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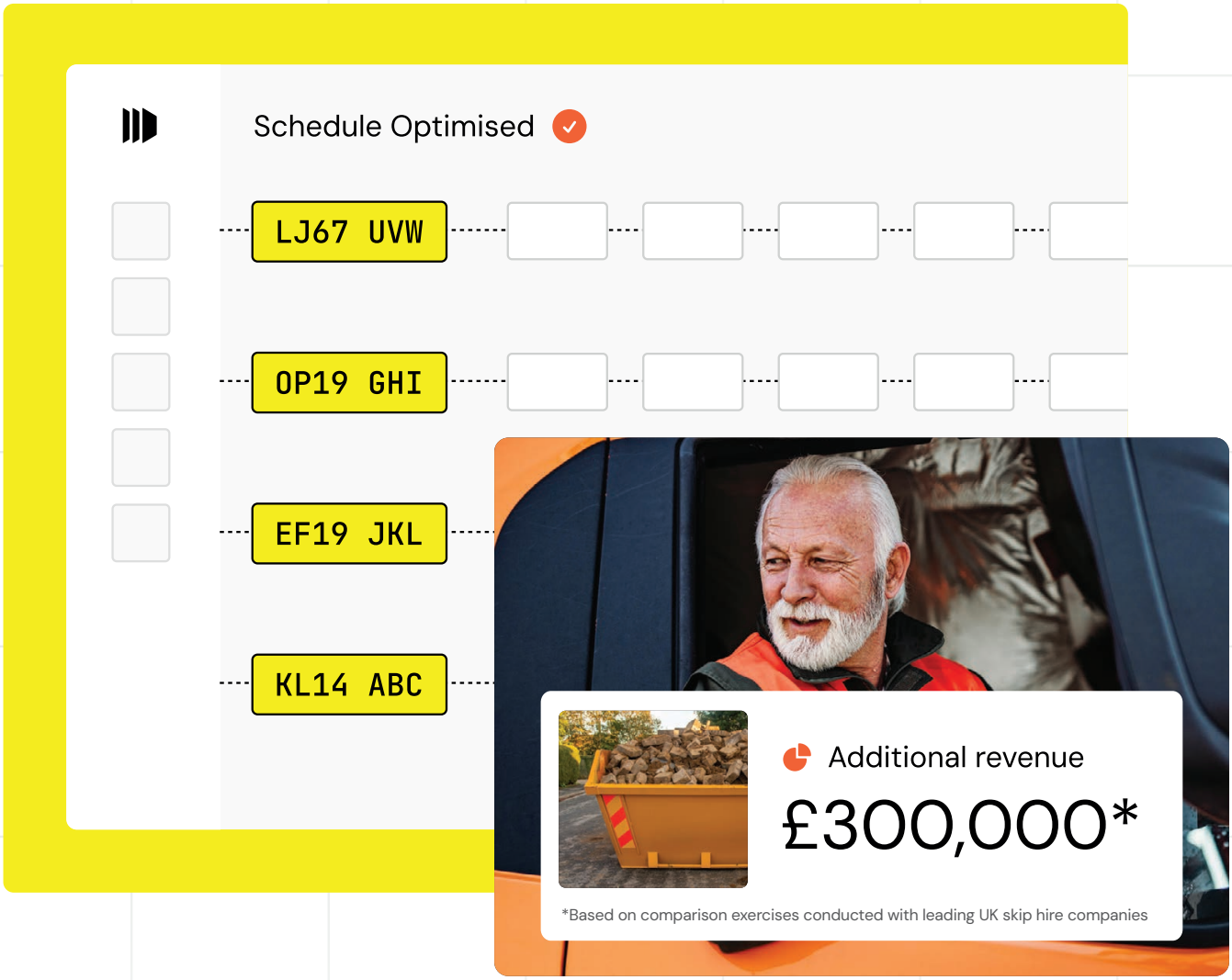

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EDITORIAL VIEWPOINT

By **Brendan Gilligan**

Last month, a significant topic of discussion was Chancellor Rachel Reeves' confirmation in her Autumn budget that the Government will not move forward with plans to converge the standard and lower rates of landfill tax.

However, there's been a troubling development: a 'mountain of illegal waste', measuring 60 metres long, 15 metres wide, and stacked 10 metres high, has been discovered in a field between the River Cherwell and the A34 near Kidlington, Oxfordshire. This situation has received extensive national coverage, triggering intense criticism from the waste industry.

The Environment Agency (EA) reported becoming aware of this issue in July. So why did it take the Agency until 23rd October to obtain a court order to close the site?

This raises the question of why the EA is so focused on reclassifying EWC codes and targeting permitted facilities while significant mountains of fly-tipped rubbish remain unaddressed. This situation mirrors the issues seen at Hoad's Wood in Kent.

The failure lies not with the legitimate waste industry but with the regulator. The laws to prevent such incidents are in place, but enforcement is not prioritised ***(see Anna's column on page 52).***

At the time of writing my column, the EA has reported that a 39-year-old man from the Guildford area has been arrested in connection with the illegal fly-tipping. Earlier in the investigation, the Agency stated that the responsible parties would cover the cleanup costs rather than the taxpayer.

I'm curious as to how this would work. They would trust the criminals who put this here to assess the waste types using WM3, complete the necessary waste transfer notes or consignment notes, arrange transport with a licensed waste carrier, and ensure the waste is delivered to a suitably permitted facility?

And what is the EA's plan for cleaning up the site? As far as I know, they don't have a fleet of trucks and drivers ready to remove waste from illegal sites, which suggests they would need to contract a waste management company for the cleanup. Ironically, this could involve a business from the "failing waste industry" that Mary Creagh mentioned, which is contributing to the epidemic of fly-tipping.

In the short term, the Westminster Government must provide the resources to deal with this mess. In the long term, it must ensure that environmental rules are properly enforced.

We need sanctions that genuinely deter, and we need swift, visible action so that those who flout the law believe there is a real chance they will be caught. Until these factors are effectively tackled, then sadly we'll keep finding ourselves back here.

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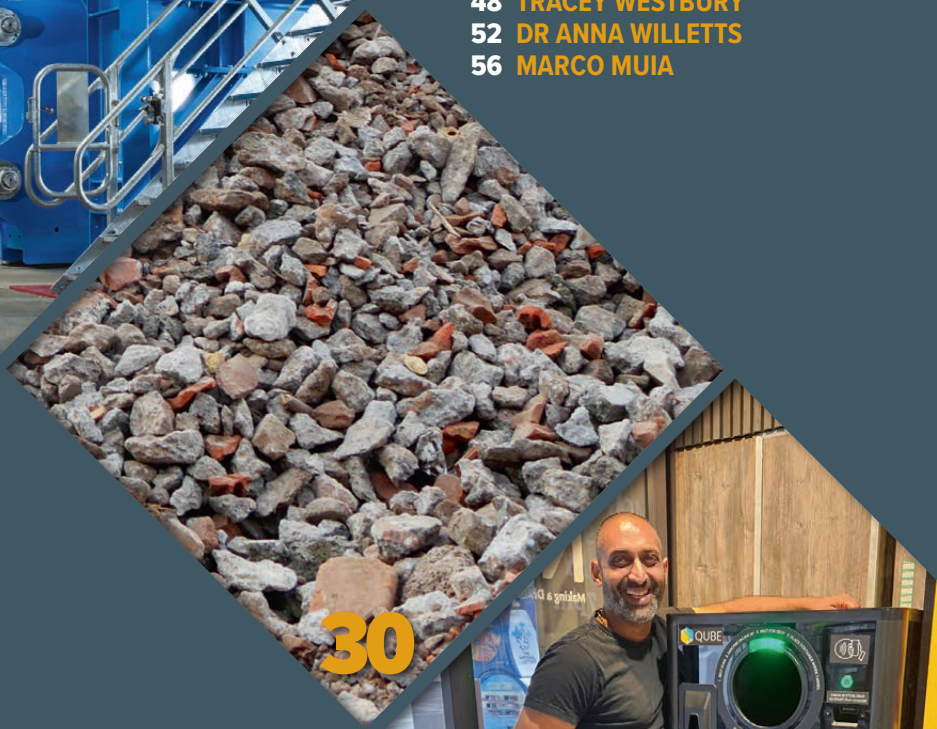

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Government delays Circular Economy Strategy launch until 2026

The Government's Circular Economy Strategy for England will be open for consultation in early 2026, not autumn 2025 as originally planned, as confirmed by Defra Secretary of State Emma Reynolds.

She shared this update during a recent meeting with the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee, saying, *"Defra is looking at the new year for a circular economy growth plan."*

Reynolds stressed their commitment to creating a circular economy and highlighted the significant opportunities it brings. When asked about the timing for the consultation, she noted that recycling businesses appreciate the stable regulations the Government has implemented. They believe this will encourage £10 billion of new investment in recycling in the UK and create 25,000 jobs over the next 10 years.

The strategy, now called the 'Circular Economy Growth Plan', will be guided by the Circular Economy Taskforce, established in December 2024. The taskforce has spent the past year creating specific plans for five key sectors: chemicals and plastics, construction, textiles, transport, and agri-food.

The roadmap for the agri-food sector is already helping shape policies, including the Government's £13.6 million scheme to redistribute farm surplus announced earlier this year.

Reynolds mentioned that Defra has recently begun collecting money from the packaging extended producer responsibility legislation. She highlighted the circular economy's potential to boost economic growth, saying that increasing recycling rates will also support industry growth.

The delay means that Reynolds, who became Environment Secretary in September after serving as Economic Secretary to the Treasury, will now oversee the consultation.

CIWM responded to the announcement, expressing disappointment over the delay of the 'Circular Economy Growth Plan'.

Dan Cooke, Director of Policy, Communications and External Affairs, emphasised the need for an updated release schedule and clarification on sector roadmaps. He highlighted the importance of a clear roadmap for the UK resources and waste sector, which is crucial for a circular economy.

Key performance indicators such as the UK's recycling rate and illegal waste incidents are essential for measuring progress.

Cooke noted that the sector plays a vital role in supporting local economies and community well-being. He also acknowledged the ongoing regulatory changes from the Resources and Waste Strategy and welcomed the progress made.

CIWM anticipates a confirmed release date for the 'Circular Economy Growth Plan' and its roadmaps by early 2026 to continue driving growth and resilience in the resources and waste sector.

Autumn Budget: Government drops plans for single rate of Landfill Tax

Chancellor Rachel Reeves' Budget last month confirmed that the Government will not proceed with plans to merge the standard and lower rates of landfill tax. Instead, it will maintain two separate rates: one for more polluting materials and one for less polluting materials.

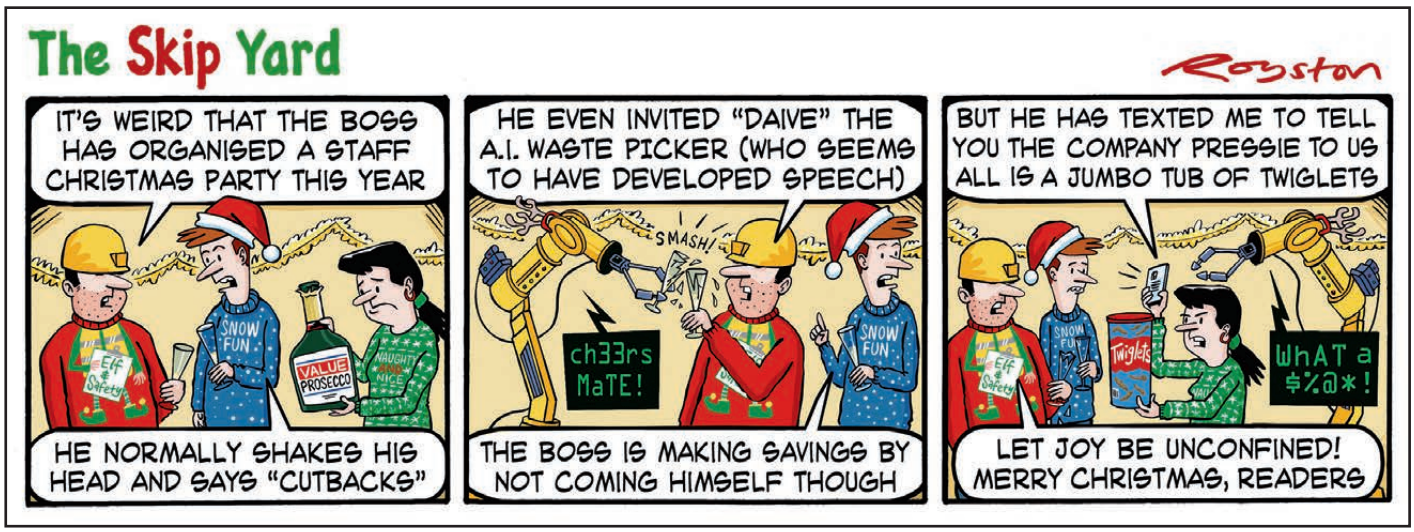
Currently, the landfill tax for firms using less polluting landfill is £4.05 per tonne, while the standard rate is £126.15 per tonne.

The Government had previously considered increasing the lower rate to match the standard rate by 2030 to encourage the industry to recycle more and reduce landfill use.

However, it has decided against this to avoid imposing unnecessary costs on businesses and not to undermine the Government's target of building 1.5 million new homes in England, as stated in the consultation response.

Instead, the Government has opted to increase both rates by the same amount, preventing a significant disparity between them.

By the 2026/27 fiscal year, with adjustments for retail price index (RPI) inflation, the lower rate will rise to £8.65 per tonne, while the standard rate will increase to £130.75 per tonne, with both rates rising by £4.60 per tonne.



Government tables amendments to pEPR regulations in Parliament

Last month, the UK Government presented the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 to Parliament, updating the 2024 regulations.

These changes will take effect at the beginning of 2026 and address operational issues arising from the pEPR scheme established in January 2025, while also supporting closed loop recycling systems.

Key updates include a refined definition of fibre-based composite material, allowing packaging with less than 5% plastic by mass to be classified as paper or board if producers can provide evidence.

The regulations also enable producers of closed loop systems to offset disposal fees by directly collecting and recycling food-grade plastic packaging from households.

Producers can report closed loop packaging waste separately if they collect food-grade plastic, recycle it without mixing it with other materials, and confirm that it is recycled into food-grade products. However, they will incur an additional registration charge of £2,548.

These adjustments aim to alleviate concerns from food and drink businesses that the pEPR scheme disadvantages closed loop systems that encourage circular-economy practices.

Additionally, the regulations allow the scheme administrator, PackUK, to appoint not-for-profit producer responsibility organisations (PROs) to assist with the pEPR scheme. PROs must meet certain criteria, and appointments require consent from the four UK nations.

The Government is collaborating with industry stakeholders, including the Food and Drink Federation's PRO Steering Group, to develop a co-design process to establish a PRO to manage the practical aspects of the scheme while adhering to government-set environmental outcomes.

Louisa Goodfellow, Policy Manager at Ecosurety, commented on the regulations, stating that the amendments empower PackUK to appoint a Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) for specific functions. This delegation encourages industry involvement in shaping Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to ensure practical application. She emphasised the importance of timely, clear guidance for producers on changes to reporting requirements and other amendments.

The amendment regulations include key technical corrections and transitional provisions for data reported in 2024 and 2025.

After a producer initially supplies packaging, only sellers can be considered producers unless new components are added. Charities are exempt from producer obligations and disposal fees, but not from the regulations.

Transitional provisions allow producers to submit amended reports for 2024 and 2025 to include packaging waste under new closed loop definitions. Those submitting amended reports or reporting closed loop waste for 2026 must pay a fee of £2,548 by 28th January 2026.

The changes clarify definitions of fibre-based composites, align modulated fees with reasonable packaging use, and recognise closed loop recycling for food-grade plastics

For the 2025 assessment year, disposal fee calculations will not include closed loop waste offsets. In 2026, the transitional charge will replace the additional registration charge for closed loop reporting.

Definitions for exempt packaging under deposit return schemes have been updated to include low-volume line exemptions, excluding products below specified volume thresholds from deposit scheme requirements.

These regulations have been approved by Scottish and Welsh Ministers, as well as Northern Ireland's Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. They will take effect on 1st January 2026, starting the second year of the UK's reformed pEPR scheme.

Agency workers to join Birmingham bin strikes

Birmingham's bin strikes will continue past next May's local elections unless a deal is reached, as workers voted overwhelmingly to extend their action.

Council-employed refuse workers will be joined by agency staff who also voted for strikes, citing claims of bullying and intimidation.

Unite confirmed that 22 agency staff voted, with 18 choosing to join the picket lines starting 1st December.

Workloads for agency workers are deemed unsustainable due to the lack of recycling and garden waste collections, resulting in heavy, overflowing bins.

The ballot came after a video was leaked that appeared to show a member of staff for Birmingham City Council saying agency workers will be banned from permanent roles if they join strike action.

In the recording, the speaker says: *'people that do decide to join the picket line, then the council have confirmed to us that they are not going to get a permanent job'.*

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham labelled the vote a significant escalation, emphasising poor treatment of agency workers by Job and Talent and Birmingham City Council.

Graham stated that the council is wasting money on a dispute that could be resolved with a fair deal.

Unite and the council have been in conflict since last summer when strike action began over the removal of Waste Recycling and Collection Officer roles. There have been no formal negotiations to resolve the dispute since May.

CIWM announces Westminster as Venue for Global Waste Congress

The Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) is proud to announce that the Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) Centre *(pictured)* in the City of Westminster, London, will be the venue for the ISWA 2026 World Congress. The Congress is the premier international event dedicated to advancing sustainable resource and waste management. Scheduled for 9th-11th November 2026, this landmark occasion is expected to attract 1,300 delegates from over 50 countries and will underscore London's position as a global leader in innovation, sustainability and development of the circular economy.

Widely regarded as the most influential platform worldwide for promoting best practices, policies, and technologies, the ISWA World Congress aims to address the urgent global waste challenge. With over two billion tonnes of municipal waste currently generated annually, and projections indicating an 81% increase by 2050 if current trends continue, the event seeks to catalyse transformative solutions and policies.

The UK's selection as the host country recognises its vibrant commitment to sustainability and pioneering waste management services. It also reaffirms CIWM's role as a founding member of ISWA, representing over 8,000 professionals and 250 organisations across the UK, Ireland, and internationally.

