

# Somerset Waste Partnership

## Briefing for Members, Partners and Staff

### April 2020 - Coronavirus (COVI-19) special



#### Waste services - impact summary

- **Crews are collecting 300 tonnes extra recycling a week when staffing is down by nearly 60 people due to Coronavirus.**
- **Working closely with contractor SUEZ, we are maintaining core collections of recycling, clinical waste and rubbish.**
- **Easter weekend usually sees a spike in waste, so we are urging residents to avoid traditional Bank Holiday spring cleaning, DIY and gardening.**
- **As we offer guidance on how people can best manage their waste at this time, we need your help to share this as widely as possible.**

The crisis has affected both waste amounts and staffing levels to collect it.

Across Somerset, crews collected 300 extra tonnes of recycling and food waste last week, compared to the same week last year. This 20% rise is most likely due to people buying more online, eating in and tidying homes, garages and sheds.

At the same time, nearly 60 staff are not working, self isolated by symptoms in their families, and all recycling sites are temporarily closed until government travel restrictions are relaxed.

Together, these put a serious additional strain on services. We are working very

hard with partners and contractors every day to refocus resources and switch staff to maintain the priority collections of recycling, clinical waste and rubbish.

Given the usual spike in waste after Easter weekend, we are encouraging people to think first before gardening, spring cleaning or DIY unless they can store waste until recycling sites reopen.

#### Service draw-backs implemented:

- Garden waste – suspended. Subscriptions will be extended 12 months when collections restart.
- Bulky waste collections – suspended.
- Waste container delivery - suspended.
- Recycling collections – as usual but if rounds are missed, recycling will not be collected until the following week.
- Recycling sites – closed.
- Staff from suspended services have been redeployed to core tasks.

Rubbish and clinical waste collections continue as usual. If either of these are missed, use the My Waste Services menu at [www.somersetwaste.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk) to report this or district customer services: [www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/contact-us/](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/contact-us/)

For the latest updates on disruption and the steps to deal with waste, please visit [www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus) and follow @somersetwaste on Twitter and Facebook.

## **Parishes, councillors: Please share the following information widely.**

### **Advice and guidance**

Personal waste – if you have COVID-19 symptoms or someone in your household has symptoms, double bag all tissues, gloves and disposable cleaning cloths, keep separate for at least 72 hours, then put in the rubbish. No tissues, cleaning cloths or gloves in recycling. More detail here:

[www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus)

If your recycling collection is missed, take it in – we will prioritise you and be back next week. If for any reason, we miss that second week, report it and we will do our best to get back ASAP.

Put your boxes and food waste bin out by 7am and leave out late, so crews can complete delayed rounds. Park carefully so waste trucks can reach your home.

Store items you would otherwise drop off at recycling sites – do not add them to your rubbish. In particular, do not take risks with electrical items, batteries and gas canisters as these can cause a fire risk in your bin or the rubbish trucks.

Garden waste – leave it in the garden, home compost if it is practical and cut back on lawn moving and trimming until garden waste collections restart.

Do not burn waste – this affects people's health, causes pollution, annoys neighbours, and risks wasting fire crews' time. Do not fly tip – it is a crime and

will be prosecuted. This includes leaving waste outside closed recycling sites.

Sort recycling properly – putting the right things in the right boxes helps crews collect faster and collect more. If safe, crush, squash and flatten all waste – except glass and aerosols – to get more in recycling boxes or store.

Reduce your waste – reconsider cardboard-heavy online shopping, think of creative ways to use up leftovers, compost suitable foods if you can, reuse recycling materials for child activities or reuse plastic containers to store food.

If you have no recycling box or need more space, use alternative boxes of a similar size or smaller. Do not use larger containers that will be difficult to lift.

Carrier bags can be used, with each material in a separate box or bag, except that glass bottles and jars must be in a recycling box or similar, not in a bag, and food and drink cans, aerosols, foil and plastic bottles can go in together.

Do not use cardboard boxes for recyclable materials. If the box gets wet, a lot more materials will get dropped, broken or end up as litter.

### **Easter collection day changes**

No collections on Good Friday; instead, collections will be on Saturday 11 April. All collections next week will be one day later after Easter Monday, including Friday collections on Saturday 18 April.