes.

The e-bike sector is one with great potential to improve both environmental and public health. But to realise these benefits, we need to focus on making them last longer and using fewer resources.

*This article first appeared at
www.theconversation.com*

UK businesses call for VAT-free repairs and reuse

Businesses, charities and community groups are urging the Government to eliminate VAT on all repaired and refurbished electronics. They argue this change would reduce waste, lower consumer costs and enhance the circular economy.

In an open letter to Environment Secretary Steve Reed, 25 organisations, including Suez UK, called for the removal of the 20% VAT on second-hand and repaired tech items sold by businesses.

They believe this policy change would encourage more people to opt for pre-owned or repaired electronics over brand-new ones, thereby helping families save money and addressing the growing e-waste problem in the UK.

Right now, VAT is charged at the same rate for a refurbished smartphone or laptop as it is for a brand-new model. This push for change comes as ministers face pressure to update policies that support the UK's goals for a net zero and circular economy. Since electronic goods are a major source of consumer waste, campaigners argue that changing VAT would help remove a big barrier to sustainable consumption. Cost and convenience are still big concerns.

Dr Adam Read from Suez UK highlighted that the convenience of buying new electronics often discourages the need for repairs. Lowering costs for repaired items could significantly boost demand, particularly among students and budget-conscious consumers.

Additionally, supporters claim the tax cut could generate thousands of green jobs. Projections indicate that growth in the reuse and repair sector could create 31,000 jobs by 2035, increasing to over 80,000 by 2040, with many of these jobs in skilled local trades.

Read noted that young people are already pursuing training in these fields. As Labour's new government aims to create a greener economy, campaigners stress that swift policy changes are needed.

A Treasury spokesperson mentioned the Government's commitment to waste reduction and indicated that tax changes would be considered during fiscal events.

The letter's signatories hope the upcoming Autumn Statement will bring about necessary action, with many looking to the Treasury to take advantage of this 'low-cost, high-impact' opportunity.



Jason Purlant (right)
handing over the Pronar to
Neil Ogden (middle)

Doubling wood recycling at Enva's Manchester facility

In just one year, Enva has doubled its wood recycling capacity by investing in a Pronar 2.1010 recycling shredder

Enva, one of the UK and Ireland's leading recycling and resource recovery specialists, had identified a need to upgrade the shredders at its Droylsden wood recycling facility to increase its processing capability and meet the growing demand for sustainable animal bedding and Biomass. The facility, spanning 18 acres, processes up to 500 tonnes of wood waste daily, including grade A (high-quality clean wood) and grade C (lower-quality wood material).

The primary challenge was to find a wood recycling shredder capable of handling a higher throughput rate and efficiently shredding both grade A and

grade C wood. Enva needed a wood recycling shredder that would not only increase production but also maintain the quality of the woodchips produced.

After evaluating several options, Enva's Site Manager, Neil Ogden, was impressed by the specifications of the Pronar 2.1010 recycling shredder. Following a visit to Pronar's manufacturing facility in Poland and a demonstration of the machine, Enva decided to invest in the Pronar 2.1010. This machine was chosen for its advanced technology, noise reduction and superior throughput capabilities.

The Pronar 2.1010 was installed, and Global Machinery Solutions provided on-site training to ensure the Enva team could operate the wood recycling shredder safely and effectively. Initially, it took time to adjust the settings for optimal performance, but with support from Global Machinery Solutions, the team quickly adapted.

Results

Since the installation of the Pronar 2.1010, Enva has seen remarkable improvements:

- **Daily processing capacity of grade A wood has increased from 30-35 tonnes to over 50 tonnes.**
- **The machine operates continuously with minimal downtime, significantly enhancing operational efficiency.**
- **Employees are now able to focus on other areas of the site, eliminating the need for additional hires.**

Enva's Neil Ogden said: "Wood recycling is highly sustainable and delivers significant environmental and commercial benefits. I am incredibly impressed with the Pronar, which has played a key role in doubling our wood processing capacity, increasing employee productivity, and reducing costs. The after-sales support from Global Machinery Solutions has been wonderful, and I am keen to continue working with the team as we continue to grow our business."

Jason Purlant, Business Line Manager at Global Machinery Solutions, said: "I am thrilled we were able to provide Enva with the perfect wood recycling shredder to meet their specific needs. With numerous wood recycling shredders for sale, it was crucial to ensure that the Pronar 2.1010 not only met their operational requirements but also represented a sound long-term investment."

"The advanced technology and efficiency of the Pronar will undoubtedly support Enva's growth and sustainability goals for years to come."

Global Machinery Solutions has supplied high-quality machinery to the recycling, construction, aggregates and forestry sectors in the UK, Ireland and Europe for over 20 years.

Visit www.globalmachinerysolutions.co.uk for more information.

McHale Plant sales commits to 'circular economy'

McHale Plant Sales, a distributor for Komatsu and Metso, has confirmed its focus on the circular economy. The company aims to support equipment users and industries that are committed to sustainable practices.

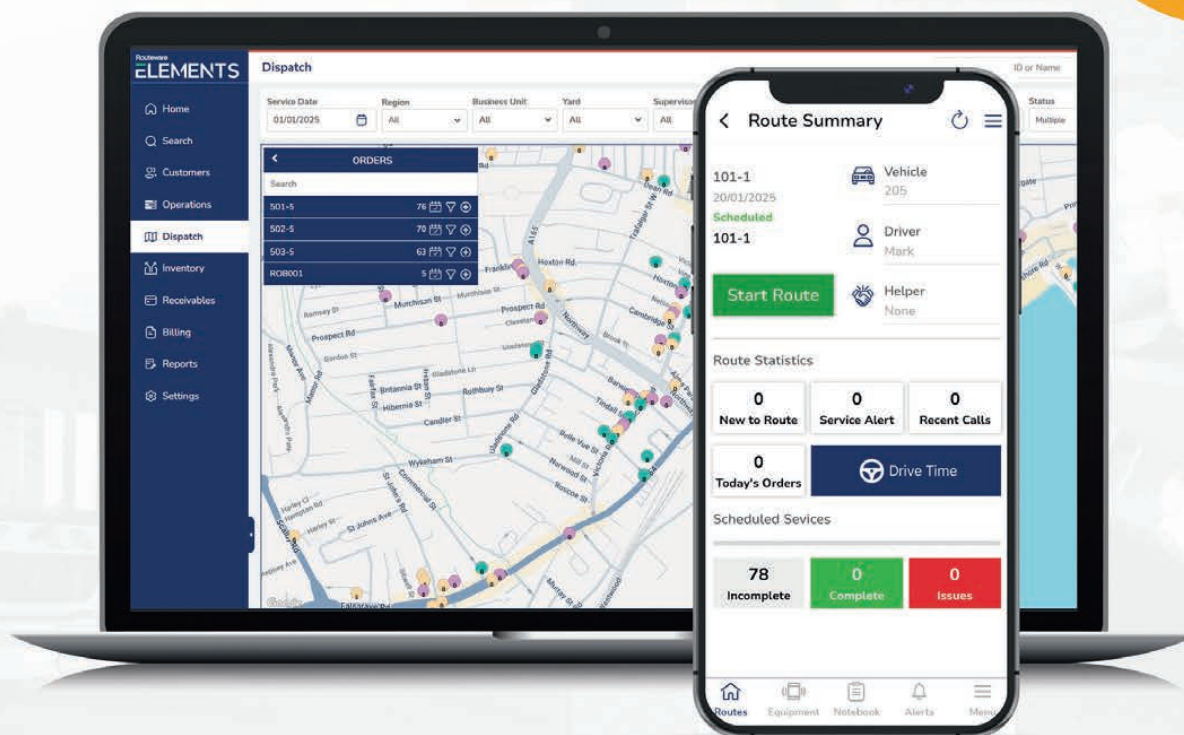
Denis McGrath, the sales director, stated: "We will promote sustainability alongside Komatsu and Metso, who are both dedicated to this mission."