CIWM CEO, Sarah Poulter, said: *"We are honoured that CIWM is hosting the ISWA 2026 World Congress here in London*

and are excited to welcome professionals from around the world to this historic and vibrant city. This event is about much more than the three days we will bring people together; it is a powerful opportunity to build on the Congress' 50-year history by creating a lasting legacy and driving real advancements in how we manage waste globally. It aligns perfectly with CIWM's commitment to delivering a world beyond waste, fostering innovation, collaboration, and sustainable solutions that will shape the future of resource management for generations to come."

Marc Tijhuis, Managing Director of ISWA added: *"ISWA is delighted to return to the UK after 30 years with its annual flagship event, celebrating a longstanding collaboration with CIWM as one of the founding members of the Association. We look forward to convening in London, a hub for innovation in sustainability, circularity and waste and resource management."*

For more information, visit **www.iswa2026.org**

Exemption to Scottish landfill ban in place until 2028

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has issued a new temporary Regulatory Position Statement (RPS) delaying the enforcement of the ban on sending biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) to Scottish landfills until 2028.

This ban, established under the Landfill (Scotland) Regulations, aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by improving waste management practices.

Originally proposed in 2005 and set to take effect in 2021, the ban was postponed to 2025 due to COVID-19.

BMW includes waste that decomposes biologically, such as parks and garden waste, food waste, timber, paper, card, and textiles.

Industry experts expressed concerns about the adequacy of incineration capacity in Scotland, fearing that waste would need to be transported to England and Wales for landfill, potentially involving over 100 truckloads daily.

The temporary RPS remains in effect until 31st December, 2027, allowing continued landfill of BMW under specific conditions.

SEPA introduces environmental legislation in biggest change for three decades

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has made significant updates to environmental legislation, marking the biggest change since its establishment nearly 30 years ago.

As of 1st November, the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (EASR) have been revised to simplify the regulatory framework by consolidating eight existing laws on waste management, water, and industrial activities. The goal is to enhance environmental protection and improve public service efficiency across Scotland.

The new framework streamlines the authorisation process into a single, user-friendly application, with requirements based on the risk level of activities. This approach aims to safeguard the environment while reducing the regulatory burden where possible.

Additionally, the new rules strengthen oversight in the waste sector and provide regulators with the tools to quickly intervene in cases of non-compliance.

SEPA CEO Nicole Paterson *(pictured)* emphasised that these changes will enable the agency to allocate more resources to frontline regulation, ultimately benefiting both the environment and legitimate businesses.

She stated: *"This once-in-a-generation shift in environmental regulation is good news... Better environmental outcomes are achievable, and we're committed to leading by example."*

The changes align with the Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, which mandates SEPA's role in enhancing environmental health and supporting sustainable economic growth.

The Scottish Parliament approved the Environmental Authorisation (Scotland) Amendment Regulations on 30th April, 2025.

EfW sector targets tenfold increase in heat output to 20,000 GWh

The Environmental Services Association (ESA) has released a guide aimed at boosting the development of heat networks linked to energy from waste (EfW) facilities, aiming to achieve a tenfold increase in heat output to 20,000 GWh annually.

The guide, titled *Energy-from-Waste Heat Networks: A Guide to Heat Offtake,* outlines the development process, from waste demand assessment to securing contracts and permits, and includes checklists for EfW operators and network developers.

Currently, only 12 of about 60 UK EfW facilities export heat at scale, with a total of 1,949 GWh exported in 2024, reflecting a 10% increase from 2023. Research indicates that existing EfW plants could produce 20,000 GWh of usable heat each year.

Despite heating accounting for a third of UK carbon emissions, heat networks serve less than 3% of the national heat demand, in contrast to Denmark and Sweden, where heat networks provide 64% and 53% of heat demand, respectively.

The Climate Change Committee has emphasised the need for heat networks to supply 20% of the UK's heat by 2050 to meet net zero targets.

Barriers to expansion include high infrastructure costs and complex agreements. The Government's heat network zoning policy, effective from 2025, aims to facilitate connections to designated zones, reducing uncertainty for investors.

Additionally, households connected to heat networks could save between £4,000 and £22,000 on heating bills over 25 years compared to traditional systems.

EfW heat is classified as low-carbon under the British Standard Assessment Procedure, and EfW facilities are set to be included in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme from 2028, with operators needing to account for their emissions.

The guide also covers three potential heat sources: direct heat offtake, flue gas recovery, and low-grade heat recovery.

Scan the QR code to view and download the document.

Dubai to be landfill-free by 2027

Dubai has announced a plan to close all landfill sites by the end of 2027.

Dubai Municipality has already closed five landfills and is working to shut down the remaining two, Al Qusais and Bayada, as the city shifts to a more advanced waste-to-energy and recycling system.

The Dubai Waste-to-Energy Centre, opened last year, is a key part of this plan. It is now one of the largest facilities of its kind in the world.

The centre processes 6,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste each day, which is about half of Dubai's daily waste output of 13,000 tonnes.

By turning waste into steam-powered electricity, it generates 200 megawatt-hours daily, enough to power 350,000 homes in partnership with the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority.

Adel Al Marzouqi, CEO of the Waste and Sewerage Agency at Dubai Municipality, called the centre a *"global benchmark."* He praised its size, automation, and environmental efficiency.

The facility currently manages nearly 50% of the emirate's waste and produces clean power through a closed loop system that uses treated water. The transition also aims to reuse the byproducts from incineration.

Bottom ash, a byproduct of waste incineration, is being used for temporary road construction through different partnerships.

This waste-to-energy programme shows Dubai's commitment to sustainability, positioning the emirate as a leader in clean energy and modern waste management.

Climate plan captures clean energy benefits and boosts investment

The Government recently shared its plan to cut emissions from waste in the *Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan*. Waste and F-gas emissions make up 27 million tonnes of CO^2 equivalent, which is 6% of the total greenhouse gas emissions in the UK.

The plan highlights the importance of managing waste and promoting a circular economy to meet carbon budget targets through 2037. A key initiative is the Collection and Packaging Reforms, which aim to reduce emissions from landfills, responsible for 72% of waste sector emissions.

The Environment Services Association believes these reforms could attract £15 billion in investment and create 40,000 new jobs in re-use, repair, and material processing.

By 2028, the Government wants to nearly stop biodegradable municipal waste from going to landfill. In February 2025, consultations suggested plans to restrict landfilling five types of biodegradable materials: paper and card, food, garden waste, textiles, and wood.

The Government will also invest at least £58 million in research and development to reach net zero emissions in the natural resources, waste, and F-gas sectors.

The *(delayed)* Circular Economy Strategy will focus on reducing waste and reusing materials to improve efficiency and reduce the need for carbon-heavy new materials.

In 2028, the UK Emissions Trading Scheme will expand to include waste incineration. Energy from waste facilities that use carbon capture and storage (CCS) are identified as vital for reducing greenhouse gases. However, CCS faces challenges such as developing infrastructure and gaining public support, as only 17% of current EfW facilities are located near planned CCS industrial clusters.

The plan stresses that successful waste policies rely on participation from businesses, local authorities, and households.

John Scanlon, the CEO of SUEZ UK, welcomed the Government's plan and committed to reforms supporting a resource-efficient circular economy.

He noted the achievements in reducing landfill use and methane emissions, and expressed enthusiasm for investing in sustainable services and infrastructure to create green jobs across the UK.

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SCAN ME

DMO publishes *Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) Specification* – a DRS milestone

The UK Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) has published the official *Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) Specification,* setting out the standards and performance requirements for the automated machines that will collect drink containers under the UK's Deposit Return Scheme (DRS).

This specification outlines the standards and performance requirements for these automated machines, which will be essential for collecting drink containers. RVMs will enable consumers to return empty containers, such as plastic bottles and cans, to claim their deposits.

The specification ensures consistent reliability, accessibility, and performance across England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, while allowing for future innovations to improve user experience and environmental benefits.

Collaborating with RVM suppliers, regulators, and the Industry Advisory Group, the DMO has created standards that are practical for implementation.

Key requirements include container recognition accuracy, data management, machine certification, and integration with DMO systems.

The specification prioritises consumer needs, ensuring that RVMs are user-friendly, with clear features for messaging, accessibility, and refund processes. It also details the hardware requirements, providing confidence to suppliers and retailers in their planning.

TOMRA is a leading global provider of DRS solutions, and its UK team is ready to support retailers as they get DRS-ready. *Picture credit: TOMRA Recycling*

The software and programming requirements for RVMs are still in development and will be published in line with the wider DMO IT systems next year, with release planned for summer 2026.

The DMO will also publish further details in 2026 on the compensation available to return point operators for purchasing or leasing RVMs, as part of the Retail Handling Fee (RHF). An extensive consultation on the RHF took place through the Industry Advisory Group this autumn, with more detail on fee structures expected in the second half of next year.

The full RVM specification is available to download by scanning the QR code.

British Glass responds to Welsh Government's DRS proposal

British Glass has raised concerns about the proposed Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) in Wales, which may increase costs for glass packaging.

While they support efforts to enhance recycling rates, they caution that including glass beverage containers in the DRS - with a proposed 0p deposit until 2030 - could harm both environmental and economic outcomes.

Nick Kirk, Federation Director of British Glass, stated that glass is already highly recycled in Wales, with a 92% household collection rate. He emphasised that a DRS without a deposit for glass won't encourage returns and will significantly increase costs for producers and retailers without improving recycling performance.

British Glass warns the proposed scheme could lead to:

• No income from unredeemed deposits meaning increased costs for glass packaging, adding financial pressure on producers while limiting funds for effective collection and recycling.

• Market fragmentation across the UK, risking a reduction in products available to Welsh consumers due to added complexity and cost.

• Consumer confusion, especially around interoperability with schemes in England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

The response calls for:

• A full impact assessment before implementing a 0p deposit for glass packaging.

• Application for market exemption in the context of the UK's Internal Market Act (IMA) at the earliest opportunity, ensuring all UK DRS are interoperable and aligned to avoid trade barriers and deliver consistency for producers across the UK.

• Greater focus on reuse infrastructure development, particularly in the hospitality sector (HORECA), before setting targets.

• Glass beverage packaging to be exempt from pEPR costs in Wales, should glass be included in the Welsh recycling DRS.

• Prioritisation of products suitable for reuse systems, e.g. products like wine and spirits are predominantly imported and are not viable for return and refill within the UK.

British Glass urges the Welsh Government to work collaboratively with the whole food and beverage supply chain and the other UK nations to develop a harmonised, evidence-led approach that supports environmental goals without compromising consumer choice or economic viability.

Budget's new VAT relief will boost business donations to charity and cut landfill waste

A major VAT reform announced in last month's Budget will remove a longstanding tax charge that has discouraged businesses from donating surplus goods to charity.

The new relief, due to take effect from **1st April 2026**, is designed to stop usable products from being sent unnecessarily to landfill, as businesses are currently required to account for VAT when gifting goods.

Under the current VAT system, when a business gives goods away, even to a charity, it must account for VAT on a deemed supply basis, meaning some companies choose to dispose of unsold or returned stock rather than incur a tax bill.

The new relief removes this VAT cost entirely for goods donated to organisations that are HMRC-registered charities and, where required, their charity regulator.

The change follows an extensive consultation, which received positive feedback from charities, businesses, and sector bodies. The Treasury says the final rules will be simple, practical and effective in increasing donations across a wide range of charitable activities.

HMRC considered extending eligibility to social enterprises and unregistered community groups, but ultimately restricted the relief to registered charities on the basis that they are subject to established governance and transparency rules, reducing the risk of fraud or misuse.

Crucially, the relief will not be limited to charities with "poverty relief" objectives, meaning a broad range of causes can benefit.

To keep administration simple, the government has opted for a **two-tier value system** rather than a prescriptive list of goods:

- *A standard **£100 per-item limit** for most donations.*
- *A **£200 per-item** limit for essential goods such as white goods, furniture, computers, mobile phones and tablets, targeting support for household and digital poverty.*

Goods subject to excise duty, including alcohol and tobacco, will be excluded.

The relief will apply whether goods are donated for onward distribution to individuals in need or used directly in the delivery of a charity's non-business activities, such as hygiene products in a shelter or equipment used in community projects.

HMRC will publish detailed guidance ahead of the April 2026 start date. The policy is expected to unlock a significant volume of donations that would otherwise be scrapped, helping reduce waste while supporting the vital work charities carry out across the UK.

By Greg McNally - founding partner of VITA, a Glasgow-headquartered indirect tax and VAT consultancy.

Lexi Edwards, aged six, a pupil of Dove First School in Rocester, Staffordshire, and mum Isabel marvel at the JCB 'Backhoe in a Box' at JCB's World HQ

Iconic JCB 'Backhoe in a Box' goes super-size for 80th anniversary

Crowds are flocking to see a special 80th birthday installation at JCB's lakeside HQ in Staffordshire - a full-sized digger presented as if it were a scale model.

Visitors, young and old, have been marvelling at the ingenious display, which has an eight-tonne JCB 3CX Sitemaster backhoe loader packaged in the style of the iconic 1:32 scale models loved by collectors worldwide.

The special 'Backhoe in a Box' has been unveiled as part of JCB's 80th anniversary celebrations and will be on display beside the JCB lake at Rocester until January. It stands nearly 15 feet high by nearly 25 feet wide. It is also lit at night.

The exhibit also marks a milestone in JCB's history: more than one million replica models of its machines have been produced under TOMY's Britains brand, celebrating nearly 60 years of partnership between the two companies. Earlier this year, JCB also celebrated the production of its one millionth full-sized backhoe loader.

JCB Deputy Chairman George Bamford said: *"Scale models of our iconic machines have been a part of the JCB family for as long as I can remember. The 'Backhoe in a Box' at JCB's World HQ is an amazing tribute to our market-leading backhoe and is a truly spectacular sight."*

TOMY Europe MD Mary Wood added: *"The most successful British JCB replica model has been the backhoe loader, so TOMY is delighted to see this product in the form of this giant model displayed at the JCB World Headquarters in Staffordshire."*

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Tinkering around the edges

As the year draws to a close, folks in my line of work are eagerly anticipating what 2026 has to offer as the Employment Rights Bill is implemented. And will it deliver what it says?

On 1st December, the Acas early conciliation process was extended from six weeks to 12 weeks. Whilst touted by the Government as a mechanism to give parties more time to resolve potential claims, all this really does is give Acas, which has been inundated with unmanageable caseloads for years, a bit more kicking-the-can-down-the-road time.

No disrespect to Acas; they have a thankless job to do, but it's people like me who see how heavy their workloads are. They are often right at the limit of the early conciliation period by the time they manage to get to the case. Whilst it is reported that 38% of cases that Acas do get to conciliate result in a settlement, that means 62% do not. Given the resources Acas needs vs what they have been struggling with for years, that positive result figure could be a lot higher, without extending the timeframe.

I also do wonder whether any proper research was done into why 62% of claims are not settled despite Acas's intervention. The majority of Claimants and employers do not want 'stheir day in court'. They want a resolution.

I have spoken to very few professionals in employment law who think this change is going to have any serious impact, except to wrong-foot employers who may think an employee has moved on, only to discover three months later that they are facing a potential claim.

Coupled with the planned increase in the time to lodge employment tribunal proceedings from three months to six months, many employers are facing months of uncertainty when dealing with workplace disputes.

At the other end of the process, employment tribunal processing and listing times are just becoming longer and longer, in another completely stretched and under-resourced public service. Some in my sector are predicting periods of up to a year before an employer is notified of a tribunal claim under the new rules.

Surely there has got to be a better way?

Early intervention and identification of the issues is what is really called for, so I'm wondering if we're making a rod for the public's back by having just Acas acting in a completely neutral capacity when disputes arise.

The NHS and other public bodies have been using triage models for decades to expedite the processing of less complex cases, allowing suitably qualified professionals to resolve these issues and reduce backlogs. I've never heard a doctor or nurse say they don't want to share their true opinions with me.

Maybe it's time we had a process where disputes could be subject to early scrutiny and some straight-talking by an employment Judge as soon as the claim and responses are lodged... *Judge Judy* style. That might make a dent in the current employment tribunal backlog, reported to be nearly 50,000 cases affecting almost 500,000 individuals at the end of 2024.

Annual work-related injuries in waste sector published

Over the past year, six people - three working in the waste sector and three members of the public - suffered fatal injuries, according to the latest statistics from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The data reveals a stark reality: the fatal injury rate in the waste sector stands at 3.29 per 100,000 workers, an alarming figure that is approximately 8.2 times greater than the overall industry rate. Only the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors exhibit a higher risk.

A closer look at the causes of these fatalities paints a daunting picture. Over half (53%) of the deaths in the waste sector were the result of being struck by a moving vehicle, underscoring the inherent dangers of the work environment. Additionally, 16% were due to being hit by a falling or flying object, while 11% tragically lost their lives due to electrocution.

In an alarming revelation, 1,530 non-fatal injuries were reported by employers during 2024/25, with slips, trips, and falls accounting for a staggering 41% of these accidents. Falls from heights followed, making up 18%, while 13% resulted from being struck by moving objects.

The repercussions of these injuries were serious, with 73% of those affected rendered incapacitated and unable to return to work for more than seven days.

Between 2017/18 and 2024/25, around 3.7% of individuals employed in the sector experienced a non-fatal injury - the highest incidence rate of any industry across the UK. In contrast, the nationwide average hovers at just 1.7%.

A breakdown of injuries reveals a split between sectors: 44% occurred in public sector workplaces and 56% in the private sector, despite the public sector accounting for only approximately 33% of employment in this field.

While there appeared to be a downward trend in reported non-fatal injuries over the years, there were signs of stagnation in more recent times. However, the HSE cautions against complacency, noting that injury reporting is often incomplete, raising concerns that this may skew perceptions of safety within the sector.

Blackpool Skip Hire celebrates winning two prestigious awards

Now in its milestone tenth year, the Wyre Business Awards have become a flagship celebration of the borough's thriving business community. This evening is dedicated to recognising the outstanding achievements, resilience, and innovation of local businesses and entrepreneurs.

This year's event was a dazzling celebration of success, held against the elegant backdrop of Marine Hall in Fleetwood, Lancashire, which is also celebrating its 90th anniversary.

Themed around the glamour of the 1930s, the evening brought together over 160 guests, including business leaders, community champions, and local dignitaries. The event was hosted by the charismatic comedian and actor Justin Moorhouse, who entertained the audience with his signature wit and warmth.

The night's big winners included Blackpool Skip Hire, which was awarded **Wyre Business of the Year** and **Growth Business of the Year**, honouring its exceptional growth, innovation, and community impact.

