

Warwickshire Waste Partnership - 10 June 2008

Home Composting Scheme

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy on behalf of the Officers Group

Summary

This report updates Members on the progress made regarding the countywide Home Composting Scheme.

Recommendation

That Members note the contents of this report.

1. Background

- 1.1 One of the County's targets for home composting, within its Waste Minimisation Strategy, is to have a minimum of 15% (30,000) of households across the County using home composters by 2011, and 25% by 2015.
- 1.2 As Members will be aware, over the past four years we have been working in partnership with the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP). This organisation have been providing home composters at very competitive rates to our residents. Last year prices were subsidised by WRAP and composters were sold at £10 for the 330 litre and £8 for the 220 litre bin. Each household received a leaflet outlining the promotion and the County sent out regular press releases. During 2007/08 a total of 5,275 bins were sold, making a grand total of 19,874 bin sales since the scheme began in 2004. Currently, 8.13% of households are composting at home as a result of purchasing compost bins through the WRAP Scheme.

2. Campaign 2008/09

- 2.1 From April 2008, due to being hit heavily with major budget cuts by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), WRAP have reduced their subsidy which has resulted in bin prices rising. Composters are now sold at £20 for the 330 litre and £17 for the smaller 220 litre bin.

3. Market Research

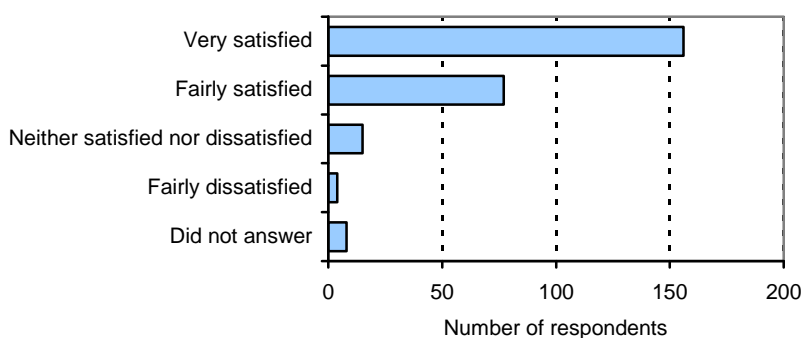
- 3.1 During March 2008, Warwickshire County Council distributed a questionnaire to 507 residents who had bought a compost bin from the WRAP Scheme over the

past few years. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine how many residents are still composting at home, how satisfied they are with their compost bins, the types of problems that users have encountered with them and, finally, to gauge the levels of interest in other forms of waste minimisation.

4. Key Findings

- 4.1 276 completed responses were received, this represents a healthy 54% response rate.
- 4.2 93% of respondents stated that they were still using their compost bin.
- 4.3 The main reason for respondents not using their compost bin any longer was that it was too big for their garden.
- 4.4 57% of respondents stated they were 'very satisfied' with their compost bin, 28% said they were 'fairly satisfied', 5% said that they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', 1% said they were 'fairly dissatisfied', the remaining 9% did not state how satisfied or dissatisfied they were.

Figure 1: Satisfaction with Compost Bins



- 4.5 Of those respondents still using their bin, 38% said they were 'very successful' in producing compost, 46% said that they were 'fairly successful', 9% said that they were 'not very successful' whilst 2% said that they were 'not at all successful'. Of the remainder, 4% did not state how successful they were at producing compost and 1% said it was too early to tell.
- 4.6 75% of respondents compost because it is good garden practice and 73% compost for environmental reasons. Other reasons why people compost are to reduce the amount of rubbish in their waste collection, because it's good for the garden, to save money on buying compost and it helps the children learn. Some compost simply because they enjoy it.
- 4.7 Of the respondents who had been 'very successful' or 'fairly successful' in producing compost, 47% had seen a big reduction in the amount of waste that they put out for collection, 42% noticed a small reduction, whilst 10% had not noticed any real change. The remaining 1% did not comment.
- 4.8 24% of respondents had encountered problems when using their compost bin, the most popular reasons experienced are displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Problems Encountered with Compost Bins

Problem	No. of Respondents Citing the Problem
Difficult to turn or extract compost from the bin	16
The bin attracts rats/mice/snakes	8
The bin falls apart	8
The bin/bin lid blows away in strong winds	5
The door at the base is not secure	5
The bin is too large	4
The process is very slow and won't take cooked waste	4
The bin attracts flies	4

- 4.10 Respondents were asked whether they thought that additional encouragement or support was necessary, 26% of respondents did not think that there was a need for any further encouragement or support. Of the respondents who did want further support, 10% thought that literature was necessary, 28% thought that a web page was necessary, 11% thought that a telephone help-line was necessary and 4% thought that seminars were necessary.
- 4.11 Other suggestions for further support and encouragement included displays at local shops, library exhibitions, providing wormeries, publicise the benefits on local TV and reducing Council Tax bills for those with reduced waste collection.
- 4.12 96% of respondents would recommend composting to others.
- 4.13 38% of respondents already have a second compost bin, 31% would consider a second compost bin, whilst 28% would not consider a second compost bin. The remaining 3% did not state if they would consider.
- 4.14 29% of respondents said that they would be interested in Green Cone composting (although there were some who didn't know what it involved), and 28% were interested in wormeries.
- 4.15 To support those who have indicated problems encountered with compost bins, a follow up advice sheet will be drawn up and sent to them. They will also be made aware of other information services such as the Warwickshire County Council Home Composting web page.

Enquiries: about this report should be made to Caroline Faulkner, Waste Minimisation Project Officer, 01926 412458, email carolinefaulkner@warwickshire.gov.uk

Background Papers

Home Composting file held within Waste Minimisation Group.

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