"Our commitment to the circular economy will guide our equipment choices and how we market machinery that addresses the need for sustainable practices," McGrath added.

He explained that electric drives and emissions-free, low-noise operations offer benefits to manufacturers and customers. These are part of what Komatsu and Metso provide in their models. The idea

of 'reduce, reuse, recapture, reconstitute and reprocess' is gaining attention in the construction and materials sector. This approach will lead to new processes, new equipment, and new opportunities.

"For distributors like McHale Plant Sales, which also focus on recycling and environmental applications, these changes will be very important going forward," he noted.



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Enva launches certified Battery Safe Box for lithium waste storage and transport

Enva, one of the UK and Ireland's leading recycling and resource recovery specialists, has announced the launch of its new Battery Safe Box - a purpose-built solution for the safe storage and transportation of waste lithium batteries, including defective units.

Capable of storing up to 400kg of lithium batteries and with a maximum capacity of 20kWh, the Battery Safe Box is engineered to contain and isolate fires caused by thermal runaway, preventing the spread of flames and ensuring safe handling throughout storage and transit.

The Enva Battery Safe Box has received official approval from the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA), signifying it has undergone rigorous testing, including fire containment and drop tests. It is fully certified to meet UN Dangerous Goods Packing Instruction P911 standards, ensuring safety and compliance during transportation.

One of the key features of the Lithium Battery Safe Box is its innovative Gas Lift Lid, designed with an L-shaped profile to make opening and loading quick and effortless. This feature addresses common challenges posed by heavy conventional containers, reducing the risk of batteries being stored elsewhere due to difficult access.

Diane Rainsford, Head of Batteries at Enva, commented on the new product: "The Battery Safe Box exemplifies Enva's ongoing commitment to delivering safe, innovative and sustainable resource

recovery solutions across the UK and Ireland. With lithium-ion battery fires increasing by 46% last year, this approved and easy-to-use storage solution addresses a critical safety need, providing customers with a tested and accredited way to store and transport batteries to licensed recycling facilities safely."

"This new Lithium Battery Safe Box reflects our commitment to safety, sustainability, and compliance," said Mike Sneath, Managing Director. "It provides a reliable, approved solution for the secure storage and transport of hazardous lithium batteries, helping our clients manage their waste safely and efficiently."

John Henderson, Group Parts Manager at Parks Auto Group, one of Scotland's largest dealerships and among the first customers of the Battery Safe Box, stated: "The introduction of the Battery Safe Box is a game-changer for us. As a group with multiple sites across the country, it significantly enhances our risk management and ensures compliance with both our franchise and insurance partners."

Other key features include:

- **Fire-resistant design:** Manufactured from high-grade steel with Class 1 fire-resistant insulation for exceptional fire containment.
- **Gas lift lid:** Facilitates easy opening and closing, reducing operational difficulty.
- **Toggle clips:** Secure the lid quickly



and safely with robust, adjustable clips.

- **Front loading:** Allows batteries to be loaded from the front, enabling internal segregation and reducing manual handling.
- **Forklift and pallet truck access:** Equipped with forklift slots on all four sides for easy movement and positioning.
- **Stackable Design:** Can be stacked up to three units high, maximising storage space and transport efficiency while maintaining stability and safety.

Veolia to open UK's first closed-loop PET recycling plant

Veolia is investing £70 million in a closed-loop, tray-to-tray PET recycling facility, which is expected to process 80,000 tonnes of mixed plastics annually and produce new, food-grade packaging.

This initiative is described as Veolia's largest recycling project in the UK. The facility, located in Battlefield near Shrewsbury, Shropshire, is currently under construction and is set to become operational by early 2026. The new facility will shred, wash and flake PET trays and bottles sourced from both domestic and industrial waste streams. The use of recycled plastic is projected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by up to 70%

compared to those associated with virgin materials.

This project aims to address the UK's shortage of closed-loop facilities that can recycle PET trays into food-grade materials, a challenge that stems from the stringent standards that must be met. Total investments in this initiative are expected to reach around £1 billion by 2030.

Veolia considers this effort crucial for establishing a circular economy in the UK, which is anticipated to strengthen the resilience of the recycling industry, benefiting both the grocery sector and local consumers.

"Today's announcement marks a major

milestone for the UK recycling industry and a key pillar of Veolia's GreenUp plan to drive sustainable resource management," said Estelle Brachlianoff, CEO at Veolia. "By becoming the first company in the UK to recycle PET trays through a fully closed-loop process, we are reinforcing our leadership as a pioneer of the circular economy."

"This innovative facility not only advances our commitment to reducing waste and carbon emissions but also positions us to meet the growing demand for effective recycling as Simpler Recycling legislation comes into effect, ensuring more of this material is responsibly recycled for years to come."

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TRACEY WESTBURY

Director – Westbury Environmental Limited

Tracey has worked in the waste industry for over 35 years across all sectors. She now acts as a consultant supporting small - medium site operators providing advice and services in waste regulation including permitting, waste recovery, end of waste and environmental management systems.