Speaking at the ceremony, Kenny Stephenson, the Operations Director, exclaimed: *"It feels fantastic to win, the whole team are really happy! It's always a great event, an incredible venue, great food and atmosphere, it's been a fantastic night. I'm very, very proud to have won twice now, and it's nice to be recognised for the effort we put in."*

Councillor Peter Le Marinel, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Economic Development at Wyre Council, praised the winners and finalists: *"The Wyre Business Awards are more than just a celebration, they're a testament to the incredible drive, creativity, and community spirit that define our local businesses. Every winner has shown what it means to adapt, innovate, and lead, even in challenging times.*

"I extend my sincere congratulations to all this year's winners for their outstanding accomplishments. These businesses are the heartbeat of our borough, and their success is to be commended. We're proud to stand beside them and support their continued growth.

"Here's to another decade of business brilliance!"

The Wyre Business Awards are part of Wyre Council's ongoing commitment to supporting local enterprise, encouraging innovation, and building a resilient, thriving economy. The awards are free to enter and open to businesses of all sizes and sectors, from across the borough.

CSG approved to deliver IOSH training

Waste management company CSG has shown its commitment to health and safety by gaining approval to provide in-house IOSH-accredited training courses.

For many years, CSG has encouraged its over 650 employees to take external IOSH courses (Institution of Occupational Safety and Health). But now, the business can offer fully accredited programs with its own trainers at its 30 locations across the UK.

Andy Hall, CSG's Health and Safety Manager, said this change will allow the company to tailor training to meet the specific challenges employees face in the waste industry.

He stated: *"CSG is now an approved IOSH training centre, which is a significant achievement for us. This will enhance our training programmes. By offering IOSH courses in-house, we can provide the same respected content while including real-life examples relevant to CSG.*

"Learners will also discuss topics with colleagues who work in the same company, helping them apply what they learn to their work. This shows that we take safety seriously and are willing to invest in our people."

Andy is a chartered member of IOSH and has qualifications and experience in training, allowing him to deliver the courses effectively.

IOSH will monitor feedback and learning outcomes to ensure the training is delivered correctly and meets high standards.

CSG will initially offer two courses: Managing Safely is intended for managers, while Working Safely is geared towards supervisors.

They plan to run three Managing Safely courses and one Working Safely session in the next six months.

Do you really know where your waste is going?

Why action needs to be taken against the Environment Agency

*By **Karen Bostock**, Co-owner of Axe Skip Hire in Axminster, Devon.*

In the regulated waste industry, it often feels like we're playing a game of "hangman", with tighter restrictions, regulations, and costs imposed by the Environment Agency (EA).

The playing field is unfair: a "man and a van" service (often called "fully licensed") can haul away all kinds of unwanted items, including hazardous materials like asbestos, in a single load. Meanwhile, we can't place fridges, freezers, TVs, or soft furnishings in a skip due to contamination rules.

Then, as a skip hire firm/waste transfer station and licensed carrier of waste, we must have the following permits for our site to store and sort the waste:

- ***Continued Competence Certificate License to deal with non-hazardous waste.***
- ***Waste Carriers License to be able to carry it.***
- ***Transport Operators License for vehicles over 3.5 tonnes.***
- ***Various other qualifications and training to handle, sort and dispose of the waste.***

All this costs us thousands of pounds per year. On top of this, we have regular audits from the EA and must account for every bit of waste that comes in and out of the yard. We must make quarterly returns to the EA and tally up our job sheets, tickets and weights.

You may have seen many new "man and a van" services on social media. These services can start working without much checking from the Environment Agency (EA). They just need to register, get a van, and they can pick up waste without following strict rules about weight. They can collect or store waste in different places, such as yards or farms.

Because of this, many landlords are upset. They have to call us to arrange skips to clean up homes left filled with waste by these services. Some of these services only show a few tickets from local waste sites to prove they are doing things right. They don't need permits or any training, so there is no proper record of what they take. This is why we see trash in fields and along the roads.

It's sad to see furniture and appliances dumped everywhere. This rubbish probably comes from people who were paid to take it away safely. We need changes, and we want the EA workers who make the rules to see what's really happening.

Now, it's getting harder to deal with soil waste too. Other services can collect lots of soil without any checks. But we have to test the soil if we take more than one skip from a single place.

Every load we collect has to be logged and checked before we can move it, which costs us more money. We care about protecting the environment, but the rules for waste management should be the same for everyone.

Recently, the EA has made it even harder for us. We can only throw away soil from different places if we take it to a faraway site. This new rule is not helpful for us, and we want better ideas for managing waste.

If dirt comes into our yard, the EA calls it "treated waste" rather than "clean soil." Even though we have tested it for years and found it safe, we still incur extra costs.

We look around our local area and see once lovely fields of black Devon soil being filled with thousands of tons of bright orange soil from different counties, but this is apparently acceptable as it's "virgin" soil. It seems like the EA holds all the cards, and because of their own inefficiency, overfilling, and pollution over the years, we are now going to another extreme.

We want to do the right thing and will always consult the EA and welcome their advice, but we are charged for this and having taken our money, they tell us what needs to be done and then subsequently change their minds and refuse to allow it! Madness.

Whilst we fully appreciate protecting the environment and countryside, it has to be workable and practical. Rather than punishing the waste companies for trying to dispose of excess packaging and obsolete products, why not target wasteful producers in the first place?

It's time someone helped us in the waste industry and made the EA accountable for their actions before these rapidly increasing issues become unworkable. Where will all our waste be taken to then?

FCC Environment acquires Cumbria Waste Group

FCC Environment has acquired Cumbria Waste Group to strengthen its operations in northern England.

Cumbria Waste Group offers waste services to both local governments and businesses. Its work includes operating recycling centres and composting sites, and handling hazardous and liquid waste. The company also provides collection services for recycling, waste, and organic materials.

This acquisition makes FCC Environment UK, one of the largest waste management companies in the country, even stronger. It allows FCC to reach more areas and to offer new services to current and future customers.

Steve Longdon, CEO of FCC Environment UK, said this move is a great fit. *"This is a positive step for our UK business, enhancing our core services and customer support. With our shared values and operations, we are excited to welcome the Cumbria Waste Group team and continue delivering excellent service to all our clients."*

This acquisition follows a period of growth for FCC Environment, which recently secured a £44 million contract extension with Hull City Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

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Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of our Glosta Family, we cannot wait to welcome new customers into our family next year!

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Take a look at what we've been up to this year:

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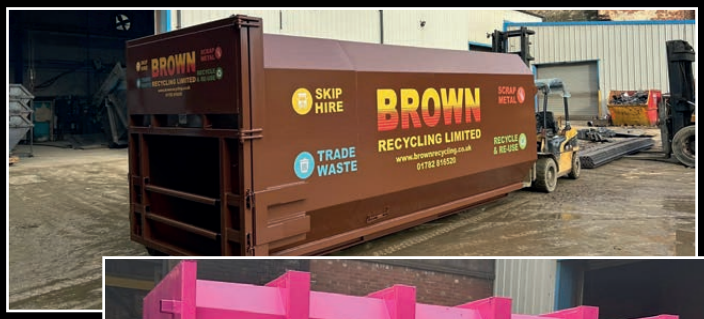

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Is this the end of boring bins?

The Big Ballot Bin™ throws a playful alternative

An innovative bin that went viral during its trial in 2023 was launched last month by the environmental charity Hubbub. The Big Ballot Bin™ aims to transform litter management into a fun and engaging experience by inviting people to "vote" with their rubbish. This bold new approach to litter prevention not only sparked nationwide conversations when tested in partnership with KFC but also reduced litter by an impressive 70%.

One of the questions posed by the bin is: *"Who will get the Christmas number one, Mariah Carey or Wham?" (pictured below).* These bins not only capture attention and encourage discussion, but also significantly reduce waste and cleanup costs.

Crucially, the Big Ballot Bin™ is designed as a customisable brand asset. Operators can integrate the bin into their guest experience by adding branding, bespoke colours, and campaign messaging, turning litter collection into a marketing tool that strengthens their brand experience.

Litter costs the UK over £1 billion a year to clean up, and it's one of the most visible indicators of poor visitor experience. Traditional methods are failing to tackle it.

Alex Robinson, CEO at Hubbub, said: *"The Big Ballot Bin™ shows what happens when you make the right choice, the fun choice. Traditional enforcement often fails to change behaviour, but when you invite people to take part in something playful and topical, littering drops dramatically. We've seen how curiosity, conversation and competition can transform a simple act like binning rubbish into a moment people enjoy and remember. For venues and destinations, it's proof that positive engagement can deliver real environmental impact."*

Behind the fun exterior sits smart technology. Each bin comes equipped with a remote tracking system that enables operators to monitor vote counts and collect valuable data for ESG and CSR reporting. The plug-and-play design ensures reliability both indoors and outdoors, while its 240-litre capacity makes it ideal for busy shopping centres, theme parks and stadiums.

The Big Ballot Bin™ has been successfully trialled on UK high streets through an eight-week pilot with KFC, Manchester City Council, and Southampton City Council. The results showed that litter was dramatically reduced within 20 metres of each bin, with drinks litter down 70% and food litter down 60%, while the bin's capture radius was 2.5 times larger than standard bins.

The pilot also got people talking and sharing the bins on social media, reaching 10 million people organically. According to Manchester City Council, *"people were actively seeking them out."*

This innovation builds on the success of Hubbub's original Ballot Bin™, the world's first voting ashtray launched in 2015. Now found in over 5,000 locations across 43 countries, the Ballot Bin™ has collected more than 15 million cigarette butts and won the Queen's Award for Enterprise. The Big Ballot Bin™ takes these proven principles and scales them up for general litter - delivering the same mix of visibility, fun and effectiveness.

To find out more about the Big Ballot Bin™ or to order a bin, visit ***www.ballotbin.co.uk***

Salford City Council's first electric RCV exceeds expectations

Salford City Council is setting new standards for sustainable waste collection with the addition of its first all-electric refuse collection vehicle (RCV), a 27-tonne Mercedes-Benz eEconic.

The eEconic combines zero emissions with a high payload capacity similar to the diesel Econic and a class-leading operational range of at least 150km in refuse operations, making it ideal for the stop-start demands of urban refuse collection.

At 27 tonnes when fully loaded - only one tonne more than the typical 26-tonne diesel equivalent - the eEconic handles the intensive demands of refuse collection with ease, collecting over 1,200 bins per day as part of the council's 36-truck fleet.

Alan Fitzsimons, Transport Manager at Salford City Council, said: *"The Mercedes-Benz eEconic is leaps and bounds above the rest. During our demonstration period, it completed every route with battery range to spare, while competitors struggled to finish on a single charge. It is 100% electric, and the range and regenerative braking are excellent. It has surpassed all our expectations, and we're proud to lead the way in sustainable waste collection for Salford residents.*

"For cost reasons, we previously bought cheaper trucks, but experience has shown that quality and reliability matter. We have been gradually returning our fleet to Mercedes-Benz, adding around one new vehicle per year to serve Salford's growing population."

Salford City Council is targeting net zero by 2038 through natural fleet replacement where possible. Refuse trucks typically have a ten-year operational life, improved from the previous seven-year cycle, reducing maintenance and downtime while supporting the council's sustainability goals.

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See also page 37

Cybersecurity management considerations for skip hire and waste businesses

Big cybersecurity attacks make big news. Major incidents this year have included high-profile breaches at Marks & Spencer, the Co-op Group and Jaguar Land Rover.

While it may be easy to assume that bad actors target only large organisations and big payouts, smaller businesses can be just as vulnerable. And while they may not be the ones in the news, they're being targeted more often than you might think.

According to a Forbes report, 43% of all data breaches involve small and medium-sized businesses, and 42% of small businesses were affected by cyberattacks in the past year. There are a few reasons for these grim statistics. Smaller organisations often have fewer resources to hire cybersecurity staff, and resource constraints can also make it difficult to keep up with security updates.

For small- and medium-sized waste businesses, cybersecurity must be a top priority. Below are some key issues companies might want to consider.

Access control & authentication

Many cyberattacks exploit weak or missing access controls to gain unauthorised entry, escalate privileges and steal or damage data. Proper access control ensures that only genuine, authorised users can access systems, applications and data. Alongside appropriate access control mechanisms for your systems and users, such as password management software, multi-factor authentication (MFA), or single sign-on (SSO) systems, businesses should also take simple steps, such as limiting user access rights to the minimum required for their role and regularly reviewing and removing inactive or former employee accounts.

Software security & management

Modern, cloud-based software solutions **(like Routeware)** significantly reduce the cybersecurity risk for customers by leveraging built-in platform security for their foundational layers. Software deployed on cloud platforms like AWS (Amazon Web Services) benefits from shared security features, automations, and infrastructure controls that are difficult or costly for other software suppliers to build alone. Choosing a modern, cloud-based solution is one of the best ways to protect your company from cybersecurity threats.

Data protection & privacy

By identifying the types of data and business processes your new software will need to support (customer names, addresses, financial data, service records), you can identify appropriate protections and check compliance with regulations such as GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). A solid principle is only to collect and store data that's really necessary.

Employee awareness & training

Malicious activity is becoming ever more sophisticated and harder for employees to spot. You can help your people by training them to recognise phishing attempts and educating them about safe password practices, software updates and handling sensitive data. Like Routeware, many companies now make it mandatory for all staff to refresh training regularly and monitor their compliance with training software solutions.

Incident response & business continuity

Hacks, breaches, ransomware and other malicious activity can happen to any organisation, regardless of size. As such, cybersecurity should form a key part of your overall business continuity planning with the development of a plan for responding to and recovering from cybersecurity incidents. As well as checking your software supplier's security certifications - Routeware is ISO 27001 and SOC 2 Type 2 certified, for example - it's important to understand your software supplier's process for backups and test restoration processes, so you know what you would need to do if the worst was to happen.

Scalability & ongoing security

Finally, companies need to develop processes that evolve over time. Rather than viewing cybersecurity as a one-off project, you should regularly review security processes and procedures as your business grows. Working with their technology suppliers, companies should regularly test systems for vulnerabilities and conduct risk assessments to identify and prioritise risks and threats.

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Steve Horne, the Business Development Manager for the South, said: *"Our vehicles are highly specified and come with a three-year bumper-to-bumper warranty from the manufacturer, providing total peace of mind for our customers. For just two months of advance rental, they can be on the road with brand new equipment, with no surprise maintenance costs during the three years."*

One of Steve's clients, Oxford Skip Hire Ltd, based in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, was founded by Ben and Gemma Baker

in March 2022. The company has grown to thrive, operating over 300 skips daily across Oxfordshire. They have been working with MV Commercial since day one and have been supplied with two skip trucks, along with additional spot-hire trucks during busy seasons.

Recently, the business expanded by adding two new DAF XB Construction Chassis equipped with Hyva Remote Control Equipment - one with a 16-tonne gross weight and another with an 18-tonne gross weight. These vehicles are provided on a three-year contract hire basis, including full repair and maintenance.

"We have also incorporated additional features requested by the customer, such as a higher horsepower engine, air conditioning, a smoked sun visor, and a manual gearbox, all within the weekly charge," Steve mentioned.

Gemma remarked: *"We chose MV Commercial for their expertise in the industry and their ability to listen to our needs and understand our aspirations. They offer 24/7 support, reducing delays and maximising our operations, ultimately leading to better working conditions for our drivers. We look forward to a continued partnership in the future."*

Steve concluded: *"On the used sales side, these same vehicles return from hire, are refurbished, and then sold to customers across the UK, knowing they are one owner and have been serviced throughout their initial use."*

For further details on the available options, please get in touch with Steve at ***07971 513003*** *or* ***steve.horne@mvcommercial.co.uk*** *or visit our website at* ***www.mvcommercial.com***

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Contact Steve Horne, Oxford on 07971 513003 for Further Details.

VWS Software Solutions goes behind the scenes at Bloomfield Resources

"Anyone who has read this column over the past few months will know that I tend to repeat myself when it comes to PurGo - yes, it's powerful, yes, it's industry-specific, and yes, it transforms operations. But what really keeps this series interesting is the real stories from real companies. These conversations show how PurGo is being put to work on the ground, shaping the day-to-day realities of waste and recycling businesses across the UK." - Joe Barnes, Sales Director at VWS Software Solutions.

Introduction

Since launching **Bloomfield Resources, Director Scott Smith** set out to build a waste and recycling business driven by accuracy, transparency, and operational efficiency. From day one, Bloomfield adopted PurGo, the industry-leading waste management software from VWS Software Solutions and has now processed close to 20,000 jobs through the platform.

