

Permit success eases access

Somerset's vehicle permits scheme has proved so successful that Somerset Waste Board has, after a full review and listening carefully to residents, decided to allow vans, pick-ups and car-towed trailers access whenever recycling sites are open, including all weekends.

Other simplifications include a clearer way to identify vehicles requiring permits by using their N1 registration category, and adding all campervans and minibuses to the system.

A report on the permit scheme's first six months found that it achieved all its aims: to cut congestion, control illegal commercial users, bar out-of-county visitors from holding permits, maintain safety and improve services.

Some 22,000 Somerset residents with vans, pick-ups and car-towed trailers took a minute to order a free permit online directly or via a library.

Recycling site staff have seen a decrease in commercial users taking advantage of busy sites to sneak in waste they must legally pay to dispose of, while many out-of-county visitors have been barred from using sites.

The amount of waste brought in by illegal and out-of-county users has been cut significantly, saving hundreds of thousands of pounds, but forecasts of a rise in fly-tipping proved wrong, with overall dumping figures for Somerset falling to a five-year low.

For permit scheme information, visit www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/permits

Progress and potential

Statistics presented to Somerset Waste Board's recent AGM show both recycling progress and potential.

Somerset's recycling rate is almost unchanged at 52.71%, which past results suggest will beat South West and England averages. Good results for plastic bottles, glass, garden waste, cardboard, metals, paint and food waste, balanced lower figures for paper, food and drink cans, motor and cooking oils, and electrical goods. Recycling sites performed very well, with throughput down 1,935 tonnes to 71,709 tonnes and an average recycling rate up by 0.67% to 76.59%.

Careful analysis of Somerset household refuse showed that food was around one-third (by weight) of the average rubbish bin, yet Somerset's anaerobic digestion plant could transform all that into electricity and agricultural compost for local farmers.

Bin warning and food hints

Fire risks and food waste have prompted strong advice from SWP, with a warning to take care to not start a fire in your rubbish bin or black sacks, and hints about both better storage of ingredients and leftovers, and how to keep pests from your food waste.

After summer barbecues, residents are urged to drench the ashes with water or let them cool completely to avoid

rubbish fires threatening homes, and to never add these risky items to rubbish:

- * Household or vehicle batteries that may short out or cause sparks.
- * Broken glass, which could act as a magnifying lens if not carefully wrapped.
- * Aerosols that may get hot or be pierced during collection and landfilling.

To avoid the risk of pests in food waste, the advice is simple: never add any food to rubbish, keep food waste bins closed and in the shade, double bag smelly waste in rubbish, ensure food waste bins are clean and use compostable liners or wrap food in newspaper.

For more summer advice, visit www.somersetwaste.gov.uk.

Keep trucking, safely

It is essential that residents, whether on foot or in their own vehicles, take care around stop-start recycling or rubbish trucks, giving them plenty of space to do their job in tightly-packed residential areas and narrow country lanes. Never try to add items to the containers on recycling lorries – leave that to the crews – and keep well back from the loading area of rubbish trucks.

Latest media releases

Recent releases included:

- [Vehicle permit success brings full weekend access](#)
- [Beware: how your barbecue could cause a bin blaze](#)
- [Glastonbury traffic caution prompts early waste action](#)
- [Clear advice: simple ways to great glass recycling](#)
- [Get composting for Compost Awareness Week](#)

Somerset Waste Board

SWP is the executive arm of SWB, with two members nominated by each of the six Somerset partner councils, one of which must be the portfolio holder for waste and/or the environment. The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected at the Board AGM from its membership.

SWB's next meeting will be held on Friday 29 September 2017. For details of SWP, SWB and waste services: www.somersetwaste.gov.uk.

SWB membership by council is:

- **Mendip** – Cllrs Nigel Woolcombe-Adams (Vice Chair), Nigel Taylor
- **Sedgemoor** – Cllrs Dawn Hill, Gill Slocombe
- **Somerset County** – David Hall, Clare Aparicio Paul
- **South Somerset** – Cllrs Jo Roundell Greene, Derek Yeomans (Chairman)
- **Taunton Deane Borough** – Cllrs Patrick Berry, Steve Ross
- **West Somerset** – Cllrs Martin Dewdney, Brenda Maitland-Walker

SWB meeting agendas, papers and reports are available [online](#).

Information on SWP services

For all advice and information, visit www.somersetwaste.gov.uk. All partners' customer service helplines can assist with service enquiries.

SWP publishes the Sorted e-zine (sign-up on the website).