BUSINESS CLINIC

CONSULTANCY

The introduction of the Environmental Permit Standard Rules Set 2022 No. 1 for construction and demolition waste recycling facilities marks a significant step forward in tightening compliance and improving quality across the industry. A key feature of this updated permit standard rule set is the clear separation of waste codes that can be used for producing recycled aggregates from those that can be used to create recycled soils. This distinction is not arbitrary; it is directly tied to the requirements of the WRAP Quality Protocol (QP) for the Production of Aggregates from Inert Waste.

The WRAP QP establishes the conditions under which certain recovered waste streams can be considered as 'end of waste' aggregates. Essentially, this means that only specific waste codes, when processed correctly, can result in a product that is no longer considered waste and can be used in the same way as primary aggregates. This is crucial for operators aiming to produce high-quality recycled aggregates that meet regulatory and customer standards. By separating the waste codes in the permit, the Environment Agency has effectively reinforced the importance of ensuring that only approved inert waste types are used for producing recycled aggregates.

For many operators, this may necessitate a closer examination of incoming waste streams and stricter segregation processes. Waste types that do not fall under the WRAP QP-approved codes and are not listed for the production of aggregates in the permit must not be processed into recycled aggregates. Instead, they can only be used for soil manufacture or other recovery operations as specified

by the permit. Mixing unapproved waste types with those intended for aggregate production could lead to the recycled material failing to meet the 'end of waste' criteria, potentially resulting in compliance issues and loss of market value.

What does this mean for compliance?

To comply with the new standard rules permit, operators must ensure that they have robust waste acceptance and tracking procedures in place. This includes:

- *Verifying that incoming wastes are coded correctly and are suitable for the intended recovery route.*
- *Maintaining accurate records of waste codes and quantities processed.*
- *Ensuring that wastes intended for aggregate production are physically separated on-site from those that cannot be used in aggregate production.*
- *Ensuring that recycled aggregates are only produced from waste codes explicitly listed as approved under the WRAP QP and Table 2.3a of the standard rules set permit.*

If other waste codes are used in the production of recycled aggregates, they will not meet the end of waste status under the WRAP QP and will remain defined as waste. It is an offence to send out waste without a waste transfer note. Your customers may then be acting unlawfully by disposing of waste without the necessary authorisations.

The WRAP QP is not the only route to 'end of waste' status for recycled materials. There is a process by which

you can self-certify and seek legal and technical advice if you intend to go down this route.

Quarterly Reporting Requirement

Another significant addition to the 2022 No. 1 standard rules set is the requirement for quarterly reporting of tonnages of 'end of waste' recycled material, specifically 'end of waste' recycled aggregates. This reporting obligation helps regulators monitor recycling facilities and provides transparency regarding the amount of material being returned to the economy as high-quality products. For operators, this means having reliable weighing, recording, and reporting systems in place to ensure accurate data submission every quarter. This reporting of non-waste material production is new, so don't get caught out by it.

Why this matters

The construction sector has long been under pressure to reduce its reliance on primary aggregates and increase the use of recycled materials. By aligning the permit conditions with the WRAP QP, the Environment Agency is both encouraging best practice and ensuring that recycled aggregates meet a consistent standard of quality and safety.

*If you need assistance with any of the above issues, get in touch. We are happy to help. Tel: **01952 879705**.*



Please visit our website for further information:

www.westburyenv.co.uk

or drop us a line at

info@westburyenv.co.uk

**GOT A QUESTION
ASK THE EXPERTS**

REP-TEC secures order for recycling facility in partnership with CWS Engineering

REP-TEC is delighted to announce it has secured an order to supply two energy-efficient Twin Ram Goliath balers for the new Nantycaws Resource Recycling Facility (RRF), owned by CWM Environmental. The order has been placed in partnership with CWS Engineering, which is developing the new recycling facility.

The new RRF is being built in place of CWM Environmental's former Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) at Nantycaws. The new facility is set to become a state-of-the-art hub for recycling in Carmarthenshire and South West Wales, with the capacity to process up to 80,000 tonnes of materials per year from both domestic and commercial sources.

REP-TEC's Goliath balers were selected for their energy efficiency, cost to bale, robust design and high compaction force, making them ideal for high-throughput facilities like the Nantycaws RRF. The balers will be installed and commissioned by the REP-TEC team, who have begun the manufacturing stage at their headquarters in Dungannon, Northern Ireland.

Colm White from CWS Engineering says: "We are looking forward to working with REP-TEC on this project, their twin ram balers stand out for their low cost-to-bale ratio and energy-efficient ECO-DRIVE technology. They're a trusted partner whose equipment delivers the performance and sustainability our customers demand in today's competitive and environmentally focused market."

The Nantycaws RRF is designed to process both co-mingled dry mixed recyclables and segregated waste streams, supporting new Workplace Recycling Laws and wider zero landfill goals. REP-TEC's Twin Ram Goliath balers will play a critical role in compacting the recyclable materials into high-density bales ready for resale or further recycling.

"With our focus on energy-efficiency products, we're proud to support a project that is the cornerstone of CWM's broader environmental goals," said Mark Doherty, Sales Director at REP-TEC. "Our Twin Ram Goliath balers are designed to reduce the cost to bale while delivering up to 30% energy savings through our ECO-DRIVE technology. This order reflects our commitment to providing high-performance, cost-efficient solutions that help waste processors, like CWM, meet both their economic and environmental goals."

The Nantycaws RRF is on track for completion later this year. Once operational, the site will support skilled job creation, streamline recycling operations and provide vital public education on sustainability and circular economy practices.

*For more information about REP-TEC and their range of machinery, visit www.rep-tec.co.uk
To stay updated on the Nantycaws RRF, visit www.cwmenvironmental.co.uk or follow CWM Environmental on social media.*



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Terex installs bulky/ POPs waste processing plant at Biffa facility

Terex® Recycling Systems has successfully installed a waste processing plant at Biffa. This plant will help Biffa recycle and recover waste, allowing more materials to be reused in the circular economy. The facility in Milton Keynes needed to handle bulky waste and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

Andy Tapp, Site Manager at Biffa Milton Keynes, explained: “We built a shredding facility to take bulky waste

from household recycling centres in the area, reduce it to a size suitable for incineration, and remove any metals in the waste.”

Working with Terex Recycling Systems, Biffa set up an easy-to-use plant. It features a fully integrated electrical control system with a simple interface. The plant includes the TDS-820SE low-speed, high-torque shredder. This shredder has powerful twin shafts and sharp teeth to reduce the volume of

waste efficiently. Its two-metre-long shafts, equipped with fully welded teeth, provide excellent throughput and material reduction.