We sat down with **Scott,** along with members of his team - **Sales, Transport Planning, Drivers, Customer Service,** and **Accounts** - to understand how PurGo has shaped their day-to-day operations. Leading the discussion is **Joe Barnes, Sales Director at VWS Software Solutions.**

Nick (Transport Manager)

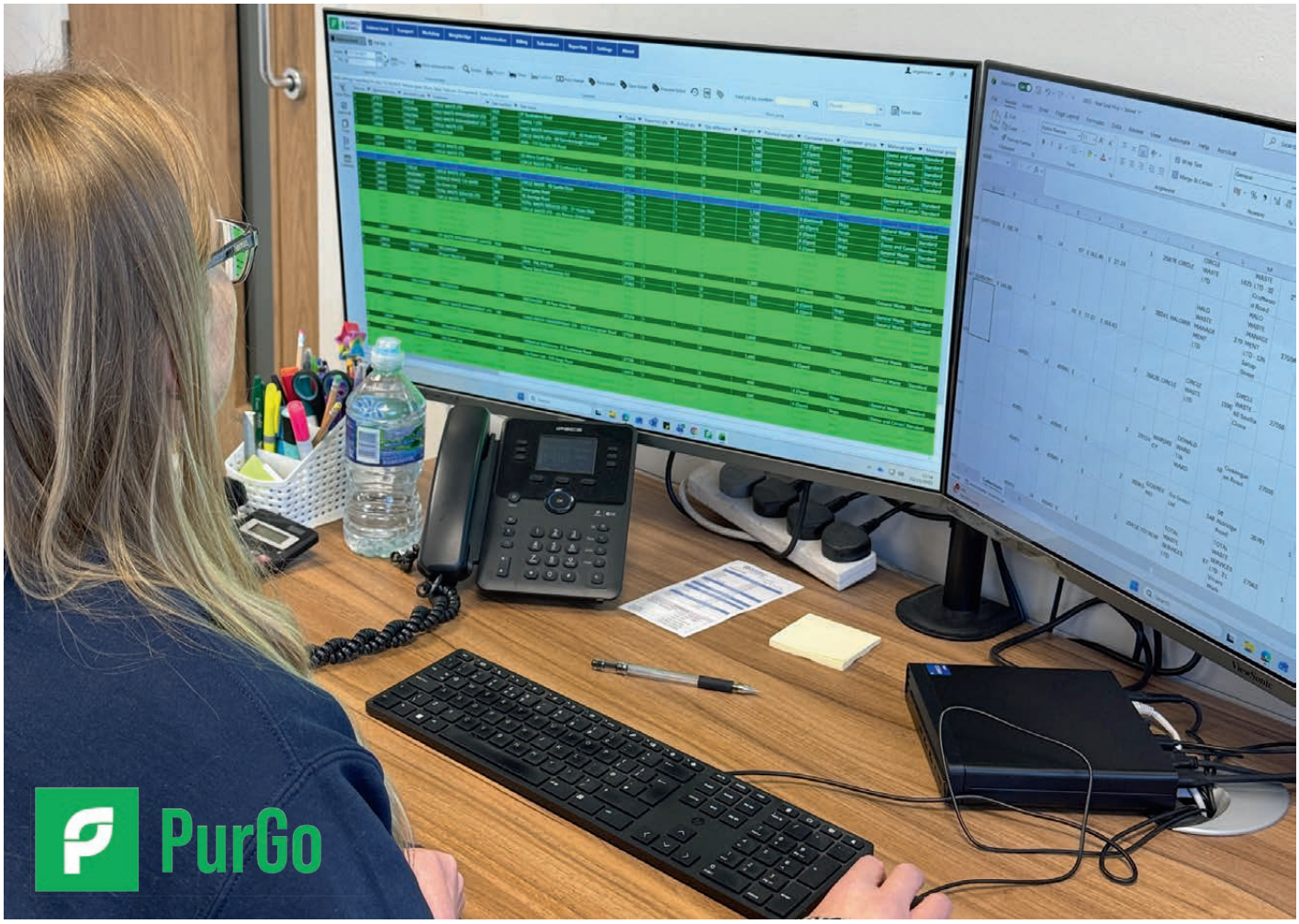
Joe Barnes (VWS): Scott, you've been using PurGo since Bloomfield Resources opened its doors. What made you choose it as your core operational system from day one?

Scott Smith (Bloomfield Resources - Director): From the outset, we wanted a system that would grow with us, not one we'd outgrow. PurGo stood out because it isn't just an operational tool - it's an ecosystem. Sales, transport, drivers, accounts, customer service... everything connects. We've processed almost 20,000 jobs so far, and the data alone has been invaluable in shaping our business model.

Sales & Business Development

Joe Barnes: How has your business development team adapted to it?

Debra (Bloomfield - Business Development): Before PurGo, other systems required multiple platforms for enquiries, notes, quotes, and client history. With PurGo, everything is there in one place. What makes it especially powerful for us is the live integration with operational data. If a prospect asks, *"How quickly can you service this area?"* or *"What container options do you run on Wednesdays?",* we can answer using real information - not estimates.



It makes our proposals accurate and more trusted.

Scott: And it allows managers to see instantly what's in the pipeline. For a growing operator like us, knowing what's coming helps us plan fleet and staffing efficiently.

Transport Planning & Route Efficiency

Joe Barnes: Route optimisation is a huge area for most waste operators. How is PurGo working for your transport office?

James (Bloomfield - Transport Planner): Before PurGo, job planning across the industry often involved spreadsheets, maps, and a lot of guessing. With PurGo's map-based planning, full Postcode Address File integration, and live driver tracking, it's all visual. You drag, drop, plan - and instantly see the impact on workloads. What's been transformative for us is the live status updates. If a driver is delayed, stuck, or finishes early, we see it in real time. We're no longer reacting; we're managing proactively.

Nick (Transport Manager)
We are proud to announce that we have achieved FORS Bronze accreditation, marking an important milestone in our commitment to safety, efficiency, and environmental responsibility. This achievement was made possible with the support of the PurGo system, which streamlined our processes, improved our compliance management, and helped us meet the stringent standards required by FORS. We look forward to continuing our journey of improvement with PurGo as an integral part of our operations.

Scott: Fleet efficiency is everything in this industry. PurGo has helped us significantly improve our round productivity and fuel usage.

The Driver Experience

Joe Barnes: PurGo's mobile app was developed in the field with drivers. How have your guys taken to it?

Patrick H (Bloomfield - Driver): Honestly, it's the easiest system I've used in my career. Drivers hate overcomplicated software, but this is built around how we actually work. The SatNav integration, GPS tracking, and clear job lists mean there's no confusion. We capture photos, signatures, weights, and can log issues instantly. No paperwork to lose, nothing to type in later.

The vehicle checklist is a big one for us too. If we flag a defect, it goes straight to the workshop module - no more handwriting defects on bits of carbon paper.

James (Transport): From the office perspective, the accuracy of data we receive from drivers has jumped dramatically. PurGo essentially closes the loop between field and office.

Customer Service & Issue Resolution

Joe Barnes: Customer service is a pain point for many waste businesses. How has PurGo helped here?

Ebony (Bloomfield - Customer Service):
Queries used to take time to investigate:

Continued on page 22>>

"Was my bin collected?" "Why was my skip missed?" "Who signed for this job?" Now everything is visible instantly.

The live issue board, exception reporting, and auditable timelines mean we can answer customers confidently within seconds. It has saved us a remarkable amount of time and reduced call volume by resolving issues before the customer even notices.

Scott: Our reputation relies on transparency and communication. PurGo helps us deliver both.

Finance, Billing & Pay-by-Weight

Joe Barnes: Let's talk about finance - often the most sensitive part of the operation. How has the billing system worked for your accounts team?

Julie (Bloomfield - Accounts): The billing system alone has saved us hours each week. The live link with our accounting package means there's no re-keying, no duplicate effort. Invoices, credits, self-billing - it all runs straight through PurGo. Multiple team members can work simultaneously without any friction.

And because we work alongside VWS's weighing technology, the Pay-by-Weight capability will be a game changer. For customers demanding transparency, especially in recycling, being able to show precise weights builds trust.

KPI & Margin Reporting

Joe Barnes: One area customers often comment on is PurGo's reporting. How has that influenced Bloomfield's decision-making?

Scott: The reporting is honestly one of the most valuable aspects. Instead of spending days pulling data from different systems, we have live dashboards, scheduled reports, and margin analysis at the click of a button. From a director's perspective, this means I can review profitability by round, customer, container and vehicle type - every angle you can think of. The ability to spot trends has helped us shape pricing, streamline routes, and identify the most profitable parts of the business.

Scaling with Confidence

Joe Barnes: You mentioned earlier that the data from 20,000 jobs has helped shape your business model. Can you expand on that?

Scott: Absolutely. Because everything is captured digitally - weights, timestamps, job statuses, exceptions - we were able to identify our most efficient service lines early on. That helped us plan investment in vehicles and equipment more confidently.

It also identified where profit margins were strongest and where we needed to adjust pricing or route densities. PurGo didn't just run the operation - it guided the strategy.

Joe Barnes: Looking back at where you started, would you say PurGo has delivered what you hoped?

Scott: Without question. We would highly recommend PurGo to any waste or recycling operator. The system is easy to use, incredibly accurate, and genuinely built for this industry.

But more than that, we've found the VWS team to be collaborative. They listen. They work with us. PurGo has become part of the fabric of our business, and as we grow, we're confident it will grow with us.

Joe Barnes: It sounds like Bloomfield Resources isn't simply using PurGo - they're leveraging it to inform decisions, streamline operations, and drive profitability. From sales and transport to drivers and accounts, PurGo has embedded itself into the daily rhythm of the organisation.

Scott: Absolutely, PurGo hasn't just supported our growth; it has helped shape it.

Joe Barnes: Thanks Scott, and thanks to your team for sharing real-life experiences of working with PurGo. As I've always said, it's what they say that really matters.

VWS SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

PurGo

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

0151 909 2009

sales@vwssoftware.com

For more information, please visit **www.vwssoftware.com** – *details are also available on the inside back page of this edition.*

Dayjob x PurGo: Turbocharge your job management system

PurGo has long been the engine room for skip hire and waste firms, keeping the back office running smoothly. Now, with Dayjob fully integrated, operators can connect their operating system to automated vehicle scheduling. This integration is like putting your daily ops on autopilot, without losing the steering wheel.

Coastal Recycling was among the first to connect Dayjob with PurGo, their job management system. Their verdict? The heavy load shouldered by planners is now a lot lighter.

"This is hands down the best routing software I've used, and I've been doing this for over 10 years. *Dayjob speeds up the monotonous parts of the job so I can spend more time on problem solving; while I can remember five jobs and all the variables at one time, Dayjob can sort through and organise thousands."* - Stuart Pearce, Transport Planner.

Built for skips, not the shelf

Dayjob isn't generic software created for parcels. It's built for the nitty-gritty of skip hire, and things like skip stacking, time slots, and last-minute changes don't throw it off. In fact, that's where Dayjob's AI thrives and can be life-changing for planning teams who are worried their manual systems will fall apart when they go away on holiday or other complex tasks need their focus.

And now, with Dayjob connected to PurGo:

- **Jobs flow straight from Dayjob into PurGo.** No rekeying, and jobs are delivered to drivers in the same interface they are used to.
- **Live schedules adjust on the fly,** keeping everyone in the loop from the transport and customer service teams in the office to the drivers on the road.

Dayjob

PurGo

COASTAL RECYCLING
RECOVERING RESOURCES™

According to Marc Williamson, Coastal's Transport Manager, the impact on stress levels, job satisfaction and efficiency has rippled through their team.

"We are more in control, and it's especially helpful when a member of the team is on leave. Efficiency has been boosted both in the office and out on the road. In the pilot period alone, the number of jobs that a driver could do in an hour has increased by 5-10%."

Less faff. More skips moved

Since switching to Dayjob, dispatching has got quicker, fuel costs have dropped, and managers get proper visibility.

For Coastal Recycling, nothing had to change because they use the same job management system they're used to working with, and Dayjob plugged in seamlessly, making jobs run like clockwork.

Whether you're running 20 trucks or 200, Dayjob helps you do more with what you've got. It slots into your team like it's always been there. And with PurGo now fully integrated, it's easier than ever to get up and running.

Want to see it in action?
Speak to George by booking a chat at **www.getdayjob.ai**

CDE announces first global installation of X5 ProPress

CDE, a leader in wet processing solutions for the waste recycling and natural processing sectors, is on course to install its first X5 ProPress in Australia in the coming weeks, marking the first commissioning of this technology globally.

Unveiled at Hillhead in Buxton, Derbyshire, last year, CDE's ProPress represents a new generation of filter press technology which delivers exceptional operational efficiency and maximum water recovery.

The installation of the ProPress X5 - the largest model in the range and the first of its kind globally - demonstrates CDE's commitment to innovation and sustainability in the region and will be fully commissioned this winter.

James Murphy, CDE's head of business development for Asia Pacific, is proud to see the first installation of the ProPress X5.

"The ProPress is our response to minimising freshwater dependency and maximising water recycling, all while improving processing capacity, reducing operating costs, and minimising maintenance downtime. This technology will be key for our customers in regions where water resources are particularly scarce."

Maximising resource, minimising water usage

In natural processing, the ProPress is a powerful solution for water and tailings management, especially in operations aiming to eliminate tailings dams and reduce environmental impact. Dry tailings are easier to handle, transport, and store.

This allows for better use of available land, especially in space-constrained sites or urban operations. In addition, the water extracted during the filtration process is clean enough to be recycled back into the plant, reducing freshwater demand and

Sortera says UK recycling plant is on schedule

Sortera UK has completed the first phase of a multi-million-pound project at its construction and demolition (C&D) materials sorting site in Edmonton, near London.

This project aims to improve processing capacity, operational efficiency, and sustainability. Called 'Project Mercury', this upgrade is the largest infrastructure change Sortera has made so far and is an important step in the company's growth.

The first of two new processing lines has been installed and is now being tested. This new line increases the site's capacity and improves the speed and accuracy of material recovery. A second processing line will be installed in the next few months.

Ian Wilkinson, Operations Director at Sortera UK - a part of the Sweden-based Sortera Group - said: *"'Project Mercury' is a significant investment for Sortera."* He added that *"investing in Edmonton shows the company's commitment to improving its operations and preparing for future customer needs."*

This investment will boost productivity and flexibility at the Edmonton site. It supports Sortera UK's goal of maximising recycling and resource recovery while reducing environmental impact. The site will also receive better safety features, including advanced monitoring and fire-prevention systems.

Sortera UK says Northern Ireland-based engineering company CRS NI Ltd. has been instrumental in equipping and installing the new system, and earlier this year, JCB announced it would provide mobile material-handling equipment to Sortera UK.

improving overall water efficiency.

Designed to operate in conjunction with an existing plant, CDE's ProPress allows up to 95% of process water to be recycled for immediate reuse in the wash plant.

Unlike traditional filter presses, the system is dual feed, meaning sludge is fed from both sides of the ProPress for improved efficiency and faster cycle times. Optimised sludge feed pressure also allows for faster dewatering to increase overall throughput. This is further supported by an overhead beam design that ensures reliability by reducing stress on the unit and improving its durability.

The ProPress integrates the latest technological advancements, including 25% larger 2.5m by 2m plates and plate-shaking technology that addresses filter cake build-up within chambers, helping reduce the need for manual intervention.

The smart design is supported by an innovative, multifunctional robot that serves as the main workhorse for the ProPress, controlling plate opening, plate shaking, cloth washing, plate winch, and the maintenance platform. The robot allows for reduced movement of mechanical parts, which can allow for greater uptime, lower maintenance costs and ultimately improve the uptime of the ProPress.

One mission: zero waste

In a time when water preservation across the globe is of utmost importance, there is mounting pressure on businesses to align practices with regional sustainability goals, which is why technologies like CDE's ProPress provide support to the industry in protecting vital resources.

In Australia, factors like decreased rainfall and population growth have led to greater focus on water conservation through initiatives that ensure water supplies are not only protected but also cleaner.

CDE's installation of its largest ProPress model marks a significant milestone in sustainable water management and resource recovery in Australia, and underscores the industry's ongoing efforts to protect precious water resources.

Prioritising safety

As well as focusing on water management, CDE's ProPress filter press prioritises safety through features such as an automated, multifunctional robot for plate operation and cloth washing, a secure operator platform with access walkways to all moving parts for maintenance, and flush-mounted drip trays and handrails around the frame for improved operator protection.

The use of larger plates with lower hydraulic pressure and a dual-ram, pull-to-close system also contributes to mechanical safety and structural integrity. The built-in intelligent HMI system enables diagnostic maintenance, helping to eliminate the need for manual intervention.

Murphy *(pictured)* adds: *"We're excited to see how this innovation brings value to their operations whilst allowing for maximum recovery of resources. Sustainable water management is so important to both CDE and our customers, and that's why we're so delighted to see the first installation of this pioneering technology in Australia."*

BUSINESS CLINIC CONSULTANCY

The importance of wash water management for wash plants

JESSICA MORGAN-SMITH
Partner at MPG, based in Bingley, Bradford and Skipton, North Yorkshire

Wash water management is a critical component of aggregate recycling and wash plant operations, underpinning both environmental protection and operational efficiency. As wash plants continue to grow in scale and complexity, the ability to control, recycle and monitor wash water has become central to regulatory permitting and compliance, cost control, sustainability and the production of high-quality recycled aggregates.

Aggregate washing uses significant volumes of water to remove silt, clay, and fine particles from construction, demolition, and excavation materials to create higher-quality products. Over the last few years, the EA have become increasingly concerned with the potential for this water to become contaminated and for pollutants to build up and concentrate within the recirculated water. Effective management of wash water is, therefore, essential.

Modern wash plants are typically designed as closed-loop water-recirculation systems with external, sealed, impermeable surfacing and dedicated drainage infrastructure, so that all process water leaving the plant on products is either evaporated or flows to controlled collection points such as sumps, channels, or perimeter drains. This ensures there is no uncontrolled release to the surrounding environment, including nearby watercourses, drains, or groundwater.

Closed loop or near-closed loop systems, which continuously recycle and recirculate water, are now considered best practice. By recirculating the majority of the water used in the washing process, operators minimise the need for top-up from their water supply and significantly increase the sustainability of the operation. Losses still occur through evaporation, wet product, and filter cake, so reliable water-supply top-up measures remain necessary, but overall consumption is greatly reduced by this method.

Monitoring plays a central role in responsible wash water management. Routine and consistent visual checks ensure equipment is functioning correctly and that no leaks, blockages, or mechanical failures compromise containment. More formal laboratory testing of wash water quality allows operators to identify any build-up of contaminants within the recirculation system. Parameters such as pH, suspended solids, hydrocarbons, chemical oxygen demand, and metals are commonly monitored to assess whether the water remains suitable for reuse and whether the flocculant is working effectively. If thresholds are exceeded, the system can be flushed and contaminated water removed from site for treatment at licensed facilities, preventing any long-term accumulation of harmful substances.

Managing sludge and filter cake is another important part of the process. Fines removed during washing are concentrated and dewatered, typically to around 15–20% moisture. This material must be stored on hardstanding and handled appropriately. In some cases, it can be reused. We would argue that the good-quality filter cake is currently being very much underused, but where disposal is required, it must be sent to a suitably authorised facility.

Ultimately, an effective wash water management system allows an aggregate recycling site to operate efficiently, safely and sustainably. It protects sensitive receptors, ensures compliance with environmental permits, reduces water consumption and supports the production of clean, high-quality recycled aggregates. As regulatory expectations increase, wash water management is not just a technical requirement, it is a fundamental part of responsible resource recovery.

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****.*

MPG

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Parnaby Cyclones offer a wide range of aggregate washing systems in either modular or mobile solutions.

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- C+D and muck away
- Soils non haz and haz
- Skip waste fines
- Skip waste coarse fractions
- Hydro excavated materials
- Utility dig
- Road sweepings
- Glass MRF and kerbside

"The remit we gave to Parnaby's was that the plant should be able to handle the range of materials we have to process, most importantly the plant must produce accurately sized and clean products.

Parnaby's have achieved everything we have asked of them, and we are very pleased with the build quality of the plant and our dealings with Parnaby's have exceeded our expectations."

Michael Williamson - Midlands Reclamation and Waste Ltd.

