

Update: Recycling Centres and Garden Waste

Summary

- **11 of Somerset's 16 recycling centres reopened on Monday for ESSENTIAL VISITS only, as per government guidance, and with restrictions on materials and vehicle access.**
- **The restrictions have been, by and large, followed. As a result the sites have coped and we have managed the flow of visitors while maintaining social distancing.**
- **After review, we are comfortable keeping the sites open as per the current arrangements and restrictions. We will review again next Thursday.**
- **The only change will be allowing trailers and 3.5 tonne vans (with the usual valid permits) access during the hours of 4pm and 6pm (weekdays). Gates will close promptly at 6pm.**
- **Garden Waste collections also restarted on Monday. Additional staff and vehicles have been deployed for period of 'catching up'.**
- **The service is successfully getting back up to speed, aside from issues with the online collection day checker (now resolved) and a data issue affecting a small number of collections.**
- **Recycling centre reopening and garden waste collections are being reviewed on a daily basis and we will inform you of any significant changes.**

Recycling Centres

Eleven recycling centres reopened Monday, having been closed since 24 March in response to the restrictions on non-essential travel and the 'Stay Home, Stay Safe' policy. Chard, Dulcote (Wells), Dulverton, Frome, Highbridge, Poole (Wellington), Priorswood (Taunton), Saltlands (Bridgwater), Street, Williton and Yeovil. These give a spread across the county and are those where it is easier to ensure social distancing and manage any queues.

These are open six days a week, Monday to Sunday (all sites closed on Thursdays) with restrictions on access and materials:

- **Odd and even number plate system**
 - **Odd on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday (for example 01, 03, 15, 19 etc)**
 - **Even on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday (for example 02, 04, 10, 12, 18 etc)**
- **Maximum two people per vehicle, and must be from the same household**
- **No trailers or large (3.5 tonne and over) vans except during the new allocated slot of between 4pm & 6pm)**
- **Only accepting: residual waste (rubbish you'd usually put in your black bag) garden waste, large electrical items (white good, TVs etc) and hazardous chemicals.**

By and large, the public has adhered to the restrictions with only a small number of issues where site staff have had to intervene. Thanks to this the sites have been able to cope with visitor numbers despite having around the half the usual number of unloading bays. So long as there are no significant issues over the weekend, we intend to continue the current approach next week as planned, apart from one minor change.

From Monday (18 May), trailers and 3.5 tonne vans will be allowed on sites between 4pm and 6pm on weekdays. To manage congestion, vans and trailers will need permits as usual. Other rules apply as normal, so no vans over 3.5 tonnes, no double axle trailer or vans towing trailers at any time. <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/apply-for-a-permit/>.

As planned, we expect the remaining five sites (Cheddar, Crewkerne, Castle Cary, Minehead and Somerton) to open from Tuesday, 26 May. These have needed more work to ensure that they can operate safely. We are constantly reviewing the situation and whether any of the restrictions, on access and materials, can be lifted sooner.

SWP is monitoring fly-tipping data from district colleagues. Overall, the figures are slightly up compared to the same period the previous year, but generally on a par with our long-term average. We expect the resumption of garden waste collections and access to recycling centres improve the situation and will continue to monitor this closely.

Garden Waste

Collections resumed on Monday for those who have subscribed for the service in 2020/21. The service has been temporarily bolstered by additional staffing and vehicles, but they are not able to collect garden waste not in bins or pre-paid sacks, from people not currently subscribed to the service, or if bins are over-full or too heavy.

Collections days will have changed in many cases, due to the start of the new contract. New collections days were included in subscription letters. Anyone who needs to check can do so using the My Collection Day button on the SWP website homepage. There have been intermittent problems with the IT behind this checking facility and this is now resolved. Should there be any further issues, the search facility available through the Sedgemoor District Council website has so far worked without disruption <https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/article/993?n=&e=&u=>

For a small number of customers, around 2%, have been provided with the incorrect garden waste collection details. Suez is currently honouring the date provided and we will be writing to those customers within the next week and ensuring that the situation is corrected. SWP has received several complaints surrounding the suspension of the service during late March. Those subscribers that do not wish to continue the service are being advised to order a garden waste bin removal from their property. The bin will be removed full and the contents transferred into the garden waste system at the depot.

Container deliveries and collections of bulky waste resumed two weeks ago and are going well, we have extended the expected delivery time to 20 days to cope with the demand and are prioritising garden waste, refuse and food waste bins.

For the latest information on Somerset Waste Partnership services please visit www.somersetwaste.org.uk and follow @somersetwaste on Twitter and Facebook.

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