Biffa needed a shredder that could manage various types of household waste. After reviewing several options, they selected the TDS-820SE. Since the shredder is indoors, they chose the electric version. Terex allowed them to trial a diesel version first, which helped confirm their choice.

The TDS-820SE can shred materials in both directions, giving Biffa greater flexibility. This allows them to handle bulky waste and POPs. POPs are toxic chemicals found in items like fire-retardant furniture and certain electronics. They do not break down easily and can stay in the environment for a long time, posing risks to human and animal health. The Environment Agency has strict regulations for managing POPs waste, banning its disposal in landfills.

With the advanced technology of the TDS-820SE, Biffa’s Milton Keynes plant can manage POPs waste by these regulations. Andy Tapp said: “When we process bulky waste, we can direct it one way. When switching to POPs waste, we can send it to a separate RORO skip. This setup keeps the two waste types separate, as required.”

Michael McMenamin, Regional Sales Manager for Terex Recycling Systems, added: “We are proud to support Biffa in their work at Milton Keynes. The installation of our TDS-820SE electric shredder, combined with advanced separation technologies, shows how engineering innovation and customer collaboration can lead to real environmental progress.”

Biffa opens ‘zero to landfill’ Scottish waste site

Biffa has opened a ‘zero to landfill’ waste transfer site in Scotland amid a major economic boom in the Highlands.

The transfer station on the Longman Industrial Estate is Biffa’s first in Inverness and is permitted to handle up to 150,000 tonnes of general business waste and dry mixed recycling each year.

That’s the same weight as all the household waste produced by the 360,000 residents of Moray and Aberdeenshire annually.

With a zero to landfill strategy, recyclables are sent from the transfer

station for processing at Biffa’s Broxburn Materials Recovery Facility near Edinburgh. At the same time, general waste goes to one of Scotland’s energy recovery plants to generate electricity for the grid.

Monica Heenighan, Biffa’s Industrial & Commercial North Area Director, said: “The Highlands are absolutely booming, with hundreds of new homes being built in Inverness and £25 million of seed funding unlocked to invest in renewable energy infrastructure at the Green Freeport.

“Controlling our own waste disposal in

the region is therefore a critical part of our growth strategy in the local market.

“It protects us from cost increases so that we can offer competitive prices to new customers and means we can divert non-recyclable waste from landfill to energy recovery.”

There are also plans to convert the transfer station’s plant vehicles to run on hydrotreated vegetable oil by 2027 as part of Biffa’s wider decarbonisation strategy.

Biffa’s Industrial & Commercial depot now runs alongside the transfer station following its relocation from Evanton.



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DR ANNA WILLETTS

Anna is an environmental criminal lawyer, specialising in defence work in the waste and recycling industry. She is dual-qualified, having completed a PhD in geochemistry and worked as an environmental consultant for 5 years before qualifying as a lawyer. Anna represents waste and recycling businesses and directors who are prosecuted by the regulators for environmental and waste offences.



BUSINESS CLINIC

LEGAL

Waste crime is still taking place

You may have seen my recent foray into TV appearances, including an interview on Sky News for a feature on waste crime. The Sky News team had been investigating a large amount of waste that had been illegally dumped on a number of pieces of land in Hertfordshire. They found address details within the waste and tracked those back to the parties to whom the waste belonged. When they contacted them, they were told that the householders' waste (garage clearances, etc) had been removed by what they thought were legitimate waste removal companies. They had paid a few hundred pounds to these 'companies'. Unbeknown to them, their waste was taken away and dumped on unsuspecting landowners' fields.

They provided details to Sky News of the companies that had offered to remove their waste. Sky located these people and confronted them on camera about their

waste removal practices, which, of course, were all denied.

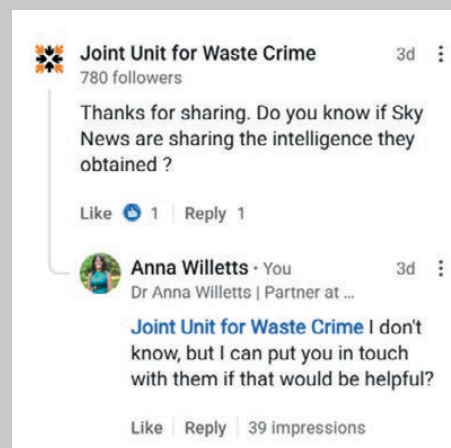
For me, the programme highlighted two things (*well three, always have your nails painted for surprise TV interviews as they do close ups of you waving your hands around in anger...*); **One** - that waste crime is still taking place and blatantly (these guys were all over TikTok advertising their practices) and **two** - how easy it was for journalists to find the illegal dumping and very quickly track down the criminals who did it. It really does beg the question why it was so easy for them and yet the regulators always say how difficult it is to find them.

Similarly, last year, *Panorama* quickly and easily discovered a number of illegal waste sites, which, as it turned out, had been in existence in plain sight for many years. Again, they found them, why can't the regulators? This was the reason for my frustrated hand-waving. See also the LinkedIn commentary at the end:

at the time of writing (two weeks ago), I offered this assistance, and I received no response requesting contact details or an acknowledgement.

I act for clients in regulated industry who are enforced against for minor permit breaches. (Remember my column from last year about my client who had 14 waste transfer notes with mistakes on in 19 years of running his business and had to spend four hours in Court with me being prosecuted.) Yet, this blatant law-breaking, which actually harms the environment, is apparently too difficult for the regulators to deal with. But not too difficult for Sky News.

This is the real side of waste crime that needs to be addressed, not regulated industry with minor permit breaches. In my view, and I am sure many others, this is where regulators need to focus their efforts, resources and time to properly deal with waste crime. Finished on a rhyme!



Anna is 'Past President' of the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management and Co-Convenor of UKELA's Waste Working Party. E: anna.willetts@gunnercooke.com

GOT A QUESTION
ASK THE EXPERTS

Hospital recycling scheme on course to save £100k

The country's first hospital recycling facility is expected to save £100,000 in waste disposal costs, according to an NHS trust. Located in a car park at Hull Royal Infirmary, the facility has been operating for three months and aims to recycle 80% of the hospital's domestic waste.

Workers transport bags of rubbish to the materials recycling facility (MRF), where the waste is sorted. NHS Humber Health Partnership stated that this initiative is believed to be the first of its kind in England, reducing waste disposal costs by £200 per tonne.

Facilities service manager Mike James explained: "We've made significant efforts to provide more bins for different types of waste across various wards and departments to assist with initial segregation. For instance, food waste bins have been placed in all kitchens and staff restrooms, while mixed recycling bins have been provided according to the available space."