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Bristol gets UK's largest soil recycling wash plant

Heidelberg Materials UK has invested in a new wash plant at its Bristol-based B&A Group site to enable the recycling of excavated waste at scale.

B&A Group is a leading construction soil and aggregate recycling company and became part of the Heidelberg Materials family in May 2024.

The new wash plant is the largest in the UK. It separates, washes, and processes up to 400,000 tonnes of excavated waste (primarily soils) a year from construction, demolition, and industrial sites, public works, and utility projects, to provide a reliable source of high-quality recycled aggregates.

It is fitted with a drainage and water recovery system to capture and recirculate the water used, minimising its environmental impact.

The £8 million investment is part of Heidelberg Materials' strategy to conserve natural resources and promote the circular economy.

"Our new bespoke wash plant enables on-site recovery and washing of material, turning soil into recycled aggregates, helping meet increasing demand for more sustainable construction products," said Helen Griffin, Managing Director at B&A Group.

"It also diverts more material from landfill, and on-site washing helps meet environmental permit standards and avoids contamination concerns, supporting regulatory compliance."

Members of the B&A Group team (from left): Dr Rob Lewis, Marc Large, Stuart Palmer, B&A Group Managing Director Helen Griffin, Darek Filipowicz, Ashley Bruno and Rob Westcott

The new plant can process inert soils into fine and coarse aggregates. The range of washed recycled aggregates produced by the plant can be used to replace primary aggregate in a range of products, including concrete and asphalt.

"Our new recycling wash plant at B&A Group is the first of a number we have planned to enable us to increase our capacity of recycled products," said Richard Wilcock, Recycling Director at Heidelberg Materials UK.

"It is part of our strategy to enable our customers to build more, with less and another step towards achieving our aim to deliver 50 per cent of our revenue from sustainable products by 2030."

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Sheehan Group offer support for new waste management protocol

Sheehan Haulage and Plant Hire, a waste and recycling company, has been supporting the utility sector with new environmental rules for waste management.

Street Works UK introduced a new Material Classification Protocol on the 1st October. This protocol helps classify waste from street works and replaces older guidelines.

It aims to improve how the utility sector manages waste, especially for unexpected utility excavations. Contractors will face new responsibilities under this protocol. The Sheehan Haulage and Plant Hire team has been assisting them with this transition.

Contractors must now separate excavated materials by type and hazard level at the excavation site and during processing. Each excavation will require careful assessment, and materials need to be classified using the correct European Waste Catalogue codes. At least 1% of excavated materials must undergo laboratory analysis.

After classification, waste must be managed based on its category and disposed of at licensed facilities. Companies must also provide quarterly reports to Street Works UK, including waste classification information and test results.

Katie Sheehan, Sales Director at Sheehan Haulage and Plant Hire, said: *"We support the new protocols that will improve sustainability in street works. We're ready to help contractors with advice and provide a simple, compliant solution that saves time and money while keeping them compliant and efficient."*

Sheehan Haulage and Plant Hire runs an aggregate recycling facility in Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire, that accepts materials classified under the new protocol. Once materials are dropped off, contractors can collect recycled aggregates that meet BS EN 13242 Highways 600 standards. This process helps them save time and reduce costs by combining disposal and collection into a single visit.

The Sheehan Group is a family-run business focused on sustainable construction and recycling, diverting over 100,000 tonnes of C&D waste from UK landfills each year through advanced recycling technology.

Peter Scott with a sample of Scott Bros' ENATS-certified sand at its £6m 'urban quarry'

ENATS approval triggers surge in demand for Scott Bros' recycled sand

Recycling specialists Scott Bros have seen demand rocket for its recycled sand after achieving ENATS certification, a key standard for materials used in power infrastructure projects.

The family-run North East business at Haverton Hill, Billingham, is now boosting production after supplying several thousand tonnes to solar farms and other high-voltage cable installations, where it is used for backfilling and bedding underground electrical cables.

ENATS - the Energy Networks Association's Technical Specification - certification confirms that it meets the performance, cohesion and safety standards required for solar farms and grid connection works.

The sand is processed at Scott Bros' £6m wash plant in South Bank, Middlesbrough, one of the UK's largest 'urban quarries', which converts construction and excavation waste into British Standard sand and aggregate. As well as being environmentally friendly, it is also more cost-effective than quarried alternatives.

Director Peter Scott led the product development to secure ENATS approval after modifying the sand by increasing the ratio of extra-fine particles to provide added cohesion.

He said: *"We're proud to be one of a few suppliers of recycled sand in the area to meet the ENATS standard. Solar farm developers need materials that protect high-voltage cables from damage and maintain stable heat transfer. The fact that they put a rather large dent in our stockpiles shows the scale of demand for reliable, sustainable alternatives to virgin sand."*

Scott Bros' recycled building sand and sharp sand are already widely used, from commercial construction projects to improving golf course drainage, turf health and surface firmness.

Fellow director Bob Borthwick added: *"It's especially rewarding when you consider that, not too many years ago, the construction and excavation waste now being processed into ENATS-approved sand would likely have ended up in landfill or as low-grade fill.*

"It's a great example of how recycled materials can replace virgin resources without compromising performance. Every tonne we supply saves the equivalent volume of natural sand from being quarried. Renewable energy developments, particularly solar farms, are being built at pace across the UK, and we're pleased to support the sector in reducing both its costs and carbon footprint."

Why we should be talking about concrete recycling

A quick glance at the history of concrete

Concrete may sound modern, yet its roots go way back. The Romans mixed lime, volcanic ash and water to erect their iconic structures. Recipes and production methods have changed over the centuries, but one fact remains: concrete is versatile and durable - and eventually turns into demolition waste.

In times of scarcity, stones, bricks or even entire elements were often reused. Today, reuse is not just a financial option - it's an ecological necessity. Modern rubble, though, is far more complex: reinforced concrete, composites, coatings, and other add-ons make selective separation harder. This is where concrete recycling comes in. If building elements are dismantled separately, much of the material can be processed for new purposes and fed back into the economy.

From old to new - What is concrete recycling?

Concrete recycling means processing old concrete - for example, from demolition projects - into new aggregates ("recycled aggregate"). These aggregates can then be used to produce recycled concrete that serves many purposes, from roadbeds and foundations to precast elements.

Imagine your city demolishes an outdated multi-storey car park:

- *Big concrete slabs and chunks are collected on site.*
- *The concrete is broken down, and foreign materials such as steel are removed.*
- *The resulting recycled aggregate can later act as sub base for roads or - when quality allows - directly replace virgin aggregate in fresh concrete.*

How does concrete recycling work?

The workflow can be summarised in five easy-to-grasp steps.

- ***Selective demolition***
  Different materials are kept separate on site. Pure concrete is hauled away independently of mixed waste.
- ***Size reduction***
  On the recycling yard, or directly on site, a crusher is used. A mobile twin-shaft shredder, such as the COMPAKTOR 300, breaks the concrete into manageable pieces, drastically reducing volume.
- ***Sorting***
  Integrated magnetic separators pull out ferrous metals, while wind sifters use air jets to blow off lighter contaminants, such as insulation.
- ***Further processing***

The various grain sizes can now either go straight into road construction (e.g. frost protection layers) or be refined into new concrete mixes.

- ***Reuse***
  Blending the recycled aggregates with cement, sand and water creates fresh concrete - this final loop closes the material cycle.

Site example: A WWII bunker is demolished. A crawler excavator feeds large chunks onto a mobile shredder. After crushing and sorting, clean, graded aggregate remains - ready for reuse without the need to quarry new gravel.

Why is concrete recycling important?
Concrete recycling delivers a triple dividend: it shrinks our ecological footprint, stabilises construction budgets and builds public trust. By turning yesterday's rubble into tomorrow's resource, we drastically cut quarrying and the CO^2-heavy production of virgin aggregate, while keeping scarce landfill space free.

- ***Environmental***
  Relief: fewer natural resources extracted, less landscape scarred.
- ***Cost savings***
  Lower material bills and disposal fees.
- ***Climate protection***
  Reduced cement demand cuts greenhouse gas emissions.
- ***Public image***
  Demonstrable sustainability wins clients and approvals.

Contractors who switch to recycled aggregates also protect themselves against volatile raw material prices and meet the tightening sustainability criteria seen in public tenders - turning compliance into a marketing advantage. Local authorities also benefit, as circular procurement keeps money in the region and reduces truck traffic. In short, recycling concrete transforms a disposal headache into a strategic asset for every stakeholder.

Where is recycled concrete used?
Recycled concrete isn't a niche material; it has quietly become a workhorse across the construction spectrum. From heavy-load infrastructure to small backyard makeovers, there is a fitting use case for every quality grade. Below are a few of the

Continued on page 32>>

most common applications:

- ***Foundations and slabs***
  Many halls and houses can be partially built on recycled concrete once the strength requirements are met.
- ***Landscaping***
  Ideal as a base layer for paths, patios, or lawn grid blocks.
- ***Precast elements***
  Several manufacturers already integrate recycled aggregates into pavers, slabs or façade panels.
- ***Road construction***
  Mixed recycled aggregates are widely used as a sub-base or frost layer under asphalt.

Real life nugget: A homeowner removed an old terrace, crushed the slabs and reused the material as sub base for a garden path - saving disposal fees and the cost of new gravel.

Muscle and brain - With what is concrete recycled?

Concrete recycling needs robust machines, not rocket science:

- ***Powerful crushers***
  Two shaft shredders from ARJES unleash high torque on stubborn material. Choose the flexible COMPAKTOR 300 for smaller jobs, or the heavy-duty TITAN 900 for large, reinforced chunks.
- ***Sorting technology***
  Magnetic separators lift steel out; windsifters create an air curtain to separate light from heavy.
- ***Skilled crew***
  Professionals assess the rubble and handle hazardous inclusions responsibly.

More and more mobile crushers drive straight onto the building site, cutting long truck hauls to a recycling plant.

From rubble to resource - How recycled concrete builds our future

Concrete recycling benefits everyone: it reduces landfill waste, saves money, preserves resources, and improves the construction industry's environmental balance. Whether you process rubble from a city-scale project or from a private patio, the potential is immense. In the future, expect wider use of mobile shredders and smart sorting technology to further boost recycling efficiency.

No greenwashing *- Recycled concrete must be deployed in truly relevant volumes. Large projects deserve real quality and environmental diligence.*

What's next? *- AI-assisted sorters, electro dynamic fragmentation, or carbon binding processes could become mainstream within the next few years.*

Rubble was yesterday - Our conclusion

Recycled concrete has gained real momentum. Rising material prices, limited landfill space, and growing eco-awareness will only accelerate the trend. So why not turn the old into the new and help the planet at the same time? Next time you

plan to demolish a slab or lay lawn grid blocks, remember concrete recycling.

Curious? Explore industrial shredders from ARJES - from the agile COMPAKTOR 300 to the mighty TITAN 900. Discover how we can make concrete and demolition recycling both efficient and resource-friendly. In selective demolition, in the recycling yard, or in mobile deployment, our high-torque solutions turn mineral waste into tomorrow's building material!

Turn waste into value! With ARJES' recycling solutions, you unlock the full potential of your construction and demolition waste. Whether concrete, bricks or mixed debris - our machines deliver powerful shredding, reliable separation and outstanding profitability. Get in touch - we'll find the right set up for your job! **www.arjes.de/en/contact/** ...or contact **Doyle Machinery - the UK and Ireland distributor for ARJES.**
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Plans for waste treatment expansion at Hampshire site

Plans have been submitted to expand a waste treatment site near Basingstoke, aiming to increase the production of recycled soil, gravel, and sand.

The application, submitted by DIY Aggregates Limited to Hampshire County Council, also includes proposals for a new storage barn, aggregate bays, and enhancements to landscaping and access around Stapeley Manor Farm in Odiham.

According to the company, the new storage barn will help keep topsoil dry, preventing it from becoming heavy and reducing the number of lorry trips needed for transportation.

The plans also include wheel-washing facilities designed to prevent mud and materials from being carried onto nearby roads.

Currently, the site recycles soils and aggregates, converting construction waste into reusable materials and keeping it out of landfill.

In its planning statement, DIY Aggregates indicated that the project would enhance the county's capacity to recycle building materials and support the local circular economy.

The application states: *"The proposal would help provide new infrastructure to maximise the use of recycled material. It would utilise crushed waste concrete as a secondary aggregate, process excavated soils into useful products for local markets, and prevent valuable materials from being sent to landfill."*

GRS to digitise materials and waste tracking with Terinea

GRS Group has joined forces with software specialist Terinea to introduce an all-in-one platform for digital waste tracking and electronic proof of delivery for bulk construction materials.

Terinea's WasteMetrix software is being configured to provide GRS with an integrated system to streamline its materials trading operations - totalling almost 20 million tonnes per year of construction, demolition and excavation waste, as well as recycled, secondary and primary aggregates. GRS is a supplier to some of the UK's biggest infrastructure projects.

By centralising materials tracking into one digital platform, GRS will become the first nationwide aggregates and waste trader capable of digitally tracking all materials, from collection to delivery, reinforcing the company's 'circular economy' model, as well as improving customer experience, supply chain efficiency and ensuring full compliance with forthcoming waste legislation.

GRS will become the first nationwide aggregates trader to digitally track all aggregates and waste materials, with benefits for customers, suppliers, employees, and haulage partners

Yvette Bailey, GRS Trading's Managing Director, said: *"Partnering with Terinea is a big step towards our goal of a fully integrated platform, where every tonne of material we move is tracked digitally. It means we will provide a better service for our customers, clearer information for our hauliers and easier processes for our people, and it will take us beyond the statutory legal requirements for waste. All the materials we trade are either reused in construction or in land remediation, and soon we'll have real-time data showing where they come from and where they're going to."*

Robin Tweedie-Walker, Managing Director for Terinea, said: *"We are very excited to be working with GRS, a nationwide business that occupies a unique position in the construction supply chain. We have extensive knowledge of the waste industry, and we are already working closely with GRS to ensure WasteMetrix supports their circularity business model, configuring where necessary to create a tailored solution that sets GRS apart from other companies in the sector."*

Anna Brooks, GRS Digital Transformation Programme Manager, said: *"After a rigorous selection process, we chose Terinea's WasteMetrix platform because of its flexibility and scalability, giving us a system that meets our needs without having to build it from scratch, whilst adapting to changing markets and our future growth. It's also an important foundation - alongside our company-wide ERP system - that will enable end-to-end digitisation of our business processes and integrate with the systems of others in our supply chain."*

The move to digital tracking - part of the firm's *ConnectGRS* initiative - is set to improve the experience for GRS customers and supply partners, giving quicker access to job details and delivery data for both muck-away and aggregate movements. Real-time tracking also means better planning, faster ticketing, and lower business risk thanks to system-generated data. For GRS drivers and third-party hauliers, collection and delivery point information will be clearer and easier to access. And the new system, which GRS expects to roll out early in 2026, will improve the efficiency of internal processes in sales, customer service, transport coordination, haulage administration, and credit control.

The UK Government is planning to introduce mandatory digital waste tracking *(currently scheduled for October 2026)* to better monitor waste production and disposal nationwide. The new legislation means everyone involved in waste management will need to switch from paper records to a digital platform, making the whole process more transparent and operators more accountable.

See also, Marco's column on page 56.

Red Rhino launches upgraded 5000+ jaw crusher

Red Rhino Crushers proudly announces significant enhancements to its 5000+ jaw crusher, designed to dramatically increase crushing capacity and operational speed for demolition, construction, and skip hire operators.

The upgraded RR 5000+ features pivotal modifications to the jaw box dynamics, with hydraulic systems strategically positioned more vertically. This optimisation results in substantial gains in both throughput and efficiency. By adjusting the jaw plates to a more vertical position, the machine now harnesses gravity to enhance the crushing process, while the advanced hydraulics allow it to operate at an unprecedented intensity.

"Continuous improvement drives our mission," declared Job Winfield of Red Rhino. *"With the optimised jaw plate positioning and the upgraded hydraulic system, we've engineered a machine that crushes faster and handles material more efficiently than ever before."*

The compact 5000+ integrates a 500mm x 250mm jaw crusher with a hydraulically driven vibrating feeder, all controlled via a wireless remote handset. It delivers output sizes from 20mm to 100mm, effectively processing reinforced concrete, brick, and other aggregate materials.

At 1,665mm wide, the Red Rhino crusher excels at navigating restricted-access sites while delivering significant cost savings through on-site waste recycling and the elimination of skip hire expenses. Standard features include integrated dust suppression and a powerful Kubota 25HP four-cylinder water-cooled diesel engine that meets Stage V emission standards.

"The feedback on the upgraded RR 5000+ has been overwhelmingly positive," Winfield added. *"These enhancements will undoubtedly deliver exceptional value to our customers across the construction and demolition sectors."*

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RED RHINO
CRUSHERS & SCREENERS

We need more drivers, says expert, as shortage pressures set to disrupt festive deliveries

As the festive season approaches and delivery demand peaks, the logistics sector is gearing up for one of its busiest times of the year amid ongoing driver shortages. John Keelan-Edwards, Managing Director of Driver Hire Training, explains why it's essential to bring new driving talent into the industry, and why now could be the perfect time to begin a new HGV driving career.

"Finding good staff isn't easy, and that's expected to make the busy upcoming festive period demanding for many in the industry, with delivery delays likely as demand peaks and winter conditions slow transport," says John. *"We need an influx of new drivers into the industry in 2026 to help ease the pressure. This will intensify over time, with a large proportion of the workforce set to retire in the next 5-10 years.*

"The shortage is felt throughout the year, but more noticeably during the festive period and peak summer months when demand is highest, and capacity is stretched. New drivers are needed urgently to avoid delivery delays and strengthen the supply chain in 2026.

"It's not only a great time to start a new career personally, with strong demand, quick training routes and competitive salaries, but also an important time to support the future of the industry. The logistics sector keeps every part of the UK economy moving, delivering everything from groceries to lifesaving medication. Drivers play an essential role in keeping supply chains running efficiently and keeping communities connected," says John.

"There are multiple pathways into HGV driving. All you need is to be 18 years old and have a UK car driver's licence to train to become a professional truck driver," says John. You may want to start out in smaller vehicles and work up, but through our fast-track training option, you could actually go straight into the top category and apply for a C+E (Class 1) licence. This is the classic 'artic' licence and allows you to drive vehicles over 3,500 kg, with a trailer over 750kg," says John.

"HGV driving is a well-paid, rewarding and flexible career option. Annual salaries for Class 1 drivers can be up to £50,000 a year, with the potential for as much as £70,000 in certain specialist roles," explains John.

