

# wasteline

ISSUE 8 WINTER 2012/13



arc21 recycling up by over 400%

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arc21

## CEO FOREWORD



John Quinn

**Being prepared for the future is an issue arc21 takes seriously and for that reason we are delighted that the region's recycling figures are continuing to increase. The Department of the Environment has reported that there has been**

**an impressive 400%-plus increase in recycling rates in the arc21 region over the last ten years. Recycling and composting rates now stand at almost 40% which reflects a tremendous effort by the public and Councils.**

We are still a long way from the EU's top recycler, Austria, which has achieved a recycling and composting rate of 70%. However, with improving recycling habits and new services provided by local Councils and arc21, we are confident that further progress will be made.

With our new corporate plan for 2012-2015 and a revised Northern Ireland waste strategy 'Delivering Resource Efficiency' in process, we are taking significant steps towards meeting our 60% recycling target. This will be reinforced in our revised waste management plan which

will follow hot on the heels of the new strategy and will serve as our delivery blueprint going forward.

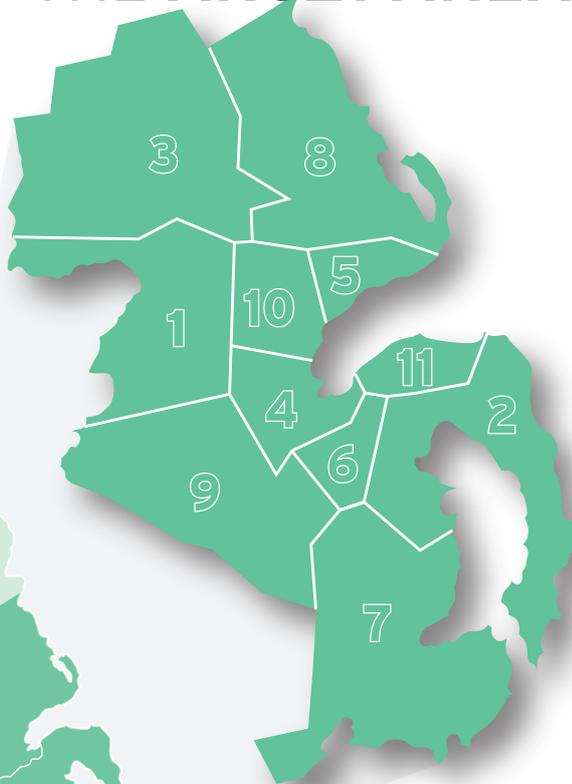
It is great to see more creative ways of reducing waste being employed by Councils, organisations and communities. In this issue we look at some fantastic initiatives including turning surplus food into a three-course Christmas dinner, Rubbish Monster Costume Design workshops and Upcycling craft masterclasses.

This year has also been a big year for electrical waste thanks to the Digital Switchover. Congratulations are due to everyone who has chosen to recycle their old TV sets responsibly. arc21 and its constituent Councils are also looking forward to making your life easier with a number of new household waste initiatives including kerbside glass collections and enhanced blue bin recycling. Watch out for details from your local Council about these new services in 2013.

### arc21 Councils

1. Antrim Borough Council
2. Ards Borough Council
3. Ballymena Borough Council
4. Belfast City Council
5. Carrickfergus Borough Council
6. Castlereagh Borough Council
7. Down District Council
8. Larne Borough Council
9. Lisburn City Council
10. Newtownabbey Borough Council
11. North Down Borough Council

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# ARC21 RECYCLING UP BY 400% SINCE 2002



## The Department of the Environment has published its Municipal Waste Management annual report, a veritable Aladdin's Cave of waste-related facts and figures.

The headline figures are very positive, with Northern Ireland's household recycling and composting rates continuing to improve to almost 40%. That's a 12% jump in the last five years and a 2.5% increase on the previous year.

The amount of waste going to landfill has also fallen, dropping 4% to 57% over the year - down from 72% in 2006/07. Overall, landfilled biodegradable waste collected by local councils fell by approximately 40,000 tonnes to 309,792, some 10,000 tonnes below the Northern Ireland target for the year.

### Municipal Waste Recycled

	TONNES		TONNES
<b>Glass</b>	12,951	<b>WEEE*</b>	6,683
<b>Metal</b>	7,114	<b>Batteries</b>	141
<b>Paper</b>	40,138	<b>Rubble</b>	16,495
<b>Compostable</b>	89,317	<b>Wood</b>	14,302

Environment Minister, Alex Attwood, said:

"Meeting this challenging target one year early is a major achievement and I would like to congratulate Councils across Northern Ireland who have contributed to this success. These figures indicate how we can stretch ourselves and how the ambition to be a world leader in carbon reduction is not beyond our ambition.

"Landfilling waste is simply a lost opportunity - we cannot afford to throw away valuable resources. How we tackle these and other issues are raised in the Department's on-going consultation on the draft revised Waste Management Strategy (Delivering Resource Efficiency). What does this mean?