Food waste is sent to an anaerobic digester, which converts it into methane for energy production, with the leftover residue used as liquid fertiliser. A compactor compresses the waste into

bales, minimising the number of lorry trips required for collection.

Future plans include converting some of the recycled plastic into benches and chairs for the hospital. James mentioned that, in addition to fulfilling legal recycling requirements, the MRF scheme at the infirmary and the nearby Castle Hill Hospital would "deliver waste management savings of around £100,000."

"But it's not just about the financial benefits," he added. "It's also about being a responsible employer, respecting our environment, and fundamentally doing the right thing."

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M&S announces major recycling change in bid to 'reduce costs'

Invisible ultraviolet tags will be added to some Marks and Spencer milk bottles to track them through the recycling system.

The supermarket is the first to introduce these packaging tags, developed by the recycling technology firm Polytag, on its shop shelves. Currently, these tags have been printed on the labels of M&S's four-pint milk bottles, which are available in stores nationwide.

The goal is to improve recycling rates. After households recycle the bottles, they will be scanned by Polytag's plastic

detection units, provided that the recycling facility has been equipped with this technology. M&S will then gain access to live recycling data, obtaining real-time, barcode-level insights into the recycling of its single-use plastic packaging.

Polytag stated that this data is designed to accurately track sustainability targets, enhance the accuracy of recycling claims, and ensure compliance with regulations requiring businesses to manage and recycle their packaging waste. Additionally, the tags may help M&S reduce costs under

the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) rules through more precise reporting.

M&S has invested £100,000 in Polytag's Ecotrace programme, which aims to establish a nationwide network of invisible UV tag readers.

Alice Rackley, CEO of Polytag, commented: "Retailers and brands can no longer afford to lose sight of packaging the moment it leaves their supply chain. With EPR now in effect, we're entering a new era where real data is not just helpful; it's essential."

"By tagging products and tracking their journey through the recycling system, we're creating a clear line of sight from the shelf to the sorting facility. M&S's decision to be the first to implement this initiative signals a commitment to transparency and a significant shift in how the industry approaches responsibility. This is a major milestone for the Ecotrace programme and the wider UK recycling industry."

Mark Hitschmann, head of packaging at M&S Food, added: "Our customers consistently tell us that reducing plastic is very important to them. This initiative allows them to trust that M&S is taking meaningful steps to help them make more sustainable choices when they shop with us."

Podback and Morrisons celebrate recycling 10 million coffee pods in under six months

Podback and Morrisons have reached an important milestone in their recycling partnership, having collected over 10 million coffee pods - equivalent to 197 tonnes - during the first six months of 2025.

Morrisons was the first UK supermarket to introduce in-store Podback recycling units for coffee pods, launching a trial in 29 stores in July 2023. Following the success of this trial, recycling units were installed in 411 Morrisons locations between January and June 2025. Customers can pick up Podback recycling bags from the customer service desk and return them to any Morrisons store that has a dedicated Podback point.

Customer response to the scheme has been positive, with the collection of 10 million coffee pods translating to an average of more than 24,000 pods per participating Morrisons store. The top-performing store in Woking, Surrey, recycled five tonnes of coffee pods -

equivalent to over 334,000 pods - in just over six months.

The recycling units have had a positive impact on various waste streams. Since the installation of Podback bins, Morrisons has seen a 17% increase in customers recycling other items in-store, such as soft plastics, batteries, ink cartridges and vape products.

Podback processes the collected bags of coffee pods in the UK to create new products, including car components, drink cans and building materials. Additionally, the coffee grounds are reprocessed to generate renewable energy and improve soil quality.

Rick Hindley, Executive Director at Podback, said: "The nationwide rollout of Podback recycling points in Morrisons supermarkets has proven to be an immediate success with our customers, who want simple and convenient ways to recycle. We are delighted to have reached this milestone within six months,



and before the nationwide roll-out of the units was even complete. Morrisons have been a supporter of Podback right from the start and we're excited to see how this partnership continues to develop."

Natasha Keighley, Packaging Manager at Morrisons, added: "It is clear that when we make recycling simple and accessible, people want to do the right thing. The success of the Podback rollout, and the positive impact it has had on other recycling streams too, shows how partnerships like this can help us all to waste less and recycle more."

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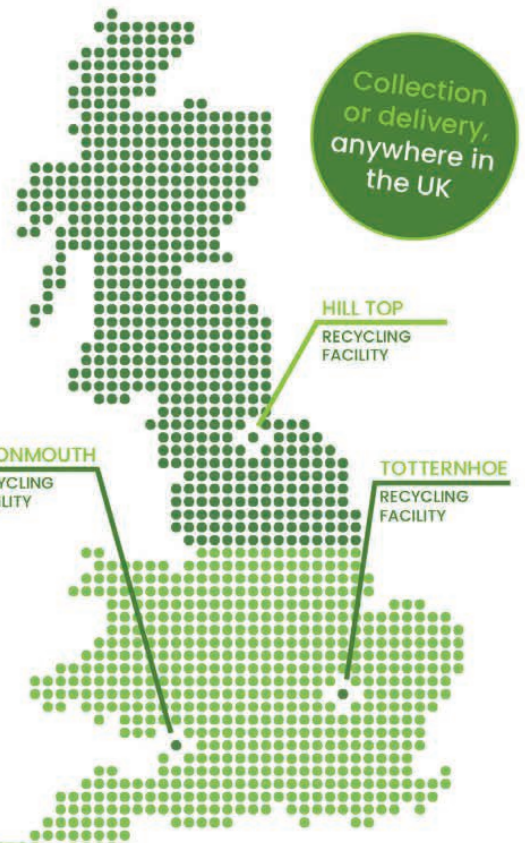
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Consistency is key

JESSICA MORGAN-SMITH

Partner at MPG, based in Bingley, Bradford and Skipton, North Yorkshire



The Environment Agency's role is to protect and enhance the environment in England by regulating activities, managing environmental risks and supporting sustainable development to benefit people, nature and the economy.

The EA regulates a wide range of activities, including major industries, waste management, water resources and quality, fisheries and flood risk. Central to this role is the environmental permitting system, which regulates activities that have the potential to pose environmental risks or harm to human health and the environment.

However, many operators and consultants are increasingly frustrated by how inconsistent the permitting system has become. These ongoing issues can delay investment, increase costs and deter innovation. At worst, they have the potential to encourage illegal waste activities due to the delays and lengthy timeframes associated with obtaining an environmental permit.