"The whole process typically takes 8-10 weeks from the initial application, through medical assessments, to booking a test date, therefore you could be fully qualified and ready to start a brand new career by Spring 2026. There are training hubs across the country, and much of the theory training can be completed online. Depending on the licence chosen and any qualifications already held, the actual training can be completed within six to eight days. After that, you'll be qualified to be one of the most important people on the road, keeping the UK moving."

CSG honours best behind the wheel with new award

Maidstone's Ian Crundwell *(pictured)* toasted success as leading waste management specialist CSG put its top HGV drivers through their paces in a first-of-its-kind competition.

Five of CSG's best-performing drivers travelled to the Science Museum site in Swindon - a filming location for *The Grand Tour* - where they took on a series of challenges to determine the overall champion.

Competitors were tested on reversing into a parking bay, driving through a slalom, braking and identifying defects on the truck.

Ian, 56, won £750 of Virgin Experience vouchers as well as a trip to Scania's head office in Sweden, where he will be treated to a behind-the-scenes look at the manufacturer's operations.

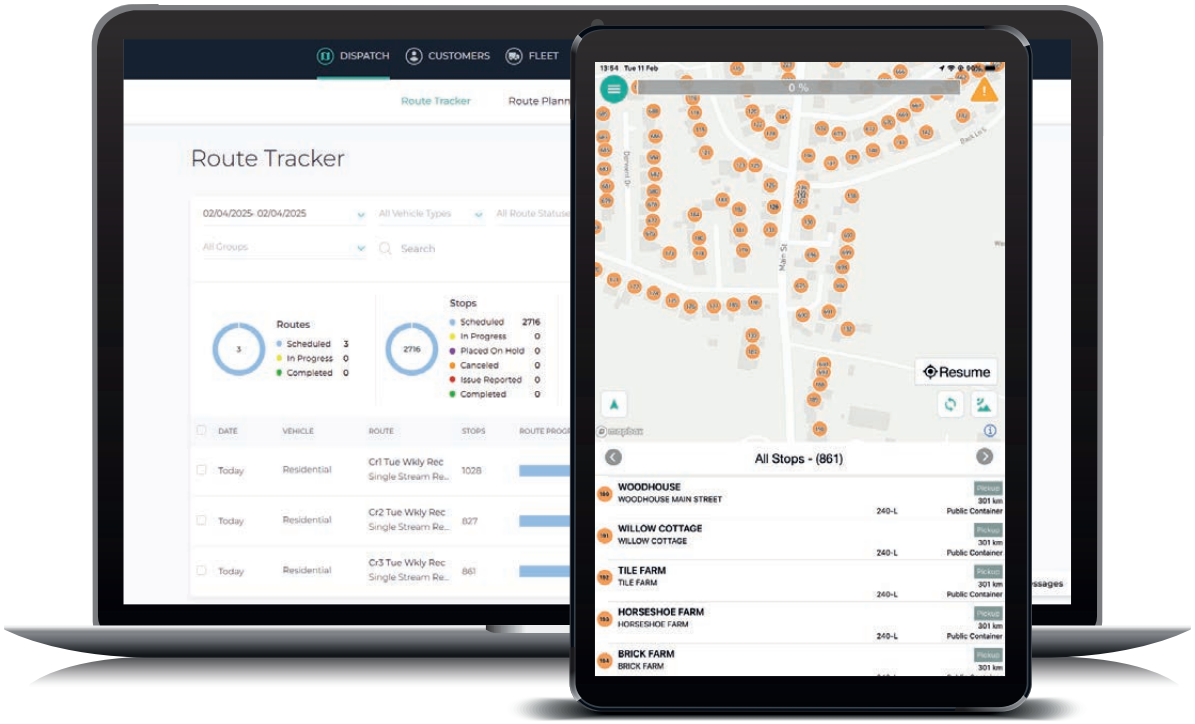
Ian said: *"It was a fantastic day competing against my fellow drivers, and I was thrilled to win. I've been with the company for 23 years, and it is a tremendous place to work. The Driver of the Year competition was a great way to acknowledge the skilled drivers we have here.*

Steve Hicks, CSG HR Director, said: *"CSG is all about the people within the business and helping everyone thrive. We pride ourselves on our drivers, who are highly skilled and are tested on the busy roads day in, day out. We regularly receive fantastic feedback about our drivers' performance and customer service, and we thought it was time to celebrate them and what they do.*

"We want to encourage our drivers to enjoy their jobs and strive for excellence. Our Driver of the Year competition was a huge success, and we plan to run it every year from now on."

Routeware

SMARTCITY



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Routeware

Keeping recycling lines moving:
The biggest conveyor challenges today

Processing tonnes of waste every year, with demand that never lessens, it's inevitable that recycling and waste management facilities face significant challenges in keeping their fast-paced operations running smoothly. An unexpected machine breakdown can cause considerable disruption, so it's essential to ensure regular checks are carried out to address common conveyor challenges.

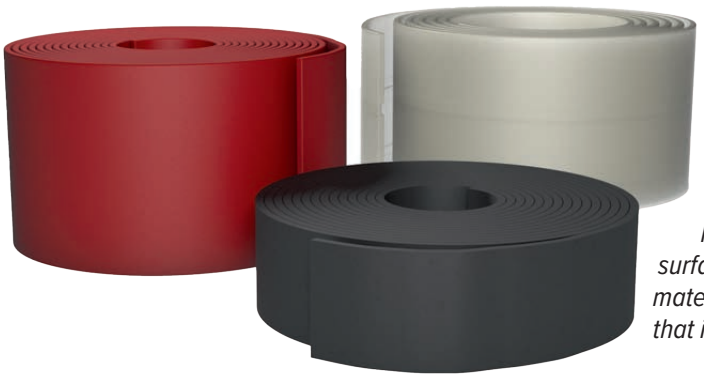
Smiley Monroe, The Giants of Belting, has 45 years of experience in belt conveying and supplies some of the biggest manufacturers of material handling equipment. Their team has seen first-hand some of the common problems faced by recycling and waste management operations.

With machinery typically processing a wider range of materials, there is a greater risk of conveyor belt damage and material spillage occurring. While rips, breakages, and conveyor blockages are unavoidable over the lifespan of any machine, their likelihood and frequency increase significantly in recycling and waste-management environments.

Smiley Monroe shares some of their top tips for recycling and waste management operations to maximise their machine uptime and reduce maintenance and clean up:

Tackle material spillage

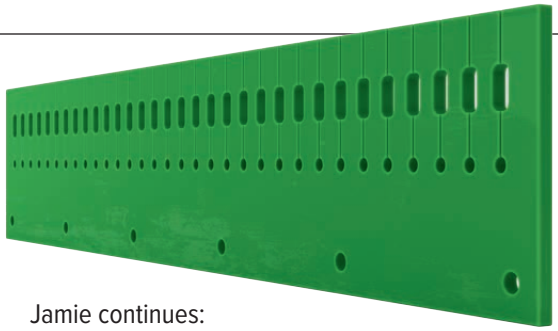
"Material spillage is a common issue in the belt conveying world, and it's something we have seen on site surveys all too often," says Jamie Gillespie, Product Support Engineer at Smiley Monroe.



"There are several ways to keep on top of material spillage, and it starts with conveyor skirting. Well-fitted conveyor skirting is vital for preventing material from spilling off the sides of the conveyor. We recommend installing skirting rubber along the sides of the belt at the feed areas, so it lightly contacts the belt surface - enough to keep material in, but not so tight that it causes excessive friction or belt wear. Always choose skirting that has a lower shore hardness than the belt cover itself. This means the skirting will wear instead of the belt, extending your belt's lifespan."

Keep conveyor belts clean

The next thing to consider is conveyor belt cleanliness. *"Carryback material is another common conveyor issue which can lead to increased material spillage and belt damage. It occurs whenever materials adhere to the surface of conveyor belts, something we see quite often within recycling and waste management."*

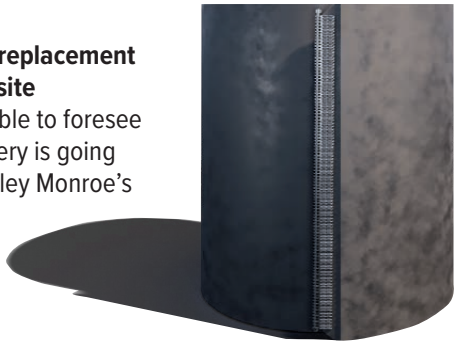


Jamie continues: *"Installing belt cleaners is a preventative measure which helps to remove carry back material, minimising unwanted material buildup while the machinery is running. Belt cleaners are available for both flat and chevron conveyor belts."*

Smiley Monroe also offers a range of oil-resistant belts that can help prolong the life of conveyor belts in contact with oil-based products, whether synthetic or natural.

Keep a ZIP CLIP® replacement conveyor belt on-site

While it's not possible to foresee when your machinery is going to breakdown, Smiley Monroe's mechanically fastened replacement conveyor belt ZIP CLIP® is a game-changer for recycling and waste management operations' ability to respond quickly and efficiently in the face of a breakdown.



Thanks to ZIP CLIP®'s ready-to-fit system, operatives can fit a new belt on site quickly and easily. With no specialist tools needed for installation, many recycling companies are switching from traditional vulcanised conveyor splices to ZIP CLIP®.

Jamie notes: *"ZIP CLIP® can be fitted safely from ground level in an hour or less, without the need for a specialist vulcanising team or equipment. The improved site safety has been another key point for recycling companies with static machinery, where space and schedules are tight, and planning for scaffolding or scissor lifts can be a major disruption and safety concern. Machinery can be out of commission for 12 to 24 hours, but ZIP CLIP® has completely changed that for our customers.*

"Customers have a spare belt on site, like your spare tyre, and fit it to their machinery when a breakdown occurs. When they use the spare belt, they just reorder from Smiley Monroe, and they have a spare belt in stock again within a couple of days. It gives customers a lot of confidence knowing that, if a breakdown occurs, they are only stopped for as long as it takes to fit the ZIP CLIP® belt."

Book a site survey

Smiley Monroe works closely with customers to understand their unique conveying applications, ensuring the belt specification is accurately matched to your materials and required output. Book a site survey to see how ZIP CLIP® - alongside the right combination of conveyor components - can improve performance on your site.

For customers across Great Britain, support is now even closer thanks to Smiley Monroe's newly opened Midlands hub in England, offering faster response times, local expertise, and on-the-ground assistance when you need it most. Backed by additional global locations in Northern Ireland, the USA, and India, their team is ready to help.

Get in contact today:
hello@smileymonroe.com

Where do wind turbine blades go when they are decommissioned?

More wind turbines are reaching the end of their operational lives. Europe has 290 GW of wind energy capacity, and 80 GW of that will reach the end of its expected lifespan by 2030. Most turbines will likely continue to operate, but some will be decommissioned. WindEurope's new circularity hub shows ways to reuse, repurpose, recycle, and recover wind turbine blades.

Sustainability is a key part of wind energy. Wind is one of the most eco-friendly ways to generate electricity. It uses very little water, has a small environmental impact, and recovers energy quickly - within a few months.

This commitment to sustainability also includes recycling and decommissioning wind turbines. About 90% of a wind turbine's weight can be recycled using standard waste management practices. The biggest challenge is the blades, which are made of tough materials that are hard to recycle. Many blades are not currently recycled after they are taken down.

So, what happens to these blades? Landfilling is not an option. The European wind industry has committed to a landfill ban for wind turbine blades starting on 1st January, 2026. The industry has been developing new methods to reuse, repurpose, recycle, and recover decommissioned wind turbine blades.

WindEurope estimates that the annual amount of decommissioned blade material will rise to 55,000 tonnes by 2030, up from about 20,000 tonnes in 2025. This increase mainly stems from decommissioning in established wind markets such as Germany and Spain.

This growing volume presents a challenge: the European wind industry needs to ramp up its circular efforts, and it is doing that. As more blades are taken out of service, new waste management methods are emerging. This is creating a new part of the wind energy supply chain and new job opportunities.

European companies are investing in new facilities and finding creative solutions for handling decommissioned blades. There are already several sustainable second-life options available.

Next year, the European Commission will propose a Circular Economy Act to improve sustainable waste management practices. In this context, the European wind industry is asking for new waste codes. Right now, wind turbine waste is not clearly labelled and is often mixed with other construction waste, making it hard to track and treat properly. The European Commission should create specific waste codes for decommissioned wind turbine blades and for permanent magnets.

School 'baa-ttery recycling campaign' is back!

A school battery recycling campaign is returning for 2025/26 across Cumbria. This campaign encourages young people to recycle used batteries to help protect the environment safely.

Last year's 'baa-ttery campaign' collected over two tonnes of batteries and kept them out of household waste. Westmorland and Furness Council, along with its campaign partners, is proud to bring this initiative back as part of a larger effort across Cumbria.

The campaign will run until Friday, 13th February 2026. Schools have plenty of time to collect and safely dispose of used batteries, including AAs, AAAs, LR20s, and lithium-ion batteries.

Managed by Biffa, the campaign focuses on the dangers of throwing batteries in the regular waste. Batteries can get damaged during collection, transport, or treatment, which may cause fires. By offering safe

recycling options, the campaign aims to protect people, property, and the environment.

Every year, about 3.2 million batteries are thrown away in Cumbria's trash. Proper disposal is more important now than ever.

To make it easier, free battery collection boxes are again provided to participating schools by Valpak Ltd. When these boxes are full, schools can ask for a free collection to ensure the safe disposal of the batteries and receive a new box.

This year, the campaign expands to include secondary schools, bringing even more young people and families into the fold across the county.

Councillor Giles Archibald, Cabinet Member for Climate, Biodiversity and Environmental Services, said: *"Last year's success made it an obvious decision to run the campaign again. By working with schools, we're not only preventing batteries from ending up in household waste but also inspiring our young people to take the lead in environmental responsibility. They are the next generation of changemakers, and campaigns like this show the real impact their actions can have.*

"This year's campaign will also span the festive season when battery use typically peaks, and so this is a crucial time to remind everyone about the importance of safe disposal."

Any schools wishing to participate or find out more should email ***hayley.slack@biffa.co.uk***

RECOUP launches Rstuff to encourage action on reuse, repair and recycling

RECOUP has launched Rstuff, an evolution of its long-running Pledge2Recycle Plastics campaign, designed to help communities and educational establishments think beyond recycling and embrace reuse, repair, and waste reduction.

Building on over a decade of experience delivering national recycling communications and working with local authorities, schools, and community groups, Rstuff expands RECOUP's reach with accessible, practical resources that make sustainable living simple and engaging.

The launch comes at a time when the UK's resource consumption is equivalent to using 2.6 planets' worth of resources every year - a stark reminder that recycling alone is not enough. Rstuff aims to empower people to make small but meaningful changes that collectively reduce waste and overconsumption.

To celebrate the launch, Rstuff has unveiled its Christmas Toolkit, a free online package designed to support schools, councils, and community organisations in sharing positive messages around recycling, reuse, and waste minimisation during the festive period.

The toolkit includes:

- ***Key facts and tips on recycling and reducing waste at Christmas.***
- ***Ready-to-use social media posts and graphics.***
- ***Classroom and community resources to inspire discussion and action.***

Other seasonal resources now available through Rstuff include:

- ***Christmas Jumper Swap Toolkit - promoting reuse and community spirit through clothing swaps.***
- ***Coat Swap Toolkit - supporting families and individuals to stay warm sustainably while reducing textile waste.***

"Rstuff represents the next step in RECOUP's public engagement journey," said Katherine Fleet, Head of Sustainability & Circularity at RECOUP. *"While recycling remains vital, we know we must help people think more broadly about reuse, repair and waste prevention. Rstuff provides the tools and inspiration to make those everyday sustainable choices easier."*

RECOUP will continue to work closely with local authorities on recycling communication campaigns under the RECOUP brand, while Rstuff extends this work to community and educational audiences.

All resources, including the Christmas Toolkit, can be accessed at ***www.rstuff.uk*** *Follow Rstuff on social media (X, Facebook and Instagram) for updates and shareable content.*

Masterchef finalist backs campaign to help recycling

A *MasterChef* star is supporting a campaign to highlight the recyclable waste thrown away at taxpayer expense. Sam Kaeokon, who reached the final of the show this year, noted that his general waste has decreased by over half since Swindon Borough Council began food waste collections in 2023.

The council incurs £140 in costs to incinerate each tonne of general waste, totalling £2 million annually for taxpayers. Councillor Chris Watts acknowledged the efforts of residents who diligently recycle but emphasised the need for others to stop wasting money.

Kaeokon has teamed up with the council to promote recycling, stressing its importance in saving taxpayer money and benefiting the environment. He highlighted the value of meal planning in reducing food waste, but recognised that not everything can be utilised.

Recently, the council conducted an experiment that revealed significant amounts of recyclable materials being discarded. Waste warden Chris Smith sifted through 10 random general waste bins and filled over a dozen recycling bins, reducing general waste from 10 to three.

Smith emphasised the need for *"education and engagement"* to improve recycling habits, expressing disappointment at people misplacing materials such as glass.

In 2023/24, Swindon Borough Council's recycling rate stood at 33.8%, which has since improved to 40% and is on track to reach 50%.

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- **Slip Hazards —** Wet floors created by water sprays, rain guns, fog cannons and rotary atomisers all have the potential to create slip hazards for vehicles and personnel, increasing claims and downtime.
- **Poor Site Image —** Accumulated piles of dust impact on house-keeping scores, and fails compliance checks.
- **Costly Equipment Downtime —** Dust infiltration clogs machinery, increases maintenance and slows production.
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The Mist-Air Solution

Why Industry Leaders Choose Mist-Air

- Install a Mist-Air DRY FOG suppression system — reduces respirable airborne silica and dust by up to 98%.
- Prevents dust migrating to other areas and kills dust before it can become airborne.
- Low cost of installation, for either new build or retrofit, with negligible running costs.
- Improves visibility and prevents flash explosions.
- Keeps everything dry — no wet floors (slip hazards), machinery, stock or personnel.
- Can be installed in any size or type of facility, including silos, hoppers, crushers, screens, trommels etc.
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"Our staff now refuse to work without it — the air is cleaner, safer, and our dust complaints are gone."