One of the most common complaints we hear and experience ourselves is the inconsistency in how different EA officers interpret the rules. What is acceptable in one region or at one site may be unacceptable in another, even when site

conditions and technical approaches are very similar. This is especially problematic for standard rules permit applications, which are meant to provide a more streamlined process for low-risk activities.

Delays are another ongoing, serious concern. It's not uncommon for applications to remain undecided for 6, 12, or even 18 months, often with little communication or explanation. Schedule 5 notices, used by the EA to request further information, can drag out the process with repeated rounds of questioning, often revisiting issues that have already been addressed or are not particularly relevant to the operation.

Operators trying to deliver low-risk circular economy outcomes often face the same level of scrutiny as high-risk disposal/recycling operations. This one-size-fits-all approach can significantly discourage good environmental practices and contradict broader government objectives regarding sustainability and resource efficiency.

The EA has recently published its updated five-year strategy, *Environment Agency: EA2030 change for a better environment*. The purpose of EA2030 is to outline the Environment Agency's strategic vision and priorities for 2025-2030, guiding how it will protect and

enhance England's environment, support sustainable growth and build national resilience to climate change through modern, efficient and collaborative approaches.

EA2030 sets out an ambition to transform the Environment Agency's permitting system to make it more efficient, responsive and supportive of innovation and sustainable development. The strategy recognises that current permitting processes can be complex and time-consuming, which creates barriers for businesses and slows down environmental progress. It is refreshing to see that this has been acknowledged.

To address this, EA2030 commits to streamlining permitting by redesigning a digital platform. It also aims to modernise and automate high-volume permitting, helping businesses get timely decisions that support their investment and compliance efforts.

Overall, EA2030 aims to create a permitting system that is faster, fairer, more transparent and better aligned with the UK's environmental goals and economic growth agenda.

The permitting system is essential to environmental protection, but without reform, its inconsistencies will continue to delay progress and penalise those working toward sustainable outcomes. A more balanced, transparent and supportive approach is urgently needed. Let's see how this transpires over the next five years!

Jessica has a wide experience of planning, permitting, operations, compliance, management systems and enforcement support.

If you have any queries about planning, permitting or compliance, please contact jessica@mpgyorks.co.uk or 07936359662.



**GOT A QUESTION
ASK THE EXPERTS**

Citywide push to increase recycling and tackle contamination

A targeted recycling education campaign, led by Preston City Council and RECOUP with support from Beyondly, has successfully reached over 265,000 residents. As a result of this initiative, there has been a 13% reduction in recycling contamination and a 19% decrease in material rejections at sorting facilities.

The campaign, part of the RECOUP Pledge2Recycle Plastics programme, ran from September to December 2024 and

utilised billboards, community engagement and social media to clarify recycling guidelines, especially for plastics.

Councillor Freddie Bailey emphasised the campaign's success in empowering residents to recycle more effectively.

In 2024/25, Preston City Council observed an 11-tonne increase in the collection of plastics, glass and cans compared to the previous year. Community engagement through school visits and events highlighted the need for clearer recycling information.

Katherine Fleet from RECOUP emphasised the importance of education in reducing confusion about recycling. At the same time, Charlotte Davies from Beyondly commended the campaign's collaborative approach and its positive impact on recycling behaviours.

Looking ahead, Preston City Council plans to enhance its relationships with schools, improve access to recycling and address the needs of neurodiverse residents.



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MARCO MUIA, BSc (Hons) MSc MCIWM, Managing Director at Oaktree Environmental Limited.

Marco specialises in all aspects of waste planning, environmental regulation and training, including CIWM/WAMITAB COTC/OCC assessment.



BUSINESS CLINIC

ENVIRONMENTAL

Exemption changes and charges

In July, the Environment Agency's exemption review web page was updated, indicating that the review is finally underway, as evidenced by the introduction of new charges for exemptions from July 2025. Exemptions will now face an initial registration charge for the majority of registrations

and a compliance charge for the period of registration (three years). The T11 will cost £1,221 to register for three years with no additional compliance fee. Farming exemptions are subject to a reduced charge, but non-farming exemptions at farms will attract the new rates. Charities will not have to pay.

The fee for registering one or more exemptions per site is £56, and you could be forgiven for thinking: "I'll register as many as I can." However, the compliance charge is levied per exemption and can rack up. Only register what you need, as the regulator may deregister any that aren't being used and you won't get a pro rata refund of the compliance charge.

I have always advocated for a compliance charge for exemptions, so there is a mechanism for carrying out duty of care checks with the regulator, rather than discovering a site is not compliant after taking waste there. Hopefully, the site inspection forms will be available on the public register.

The compliance charges are split into four bands (below), with the full compliance charge payable for the first (most expensive) registration and then discounted for the additional registrations in bands upper 1 and 2.

Band	Full compliance charge	Discounted compliance charge
Upper band (T8, T9 and U16 only)	£1,236	£227
Band 1	£420	£76
Band 2	£212	£76
Band 3	£30	No discount

If you make a mistake or no longer wish to have the exemption, you can claim a full refund within 21 days of registration. Full or partial refunds may be possible if the exemption is superseded by a permit, the business benefitting from the exemption has closed or if the exemption holder dies.

The table below summarises the exemptions in each band for ease of reference. Some exemptions are not in this list as they do not attract a fee or are registerable with another regulator, such as a local authority.

Band	Use	Treatment	Storage	Disposal
Upper	U16	T8, T9	none	none
Band 1	U1, U9	T4, T5, T6, T10, T12, T21, T24, T25	S1, S2	none
Band 2	U2, U4, U5, U8, U10, U11, U15	T1, T2, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T19, T23, T30, T31, T33	S3	D1, D6
Band 3	U3, U6, U7, U12, U13, U14	T18, T20, T26, T29, T32	none	D2, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7, D8

If you were registering a U1, T4 and S2 (all Band 1), the initial fee would be £56, plus compliance charges of £420, £76 and £76, totalling £628.

The web pages for the registration rules and guidance have been updated; however, the exemptions have not yet been reformed. Therefore, the current rules, limits, and conditions apply as set out in the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016. Natural Resources Wales has not yet introduced charging for exemptions other than the T11.

If you have any questions about this article contact Marco on **01606 558833**
or e-mail him at marco@oaktree-environmental.co.uk

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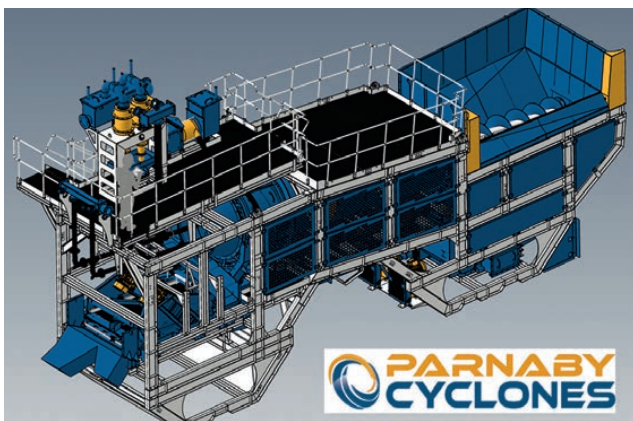
A Cyclone is a compact and efficient method of separating a mixed material stream of 'genetically uniform' parts with distinct density differences. The mixed material is firstly diluted with water, then pumped to the cyclone where the low-density products are captured by the vortex and high density exits through the spigot.

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A Barrel is a very effective and efficient method of separating coarse mixed material streams of 'generically uniform' parts with distinct density differences. The raw feed is conveyed to the feed launder where it merges with the recirculated water flow. Barrel dynamics and buoyancy effects separate the low-density materials from high-density materials.

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- High throughput capability for improved payback time on capital expenditure;
- Robust and flexible design for long life cycle and good residual value;
- Ability for mobile/modular design for short-term project.



Teenager Finlay crowned as UK's youngest qualified digger driver



Schoolboy Finlay Gallagher has been crowned the UK's youngest qualified digger driver - at the age of just 13.

The youngster spent his school holidays learning how to put a JCB digger through its paces and passed his Construction Plant Competence Scheme (CPCS) exam with flying colours.

He took the industry recognised proficiency test on the world's most famous digger - a JCB backhoe loader - at Flynne Plant Training Centre in Rochford, Essex, where he had to demonstrate a strong grasp of both the theory and practical aspects of operating the machinery. This included safely controlling and operating the JCB backhoe loader, digging and loading with precision, lifting and moving loads using the correct techniques and confidently handling

attachments and forks fitted to the machine.

JCB digger driving is in young Finlay's blood as grandad Pat Gallagher founded the family-owned aggregates, groundworks, civil engineering and property development company Gallagher Group more than 50 years ago with a single JCB 3C MK2 backhoe loader.

Fast forward half a century and the company has a fleet of more than 300 machines and employs more than 500 people. Finlay's dad, Stephen, is a Director and hopes Finlay will one day follow in the family footsteps and join the business when he leaves school.

Finlay said: "I've loved diggers since I was really little - probably around three or four. My grandad, Dave, used to drive me around in his dozer, while he did the pedals and I sat on his lap. Then my grandad, Pat, got me interested in excavators and backhoe loaders, which started my love of JCBs.

"I definitely see my future in the construction industry. My grandad Pat started the Gallagher Group, and it would mean a lot to me to play a part in helping the business continue to grow. This qualification is a significant first step, and I'm keen to build on it by learning to operate a wider range of plant machinery.

"I really enjoyed the training. I liked learning how to use the JCB 3CX Plus backhoe loader and understanding what was needed to pass the course."

Flynn Plant Training trainer, Derek Mansfield, said: "Finlay was one of the most enthusiastic and capable young candidates we've had. His control of the machine and understanding of how it operates was far beyond what you'd expect at his age. He picked things up incredibly quickly and showed real natural ability. He's now officially the youngest person in the UK to pass this qualification, which is a fantastic achievement. The

Gallagher family should be very proud. We'd welcome Finlay back any time to train on more machines, and I genuinely look forward to seeing where his skills take him next."

Finlay added: "The first time I used a JCB backhoe loader, I couldn't stop smiling. I loved using the controls and seeing how much I could do with it. JCB backhoe loaders are my favourite and they can do so many different things - digging, lifting, loading. It's like having lots of machines in one, so I can see why they call it the Swiss Army Knife of construction.

"One of my idols is Georgina Williams from JCB - @the_happydigger on Instagram. I love watching her on the backhoe loader, so I decided to set up my own account, @digger_finngallagher, to share my journey and hopefully encourage other young people to consider a career in construction."

Gallagher Group Chairman, Pat Gallagher, said: "I am exceptionally proud of Finlay and everything he has achieved.



"I've loved diggers since I was really little - probably around three or four. My grandad, Dave, used to drive me around in his dozer, while he did the pedals and I sat on his lap. Then my grandad, Pat, got me interested in excavators and backhoe loaders, which started my love of JCBs.

He has also demonstrated an incredible passion and interest in machinery from an early age, and this course has provided him with an opportunity to deepen his knowledge and skills. I was blown away by how naturally he took to it. This really does give me great encouragement for the future. Hopefully, this inspires many other young people to give it a go and see the construction industry as a fantastic career opportunity."

To celebrate Finlay's qualification, he was invited to one of the JCB Groundworker Days, where he was presented with a special model gift from Lord Bamford to congratulate him on his achievement. He was then invited to debut with the JCB demonstration team, where he drove the JCB hydrogen-powered backhoe loader as part of the opening routine.

JCB Chairman Lord Bamford said: "I wholeheartedly applaud Finlay's achievement. He is a talented young man who has demonstrated at a very young age just how simple and intuitive it is to operate today's JCB diggers."

Established in 1973 by Pat Gallagher with a single JCB digger, Gallagher Group has grown into one of Kent's largest and most respected family businesses, specialising in aggregates, groundworks, civil engineering and property development across the South East.



All new JN Bentley excavators to be fitted with Xwatch safety systems

JN Bentley, part of the global Mott MacDonald Group, has added 13 new Komatsu excavators to its fleet, each equipped with the Xwatch XW5 system. This order represents the next phase in the contractor's broader investment programme, confirming that all new excavators entering the fleet will be fitted with Xwatch.

The new machines, supplied by Marubeni-Komatsu Ltd, the UK distributor for Komatsu, follow JN Bentley's decision in 2024 to transition away from a competitor's safety system in favour of a more advanced and practical alternative. The initial phase of this transition involved outfitting 20 Komatsu machines with an integrated Xwatch and Leica Geosystems 3D Collision Avoidance solution, ideal for the high-risk environments often found in the utilities sector.

With over 2,500 employees and projects valued at more than £500 million annually, JN Bentley has established a reputation for prioritising safety at every level. The switch to Xwatch was motivated by operator feedback and the need for reliable, user-friendly control systems that reduce exposure to high-energy hazards on site.

The Xwatch XW5 system is a safety solution that establishes a defined working area around the excavator. It monitors and limits the machine's height, side-to-side movement (slew), and lifting capacity, ensuring the excavator operates within safe parameters at all times. This functionality helps protect both the operator and the site, especially when the machine is near overhead hazards, in tight

spaces, or lifting heavy loads.