— Michael McLaughlin, H&S Manager, McKinstry Skip Hire

Mist-Air

Leaders in Dust Suppression Technology

Key Features

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- **Retro-Fit Ready –** Easily integrated into existing facilities without downtime
- **Occupational Health Focus –** Reduces respiratory risks for workers
- **Explosion Risk Reduction –** Minimises airborne dust ignition sources
- **Housekeeping Boost –** Cleaner floors, equipment, and storage areas
- **Low Maintenance & Cost-Effective –** Runs economically with minimal upkeep

Case Study

Industry

Biomass Processing & MRF Facility

Challenge

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Walter the fatberg-fighting Wasteater joins Biffa's fleet

A new sewer sludge slurping Wasteater has joined Biffa's fleet of head-turning 'monster' trucks.

Unlike its trade-waste-chomping cousins, Walter sucks up grease, silt and muck from drains, sewers, gullies and culverts.

Fallen twigs and leaves, along with festive cooking fat poured down the sink, can all contribute to increased blocked pipes and flooding at this time of year.

Powered by Cappolletto's Caprecy JetVac technology, Walter combines high-pressure jetting, powerful suction and a five-stage water recycling system into a single compact unit.

The result is a fast, efficient and sustainable cleaning solution for industrial sites and urban infrastructure, predominantly across the Midlands and the North of England.

The JetVac system reduces the need for multiple vehicles and operatives, making it ideal for hard-to-reach locations and emergency callouts.

It also delivers significant reductions in water use and carbon emissions compared to comparable systems - helping customers meet environmental targets while keeping operations flowing.

Walter is available to industrial manufacturers, facilities managers, and local authorities responsible for wastewater infrastructure. Biffa's certified drainage teams are trained to the highest industry standards and provide full compliance reporting as part of the service.

There are a variety of treatment and disposal options for the waste Walter collects, including energy recovery and composting.

James Bissell, Head of Tankers & Industrial Services at Biffa, said: *"Walter isn't just another truck - he represents how innovation and character can come together to tackle real environmental challenges in a fun and engaging way.*

"The next-gen JetVac technology he uses is a major step forward in how we approach industrial cleaning - whether that's a one-off clearance or routine maintenance - with minimal disruption and in a way that supports our customers' environmental goals."

Walter will also feature in educational campaigns with schools and community groups, helping raise awareness of the environmental risks posed by contaminated sludge and industrial runoff.

Biffa merges its PET recycling operations with Esterform

Biffa has announced the merger of its PET recycling operations with Esterform, a manufacturer of PET pre-forms and bottles. This collaboration aims to establish a leading circular plastics packaging business in the UK, especially in light of the upcoming Deposit Return Scheme set to launch in 2027. This scheme is expected to increase the availability of PET drink bottles for recycling.

Biffa's acquisition of Esterform follows its initial investment in the company in 2023. Esterform operates facilities in West Yorkshire and Worcestershire, where it transforms recycled PET pellets into test tube-shaped preforms, which can then be blow-moulded into bottles suitable for drinks, food, personal care, and household products. Moving forward, both Esterform and Biffa's existing PET recycling operations will be consolidated under the Esterpet brand. This new segment will become a wholly owned business within the Biffa Group, led by Esterform's founder, Mark Tyne, along with his team.

This investment will enhance the ability to provide a comprehensive circular solution for food and drink manufacturers, focusing on delivering high-quality, food-grade recycled PET and pre-form bottles from materials collected for recycling within the UK.

"After successfully investing in Esterform in 2023, we are pleased to complete this acquisition to strengthen our role in closed-loop PET recycling and packaging," said Michael Topham, Chief Executive Officer of Biffa. *"By combining Biffa's PET recycling assets with Esterform's manufacturing expertise, we are creating a sophisticated provider of end-to-end circular PET packaging solutions ahead of the UK's Deposit Return Scheme."*

Tyne added: *"This marks an exciting new chapter for Esterform. Joining the Biffa Group as a wholly owned entity enables us to accelerate our vision of delivering high-quality, circular PET packaging solutions for the UK market. With Biffa's continued investment and support, we are well-positioned to meet the increasing demand for sustainable packaging before the Deposit Return Scheme launches, while retaining the expertise and agility that our customers value."*

INNOVATION
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DUAL SPLIT BIN

Available in 1280L and 1100L capacity

The Storm Split Bin is a space-saving solution for high density residential and commercial areas, and a great aid to simpler recycling. Combining waste and recyclable materials into one container, it negates the need for multiple bins.

Bin users like that they only need to access one receptacle to dispose of their general waste and dry mixed recyclables, which helps to reduce contamination. The Split Bin is efficient to empty and compatible with standard comb-lift vehicles.

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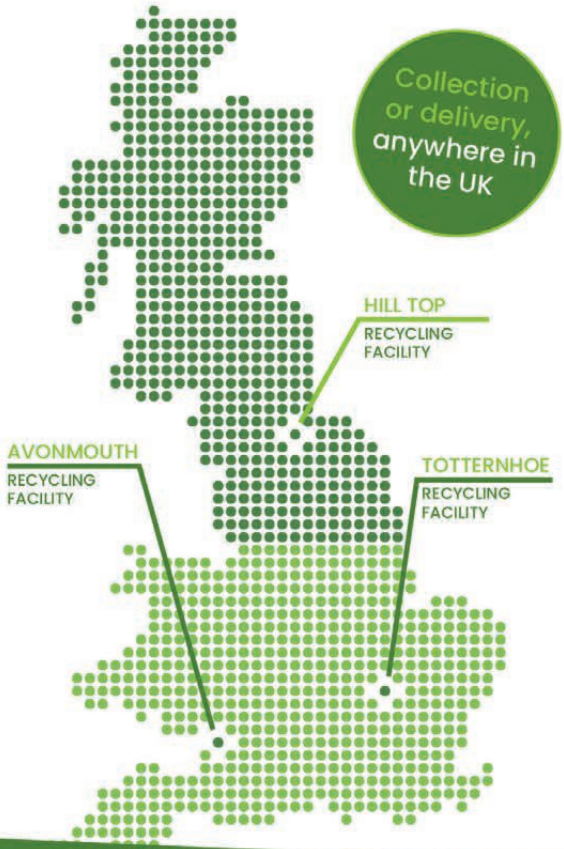

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Trovr rolls out compact DRS-ready recycling unit to the UK market

Trovr is a recycling technology start-up that is changing how we handle single-use drink containers. They have launched the QUBE in the UK, which is a smart recycling unit. This unit helps independent retailers prepare for the upcoming Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) without the high costs, complexity, or space requirements of larger supermarket systems.

The UK DRS will start on 1st October 2027. It will require retailers that sell drinks in plastic bottles or cans to accept those empty containers back from customers and give them a small refund per item. Each container will have a barcode that must be scanned and checked in a national DRS database before a refund is given.

For large supermarket chains, the solution is a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) - a £10,000+ machine that scans and stores returns on site. However, most of the UK's 50,000 independent convenience stores don't have the space or funds for that technology, yet they're still legally required to participate - and failing to do so could lead to fines when the DRS begins.

The Trovr QUBE solves that problem. It's roughly the size of an ATM and fits into a corner or near a store entrance, and has the option to connect to the national DRS. Customers simply deposit their cans or bottles, which are scanned, weighed, and securely stored inside the unit. A unique anti-fraud verification system ensures that only eligible containers are accepted.

Retailers can use the Merchant Dashboard to monitor collections, payments, and footfall - and even create in-app offers that convert recycling activity into repeat visits. At the same time, customers can process their refund via the typically used paper token or digitally via the app, which also lets them store rewards, donate to charity, or redeem value in participating stores.

Trovr's founder and CEO Nick Yeatman said: *"The DRS will reshape how people interact with local shops. Every bottle and can bought will have a 20p deposit attached, and that money has to go somewhere. If customers can't return their containers easily, they'll go to the nearest store that lets them. We built the QUBE to make sure this shift doesn't leave behind independent retailers. It's affordable, plug-and-play, and ready for the 2027 rollout."*

Kaual Patel, owner of Torridon Convenience Store in Catford, one of Trovr's first UK users, said: *"Before Trovr, I had no idea how DRS would actually work in a small shop like mine. We don't have the space or staff to deal with piles of bottles behind the counter. The QUBE fits neatly in one corner and just works. It's clean, secure, and customers genuinely enjoy using it. They feel like they're doing the right thing, and it's brought a bit of buzz back into the shop. It keeps things tidy, saves us time, and shows we're doing our bit for the environment. It's a win all round."*

Kaual Patel, owner of Torridon Convenience Store in Catford

Trovr's QUBE units are already live in Malta, Romania, Poland, and Austria. The initial UK rollout phase has just begun, with the first units now installed at a small number of independent retailers in London. This follows a recent successful trial of the Trovr app with other recycling units at leisure centres and colleges, in partnership with West Suffolk Council.

Trovr's hardware and software are built around a secure IoT platform that uses barcode and weight-sensing technology, along with remote telemetry, to track every transaction. All data is stored in compliance with DRS scheme operators' databases, ensuring full traceability and fraud prevention.

For more information on Trovr QUBE, visit ***https://trovrqube.trovrtech.com/***

Endolys to build plastic film recycling facility in Darlington

Endolys, a chemical recycling company, has chosen Tees Valley to build what it describes as the UK's first large-scale facility for recycling plastic film.

The plant will be located on the former Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Company site in Darlington, which has been empty since 2021.

The project will occur in two phases and create up to 120 jobs. The first phase, funded with £60 million, will have six production units. This phase will process 60,000 tonnes of shredded plastic film waste each year, producing 40,000 tonnes of pyrolysis oil.

The second phase will double the input and output, but it depends on additional investment. All materials will come from waste facilities.

If planning and environmental approvals are granted, Endolys expects phase one to start operations by the end of 2026.

Endolys CEO Michael Fox said: *"This is an exciting project that will create quality jobs in the recycling field. It will also help the circular economy by preventing plastic waste, including single-use items like cups, straws, and bags, from going to incineration or landfill, turning them back into a useful product."*

The plant will use technology from Niutech Environment Technology Corporation, which is already in use at 40 plants worldwide. Intelect, a local engineering company, will handle the installation work.

Endolys has a deal with a global oil distribution company to buy all the plant's output. The pyrolysis oil will be stored at Navigator Terminals' facility at Seal Sands for export to the European petrochemical market.

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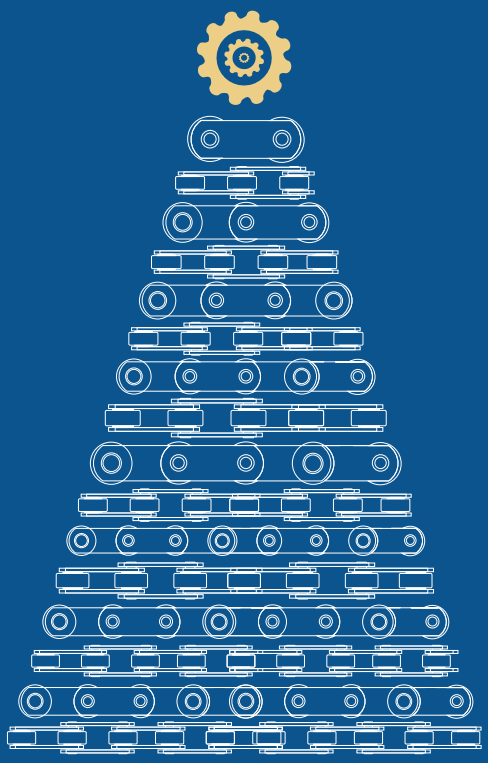

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TRACEY WESTBURY
Director – Westbury Environmental Limited
Tracey has worked in the waste industry for over 35 years across all sectors. She now acts as a consultant supporting small - medium site operators providing advice and services in waste regulation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

BUSINESS CLINIC CONSULTANCY

A look ahead to 2026

Next year is shaping up to be the year the waste sector gets properly shaken by regulation - not just nudged. For skip hire and waste operators, the big themes are clear: more activities forced indoors, a hard shift to digital tracking, and a clampdown on the "grey areas" that used to sit quietly under exemptions.

Here's a round-up of what's actually coming down the line, based on current government and Environment Agency (EA) publications - no crystal balls, just what's already on paper.

At the heart of this is the Environment Agency's 2022 standard rules permit sets, particularly SR2022 No 4 for non-hazardous waste recycling and transfer. The older, looser rules have been retired and replaced with tighter conditions that bring the Agency's "appropriate measures" guidance directly into permits.

The most visible change is the requirement for many activities to be carried out inside an enclosed building (by 19th June 2026 for sites that have transitioned to the new std rules). For the more odorous, dusty, or fly-attracting wastes, storage, handling, and treatment must be indoors by default, not a nice-to-have. Only certain bulky or inert wastes are given more flexibility, and even then, there are limits on sites near homes or workplaces, or in areas with air quality problems.

That's a fundamental shift for traditional open-yard transfer stations and skip yards. Operators will need to decide whether they can realistically meet these conditions under standard rules, invest in buildings and physical controls, or bite the bullet and move to a bespoke permit that fits how the site actually runs. Doing nothing and hoping the EA doesn't notice is not a strategy.

Running alongside this is the roll-out of the new Digital Waste Tracking service. From 2026, the UK is moving away from scattered paper notes and spreadsheets towards a single national system where every load of waste gets a digital record and a unique ID. The intention is simple: close the data gaps that have allowed misdescription, disappearing loads and illegal dumping to hide in the system.

For skip hire and transfer stations, that means getting serious about the basics: correct EWC codes, clear descriptions, accurate quantities and honest routing. Receiving Sites are likely to be in the first wave expected to use the system, so the days of sorting out the paperwork "later" after a busy day on the weighbridge are numbered.

On top of this, reforms to waste carriers, brokers, and dealers, and the tightening of the waste exemptions regime are all part of the same push against waste crime and poor practice. New charges for many exemptions and closer scrutiny of how they are used will make it harder to use exemptions as an unofficial overflow for permitted sites.

Put bluntly, 2026 is not about a single new rule that can be filed away and forgotten. It's the year when higher physical standards, better data and tougher enforcement all start to bite at the same time. Operators who review their permits, get EMS's in order, invest in infrastructure where needed for enclosed operations, and get their digital tracking systems in order will be the ones who stay ahead of the curve, rather than being dragged along by it.

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

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Limetrack raises £1.3m to scale SMART Bins ahead of UK's 'Simpler Recycling' rollout

Limetrack, a leading food waste technology company, has secured over £1.3 million in funding to boost its growth in the UK and Europe. The company has created a SMART, Internet of Things (IoT) food waste bin that automatically weighs, tracks, and reports food waste and carbon emissions. This helps businesses reduce waste, save money, and comply with new recycling rules.

Many organisations are already using Limetrack's technology, including NHS Trusts, independent schools, office buildings, hotels, restaurants, and care homes, as well as large UK waste management companies.

The new funding includes a £1 million loan from Innovate UK, the Government's innovation agency, and £320,000 in equity from waste industry partners, and private investors.

The funds will help Limetrack increase production capacity for its next-generation SMART bins, allowing the company to meet both current and future demand, which exceeds 5,700 units for 2026. This will help raise production from 20 to 250 bins per week within the next year.

Andy King, Limetrack's co-founder and CEO, said: *"Our goal is to make measuring food waste easy, so businesses can accurately track and report while reducing costs and carbon emissions. With 10.7 million tonnes of food wasted every year in the UK, there's a huge opportunity. The new 'Simpler Recycling' laws also provide a legal and financial incentive."*

Limetrack's innovative technology represents a significant advance in reducing food waste and promoting sustainability, positioning the company as an important partner for organisations trying to meet environmental and regulatory goals in the UK and Europe.

CIWM announces winner of 2025 Hack the Loop Hackathon

The Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) is pleased to announce the winner of the 2025 Hack the Loop Hackathon, which took place last month. This event brought together innovative minds to devise solutions to significantly reduce textile waste and promote circularity in the fast-fashion sector.

The winning team, Group 5, led by industry expert Gary Walpole, included talented participants Sammy Smithson, Bhavna Palli, and Lily Dunkley. Their proposed solution - ***a Circular Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for Clothing*** - operates at the brand level. It encourages consumers to return garments at the end of their lifecycle in exchange for a deposit refund, which can be used for future purchases.

Here's how it works: When a consumer buys a garment, they pay a deposit (for instance, a £100 t-shirt might include a £50 refundable credit). Once the clothing has reached the end of its use, the customer returns it to the brand and receives their deposit back as store credit. The returned garments are processed domestically, minimising the environmental impact of global shipping and increasing traceability. They are then recycled into new fibres, which are used to produce fresh garments that reflect current trends and styles - effectively closing the loop in a sustainable and responsible fashion cycle.

In addition to developing sustainable solutions for products that would otherwise be discarded, the Hackathon played a crucial role in introducing students to resources and insights in the waste sector. This engagement is essential for addressing the growing skills gap within the sector and nurturing the next generation of waste management and circular economy experts.

Judges praised the scheme for being a forward-thinking, scalable approach that effectively combines sustainability with brand loyalty and consumer engagement. Katarina Rimarcikova, FHEA, highlighted its alignment with industry trends, such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the shift toward servitization, in which companies offer circular services rather than one-off products. She described the idea as a *"smart, scalable approach that creates a continuous, circular production loop"* and positions brands as responsible stewards of their products.

John Twitchen emphasised that the concept is closely aligned with future EPR systems, enabling manufacturers to retain responsibility for their products beyond the point of sale. Michael Cusack commended the scheme for its simplicity and financial viability, noting that it is an effective way to treat textiles as a resource rather than waste, thereby significantly reducing emissions.

The winners will be featured on CIWM's *Circular Online* news platform and will receive an exclusive opportunity to have a personalised call with an industry expert. This mentorship can provide valuable insights into career development or help refine their innovative idea further.

The Hackathon was conducted in partnership with leading institutions, including the Circular Economy Institute, Cardiff University, CEIC Wales, the University of Leeds, the University of Exeter, the Exeter Centre for Circular Economy, and the University of Edinburgh.

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Essity turns sanitary paper waste into animal bedding in UK first

Essity, the global hygiene and health company behind brands like Cushelle and Bodyform, has started a recycling partnership with Veolia and Arden Wood Shavings. They aim to turn toilet paper and paper towels into bedding for livestock.

This is the first time in UK manufacturing that hygiene paper waste has been reused in this way. Instead of going to landfill or being burned, paper products can now support farms.

Essity, Veolia, and Arden Wood Shavings have changed a major waste stream from Essity's Stubbins Mill in Ramsbottom, Lancashire and Prudhoe Mill in Northumberland into kiln-dried bedding products. These products, called Agribed and Agrisoft, are now widely used in the livestock sector, especially in dairy and poultry.