Delivered earlier this year, the latest 13 Komatsu machines are all equipped with the Xwatch XW5 - a comprehensive safety system that defines the machine's working envelope. It controls height, slew and rated capacity, helping to safeguard both the operator and the machine according to site-specific requirements. The system's flexibility allows it to be deployed across a variety of project types and environments.

The XW5 utilises electric-over-hydraulic integration and feather-touch proportionality for precise real-time control. Movement restrictions can be tailored to suit each job, minimising risk while maintaining efficiency - an essential balance for JN Bentley's diverse portfolio of civil and utility projects.

Jemma Dycer Hopkins, Sales and Operations Manager at Xwatch, commented: "JN Bentley is an excellent example of a contractor committed to safety and consistent investment. Whether implementing the full 3D solution for high-risk utility work or a more streamlined system for general use, they have demonstrated real leadership. It's been a pleasure collaborating with them and the team at Marubeni-Komatsu to support this initiative."

Xwatch engineer Tom Dacosta carried out all of the latest installations, and the new machines are now commissioned and ready for live sites. With additional units expected later this year, JN Bentley is setting a clear standard for safety-focused procurement, supported by trusted partnerships and practical technology.

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www.recyclingpvc.co.uk
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www.rukgroup.com
T: 01829 732471

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www.royhatfield.com
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www.sar-metals.com
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T: 0203 603 8331

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www.impactairsystems.com
T: 0116 2448855

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Dennis Eagle
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T: 01926 458 500

Harsh
www.harshuk.com
T: 01759 372 100

Hiab

www.hiab.com/en
T: 01827 722120

Hyva UK
www.hyva.com/en-gb/
T: 0161 7766 600

John Bradshaw
www.john-bradshaw.co.uk
T: 01780 782621

Palfinger UK
www.palfinger.co.uk
T: 01380 733513

Powertec Vehicle Engineering
www.powertecLtd.com
T: 01484 842 293

Scania (Great Britain) Limited
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T: 01908 210210

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T: 01535 617 880



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T: 01453 899131

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T: 01634 862363

Site Showers Ltd
www.site-showers.com
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Skip Nets UK
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T: 01697 744474

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www.tyreboss.co.uk
T: 07484 303123

Vehicle Weighing Solutions
www.vwsLtd.co.uk
T: 0118 946 1900

>> WASTE-TO-ENERGY SYSTEMS

AIC Group
www.aic-group.co.uk
T: 028 3752 6157



John trained at Saltcoats Burgh in the late 60s. After a decade he moved to PD Beatwaste Ltd/ Wimpey Waste Management Ltd. He then joined the Civil Engineering Dept at Strathclyde University before posts at Renfrew, Hamilton, Inverness and East Ayrshire Councils.

A Fellow of CIWM, he served on their Scottish Centre Council from 1988-2009.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland and was their President between 1991-92.

JOHN CRAWFORD

The Beeb and me!

I was looking forward to the BBC's Disclosure programme about the consequences of the Scottish Parliament's proposal to ban the landfilling of untreated municipal waste from next January. It could mean between 600,000 and 700,000 tonnes of waste per annum being trucked to England due to a lack of treatment capacity. To some extent, the programme explained the problem, then got bogged down in Energy from Waste (EfW) plants (that the presenter insisted on calling 'burners'), and featured a protest group that wants all EfW plants closed. I lodged a formal complaint pointing out that nobody had explored why Scotland's recycling rate has been stuck at around 45% for over a decade: that EfW has been used effectively on the continent for decades; and where had the term 'burners' come from?

It's not the first time I've crossed swords with the BBC. In 1989, Hamilton DC secured planning consent to develop a local worked-out quarry as a landfill to see us through the next 15 years. It wasn't easy with a public inquiry where a local market gardener had challenged our consultants' professional advice, but we were now on track.

Soon afterwards, the BBC's *Nature* programme phoned to say they'd been contacted by the objectors, alleging that we'd conned our way into getting consent and would I be prepared to meet their researchers? The Chief Executive okayed it and I then met the pair who were sympathetic to the Council needing a new waste disposal facility, but felt we hadn't been able to reassure the objectors that the new site wouldn't cause problems. It was agreed that I'd be interviewed on camera at the site.

On the day however, the interviewer was quite hostile. He asked me if I'd be happy living within a mile of a landfill

site, and he was clearly very annoyed when I said there was one near my home in Ayrshire. He then asked me if I could: *'Categorically assure local residents there wouldn't be any smells, noise, vermin or other nuisances from the proposed site?'* I said nobody could give that assurance, but we could deal with these problems very quickly. He asked me the same question five more times and I gave him the same answer. He finally asked: *'So are you saying that this site can't be properly controlled?'* And I vehemently replied: *'No.'*

When the programme aired, the Council was portrayed as being completely disinterested in the objectors' concerns. The programme editors had taken my final *'no'* and transposed it as my answer to the question *'categorically assure local residents, etc.'* That allowed the presenter, Michael Buerk, to make a flippant, closing comment, that: *'Mr Crawford clearly needs to start listening to local people.'*

So we made a formal complaint to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission and the Chief Executive and I appeared before them the following June. We were told that the two researchers *'were freelancers and didn't work for the BBC. The programme producer was currently filming in Russia but had submitted his written response' (that we weren't allowed to see) and they'd watched the programme earlier. What were our issues?'* We restated our complaints (most of these being rejected by the BBC representatives present), not helped by a Member of the Commission (a retired Colonel) who regularly interjected: *'Madam Chair, please remind these people that questions have to be addressed through you.'*

Some weeks later (without any prior notice), very late one evening, the BBC broadcast the Commission's findings: *'That while there had been some unjustified criticism of Mr Crawford personally, the*

programme had been on balance fair to both the Council and the Objectors.'

But it was all academic as a few months later our contractor offered us an excellent deal for a transfer loading and disposal contract.

As far as my recent *Disclosure* complaint was concerned, the BBC says: *'The programme did explore why Scotland's recycling rate is under 50%'* (I must have blinked and missed that part). They refer to the EfW plant as a *'giant incinerator'* and *'the term 'burners' was used by the production team'*. They state that EfW plants are *'less polluting than landfill but pump damaging CO₂ into the atmosphere'*.

Words fail me!

LOOKING AHEAD - FUTURE FEATURES

SEPTEMBER 2025: ISSUE 236

RWM preview

OCTOBER 2025: ISSUE 237

EfW - renewable energy sources / Shredders

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MRFs / Artificial intelligence in waste management systems

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