UK paper mills produce a lot of non-harmful leftovers. These fibres were discarded during the pulping process and considered waste. Now known as paper crumb, this material has received full Product Status, meaning it is officially recognised as a useful product.

The partnership currently works between Stubbins Mill and Veolia's processing facility, with some paper crumb also coming from Essity's Prudhoe Mill. Since May 2024, Stubbins has collected 20,700 tonnes of this material, all of which has been processed into Agribed and Agrisoft bedding.

The kiln-drying process reduces the moisture content of the paper crumb from an average of 45% to between 10 and 8%. This creates a safe, absorbent bedding primarily for poultry farming.

Mark Jackson, Operations Manager at Essity, emphasised that their initiative prevents waste from going to landfill, reducing emissions and environmental impact while benefiting local communities.

Essity's Stubbins Mill in Ramsbottom, Lancashire. *© Phil Nelson Creative*

For example, a broiler farm in North Yorkshire with 260,000 birds uses paper-crumb bedding that effectively manages moisture, resulting in fewer top-up bales and saving time and money.

As demand increases, Veolia plans to expand distribution to the commercial poultry meat market and explore more opportunities.

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 five 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

The enforcement of waste crime is not being prioritised

Further to my article last month on the House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee evidence, I was interested to read this response to their letter sent to the Government from the Environment Agency last month: *"It is completely untrue that we prioritise compliance over non-compliance. That is a complete misreading of the situation."*

These photographs show a mountain of fly-tipped waste literally outside my client's regulated site, where they have had multiple visits from officers over the last few months. A cup of tea was offered, and a walk around by polite and friendly staff, including a WAMITAB holder and the company Director on each occasion. They have to drive past these piles of waste to get to my client's site.

In correspondence with the Agency about the associated CAR forms which complain about a skip being stored in the wrong place and some waste which spilled outside the building whilst machinery was being repaired and then accusations of permit breaches and fire risk, client has taken the opportunity to report this fly-tip, and has repeatedly drawn this issue to the officers' attention over weeks and months. Photos have been sent showing quantities well over a tipper load (therefore squarely in their remit) and also pointing out they must have seen it on their way in and out themselves.

We expected the response to be along the lines of: *'thank you so much for bringing this to our attention and reporting it, much appreciated, we will take action and also inform the Joint Unit for Waste Crime (JUWC)'.* Maybe even arrange to install CCTV.....

The response was in fact this: *'Responsibility for fly-tipping does not rest solely with the Environment Agency, rather it is led by the local authority with support provided by the EA where appropriate. Fly-tipping in the area has no bearing on XX's requirement to comply with the conditions of their permit(s).*

'We are aware that you have raised this issue on several occasions previously, and we have repeatedly clarified our position on this. We therefore do not intend to address this point in any further correspondence with you'.

The fly-tipped waste remains there for weeks on, with *(at the time of writing this column)* an additional bath deposited that visitors have to drive around to get to the site. I would suggest that this is more of a fire risk than my client's contained, managed, permitted, and securely locked site.

Can't quite understand how this is 'not prioritising compliance over non-compliance' myself.

GOT A QUESTION
ASK THE EXPERTS

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***

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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

It's all gone digital!

I was pondering what to write about this month, as it's been 20 years since I first penned an article, as *Enviroman,* on the subject of the Duty of Care. Quite a bit has changed, including the Duty of Care Code of Practice, issued in 2018. Back in 2005, we were all using paper-based systems and local servers, before cloud filing became a thing. Now, many waste companies maintain electronic records of their waste transfers using a variety of systems, so it's no surprise that Defra wants to introduce an electronic system to improve wider duty of care compliance.

The Digital Waste Tracking Service, as it's known, is much discussed and not well understood in equal measure. Delays in implementing the rollout haven't helped, but it is coming in October 2026. Defra is now carrying out beta tests and is looking for waste companies and software providers to give it a try. I think we still have a mountain to climb with regard to duty of care compliance in its current form, so a massive effort will be needed to get everyone in shape for the new system.

What effect it will have on reducing waste crime is anyone's guess, as legitimate operators will use the system and criminals will not. I do fear that it will be another stick to beat permitting sites with, rather than achieving the lofty aim of widespread compliance.

From spring 2026, the new IT service will be available for all permitted and licensed receiving site operators to try out, with legislation expected in April 2026 from all nations to bring the system into service by the planned date for receiving site operators. In April 2027, the service will expand to other operators *(more to follow).*

The system will be cradle-to-grave, with each waste collection assigned a unique tracking ID (created by the waste carrier) and the movement digitally recorded and logged by the receiving site. Records are expected to be submitted within two working days of each movement and retained for two years (no change in timescale). I presume that all details required to be on a waste information (transfer) note will remain the same as required by the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

Let us have your thoughts on the beta if you become involved, and we'll cover the good and the bad bits.

With digital recording in mind, it's worth remembering that all documentation could be useful at some point in the future, so rather than discarding old documents, scan and keep them. Imagine a scenario where a regulatory body serves a notice on you or your business, and your defence or appeal rests on the existence of documentation you can't lay your hands on, but you know you had it once.

I have scanned records that go back 28 years and regularly put them to practical use, often when regulators do not have a copy. Cloud storage is cheaper than paper storage ever was, and most copies have scanners built in, so there's no excuse not to keep anything that may at some point be of use.

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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Majestic signs lease for new Wrexham recycling facility

Majestic Corporation Plc has decisively signed a lease for a new 50,000 sq ft recycling facility in Wrexham, Wales, solidifying its commitment to expanding its capacity for processing electronic waste, battery materials, and renewable energy components.

This five-year lease, valued at £130,000 annually, has been executed between Majestic's subsidiary, Telecycle Europe, and Wrexham Holdings, a company owned by Majestic's chairman and chief executive, Peter Lai.

This agreement falls under related party transaction regulations; however, the board - excluding Lai - has confirmed that the terms are "fair and reasonable" for shareholders.

The new facility will effectively address the escalating demand for sustainable waste processing across the UK and Europe, enhancing operations alongside Majestic's existing 4,000 sq ft site in Deeside.

Peter Lai declared this expansion a pivotal move in the company's growth trajectory.

"By increasing our capacity to handle complex waste streams, we are not just meeting rising demand; we are ensuring that a greater amount of this critical processing occurs right here in the UK," he emphasised.

"This translates to delivering more value to our customers with improved efficiency."

Majestic, listed on London's Aquis Exchange, remains focused on recycling non-ferrous metals and developing circular economy solutions that significantly reduce environmental impact and resource waste.

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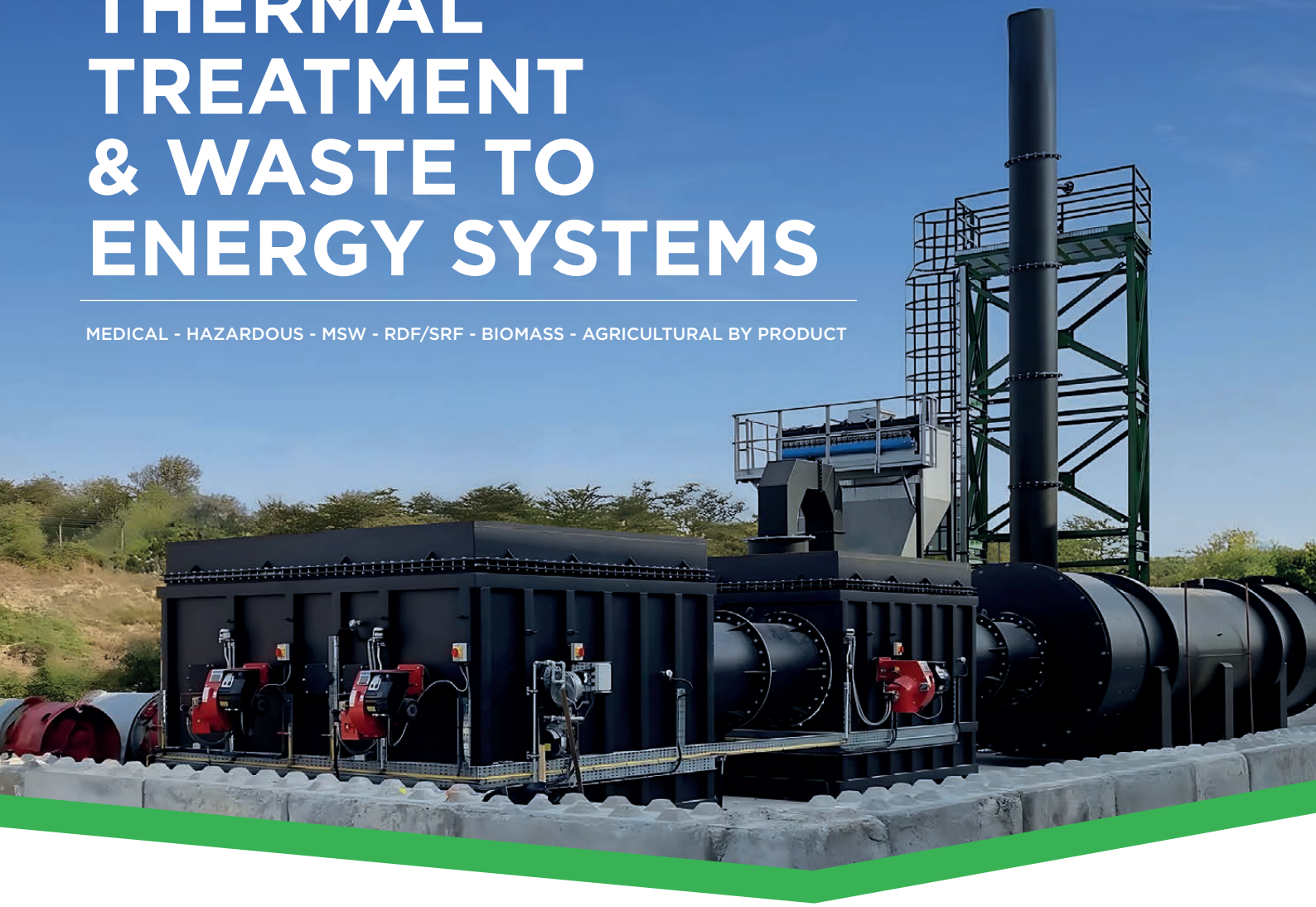

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Cigarette filters do nothing for smokers' health and create plastic pollution - why they should be banned

DR JONATHAN LIVINGSTONE-BANKS
Lecturer & Senior Researcher in Evidence-Based Healthcare, University of Oxford

JAMIE HARTMANN-BOYCE
Assistant Professor of Health Promotion and Policy, UMass Amherst

Cigarette filters were widely introduced in the 1950s, ostensibly to make smoking less harmful. With growing public concern about lung cancer and other smoking-related diseases, the tobacco industry responded not by making cigarettes safer, but by making them seem safer. Filters were the perfect innovation - not for health, but for public relations.

Over 70 years later, we know that filters don't reduce harm. In fact, they may exacerbate some risks. By softening smoke and making it easier to inhale deeply, filters may actually raise the risk of lung cancer. In the early 1950s, one popular filter type even contained asbestos. Despite this, most smokers today still believe filters make cigarettes safer.

Beyond the health deception, cigarette filters create an environmental disaster. They're made of a plastic called cellulose acetate. They don't biodegrade but break down into microplastics, polluting our rivers and oceans.

And there are a lot of them. Cigarette butts are the single most littered item on the planet. An estimated 4.5 trillion are discarded each year, and roughly 800,000 metric tonnes of this plastic waste enters the environment annually. While legislation has restricted other single-use plastics like bottles, bags and straws, cigarette filters have largely escaped such regulatory attention.

Under pressure, some tobacco companies now market "biodegradable" filters made from new materials. But these are a false solution. Even so-called biodegradable filters offer no health benefit and continue to pollute ecosystems. They serve the industry by creating an illusion of environmental responsibility, all while maintaining the false perception that filters themselves are benign or necessary.

So why not ban cigarette filters outright?

Cigarette filters are among the most harmful single-use plastics still in global circulation. And unlike many other pollutants, they serve no essential purpose. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control already advises against measures that sustain the perception of reduced harm, and cigarette filters fall squarely into that category.

Banning cigarette filters would remove the illusion of safety they create. It could reduce smoking prevalence, as unfiltered cigarettes are generally harsher and less palatable. And it would eliminate one of the most widespread sources of plastic pollution, preventing hundreds of thousands of tonnes of plastic waste each year.

If we can ban plastic straws, surely we can ban cigarette filters. In fact, it's already been done. Santa Cruz, California, voted to ban cigarette filters in 2024.

Now is the perfect time to act. Plastics are on the global conscience. Recently,

HAVE YOUR SAY!

"When we worked on nutrient analysis in the 1990s, the tech expert advising us suggested we use cigarette filters as a cheap way to prescreen samples.

"With a wry smile on his face, he described the chemical purity of these as being extremely high because, heaven forbid that the manufacturers should want to harm their customers! " - KJ Flynn

"The filter tip enables the smoker to utilise all except a few millimetres of the tobacco, for which they have paid tax. Without the filter, the smoker will be unable to consume the last 15 millimetres or so, because they have to find a way to hold the cigarette without burning their fingers.

"If smokers are soon to be denied that use, will the Government reduce the tobacco tax to compensate for the tobacco wasted as a consequence of a filter ban? I doubt it! This ban won't work! The conversation around it, though, gives an opportunity to develop a suitable biodegradable filter alternative, or we go back to using cigarette holders. " - Colin Cook

We managed to ban plastic straws, so why not cigarette filters?

in Geneva, world leaders negotiated what could become the first legally binding UN treaty addressing plastic pollution from production to disposal. This treaty is a rare opportunity to tackle the root causes of plastic waste globally.

The current draft of the treaty includes cigarette filters, but only partially. Plastic cigarette filters are listed in Annex X, a category concerned with voluntary or mandatory restrictions. This leaves room for continued use, including so-called "eco" filters, and does not mandate a total phase-out.

If all cigarette filters (not just plastic ones) were listed in Annex Y, they would be subject to a complete, mandatory ban. The negotiations ended without a final agreement, and will continue at a later date, meaning there is still time to act.

Health and environmental groups, including the World Health Organization, Action on Smoking and Health, and the Stop Tobacco Pollution Alliance, are calling for strong commitments on cigarette filters. What could be stronger than an outright ban?

Banning filters won't end smoking overnight or eliminate plastic pollution. But it would be a meaningful and symbolic step toward aligning environmental and public health goals. It would remove a harmful and misleading product from the market, reduce pollution and make cigarettes more honest.

This article first appeared at www.theconversation.com

LOOKING AHEAD - FUTURE FEATURES

JANUARY 2026: ISSUE 240
Plant machinery & equipment for recycling & construction

FEBRUARY 2025: ISSUE 241
Industry vehicles: Skip hookloaders, RCVs, electric etc.

MARCH 2026: ISSUE 242
Software systems for skip hire & waste management

APRIL 2025: ISSUE 243
Dust suppression systems & odour control.
Fire protection & site safety

MAY 2026: ISSUE 244
Compactors & balers

JUNE 2026: ISSUE 245
Plant machinery & equipment for recycling & construction.
Hillhead preview

JULY 2026: ISSUE 246
Energy from Waste (EfW) - renewable energy sources

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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

Who are we kidding?

Soon after I'd joined East Ayrshire Council in 1996, an Admin Officer came to see me after a Committee Meeting. *'I've heard one of your hobbies is genealogy',* he said: *'I'm sure if you could research back far enough, you'd find you're probably a direct descendant of the wee boy who shouted out 'the Emperor isn't wearing any clothes. Seriously, some of the Councillors are a bit unnerved with your habit of plain and forthright speaking when they ask you questions'.*

I told him I'd been trained by a Municipal Engineer whose view was that, as Professional Officers, we weren't doing the job properly if we didn't offer objective, disinterested advice, and that sometimes we'd have to tell the politicians things they might not want to hear.

And although I'm now long retired, I can't keep quiet if I think people are only telling half a story.

Nowadays, a lot of people are making a good living on the 'net zero' and 'circular economy' bandwagons. On paper, the UK's contribution to global emissions is supposed to be around 1%, so even if we could manage to reduce that figure, it would be very hard to produce demonstrable evidence of the fact.

We brag about our ban on fracking, but are quite happy to import gas that has been fracked in the USA, then shipped here across the Atlantic. Apparently, the carbon footprint and other emissions associated with fracking and transporting this gas aren't included in our emissions data. We also hold up the heavily subsidised Drax Power Station as a totem of being run on 'green' feedstock, which in fact is produced from the felling of vast acres of Canadian forests, which are then chipped and shipped to the UK. As with the fracked gas, the associated emissions aren't counted.

Our massive investment in wind energy is justified by the reduction in fossil fuel consumption it achieved, but at what price? What other business can expect to be paid when they don't deliver any goods or services? The windfarm operators get paid when there's no wind or if it's too windy to use their windmills. Most of the equipment is manufactured outside the UK, so again the manufacturing emissions aren't counted as 'ours'! And as was indicated in our September edition, we'll have hundreds of tonnes of derelict windmills to be landfilled between 2035 and 2050. Will this tonnage be included in our annual landfilling data?

But to play the Devil's Advocate, if the UK was to be saddled with all these 'discounted' emissions, we'd be looking at a significant increase, and any reductions would be more easily measured - but how could these then be achieved?

We no longer have access to lower energy costs from fossil-fuel-powered power stations, so if we were to reinvest in heavy industries in the UK, our production costs would be much higher than those of our overseas competitors: that would increase our cost of living and limit our ability to export our products. And increasing the number of wind farms would also improve our emissions.

Arguably, one solution would be more investment in nuclear power plants, but that brings its opponents, who highlight the 'how will we deal with the long-term problem of storing nuclear waste' issue? I'd argue that we seem to be doing a fairly reasonable job so far, and who knows, in the next three or four decades, somebody might find a way of recycling or reusing it?

The Lords' Inquiry has recently criticised the Environment Agency for its performance on preventing and prosecuting waste crime. Weren't we promised that the EA would do a better job than the Councils were doing before?

It's been announced that two of our biggest players in the recycling sector are closing their plastic reprocessing plants. How can that help improve our recycling performance?

Nearer to home, it saddens me that Zero Waste Scotland, with all its staff, has supposedly spent £1 billion since its launch, yet the Scottish recycling rate is exactly the same as before.

So I ask again: are we just kidding ourselves when we brag about what we're doing to protect the environment in the UK, or is it all just a con to keep people in work?

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