"Only 30% of plastics generated in Ireland are recycled and of this, only 30% is recycled in Ireland. We can

recycle more plastics and we can do so on this island. This is the green agenda with green jobs."

Household waste accounts for the bulk (88%) of all municipal waste collected by councils. The total amount of household waste collected has decreased in the last decade, down by almost 8% from 902,454 tonnes in 2002 to 834,149 tonnes in 2011/12.

Taking population growth into account over the same period, there has been a 13% decrease in the amount of household waste collected per person, reducing from 532kg per head in 2002 to 461kg in 2011/12.

The report also contained some interesting details about the amount of waste being recycled from across the arc21 region. In total over 175,500 tonnes of waste was collected for recycling.

Since 2002 the amount of household waste sent to be recycled from arc21's councils has risen from 9.7% to 39.3%.

\* Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment



# TIRED OF TYRES?

**Every year the UK goes through an incredible 55 million waste tyres. In Northern Ireland it's estimated that the number of used tyres is 1.8m, creating 30,000 tonnes of waste annually. That figure has doubled since 2000, but worryingly only 17% of the waste is being recovered - despite the EU banning the landfilling of either whole or shredded tyres.**

If not properly reused, recycled or disposed of, waste tyres can damage the environment, affect local communities and undermine legitimate businesses.

Stormont's Environment Committee has been taking a look at the issue and concluded that, although things are improving, "significant amounts of used tyres are not being disposed of in a way that meets legal and environmental obligations".

While legislation already exists for the proper management of used tyres, many tyres are being handled illegally, partly because there is a lack of enforcement.

Used tyres can be put to a variety of useful purposes. They can be recycled into items such as flooring, road surfaces, furniture or shoes, utilised for flood defences or used to displace fossil fuels currently used in cement kilns. Plus, if they're in reasonable shape, they can be re-moulded and used as road worthy tyres.

Speaking to the Assembly in November, the Environment Minister, Alex Attwood, said that steps were being taken in response to the Committee's report. These included the first ever all-island tyre survey to identify the scale of the problem, the creation of a dedicated enforcement team at the Department of the Environment and the establishment of tyre fly-tipping pilot schemes with nine councils.

In Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland a much greater proportion of tyres are disposed of or are recycled properly.

It would be a 'wheely' good thing if Northern Ireland could match their efforts.

## RECYCLING ABOUT TO GET BETTER

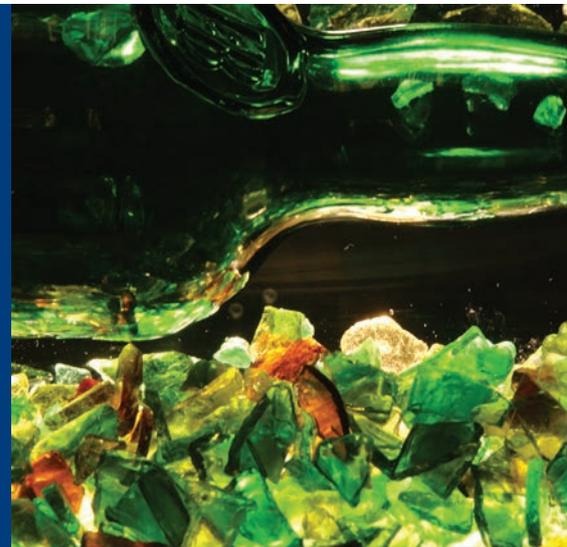
**arc21 is always looking for ways to make it easier to recycle and we're pleased to announce that changes are afoot. Next year arc21 and your local Council will be able to enhance what can go into your recycling bin and introduce a new service for glass collection which will help make life simpler.**

One question we often get asked is why can some plastic materials, eg, milk cartons, go into recycling bins but others can't? For instance, at present it's not possible to put rigid plastic containers such as butter and yoghurt tubs into your recycling bins. We're also asked why can't paper-based, waxed beverage cartons such as Juice Cartons go in the recycling bin?

Fortunately for arc21 - and Council staff across the region - we'll no longer get asked those questions as both rigid plastic containers and waxed beverage cartons will be able to go straight into your recycling bins. (The answers why they couldn't previously is that not all plastics are equal - different types of plastics require different recycling processes and those are now available. With regard to cartons, manufacturers such as Tetra Pak have introduced a new national scheme to support their recycling).

In 2013 these items will be recycled and turned into new products such as high quality paper in the case of cartons or new plastic containers.

The other major change - due to be introduced in 2013 - will be a new kerbside glass recycling scheme (this will only apply in those Council areas which



use wheeled recycling bins, not kerbside boxes).

Recycling glass at present usually involves a trip to a civic amenity recycling centre or a glass bank, and we know that storing up bottles and jam jars at home can be a bit inconvenient. So, problem solved and no more excuses!

Keep an eye out for more details from your local Council about when the new collection services will start and how they will work.

# A TITANIC AMOUNT OF WASTE

Belfast City Council has calculated that in 2011 the City sent 80,000 tonnes of waste to landfill - almost twice as much as the Titanic weighed. At the same time only 38,000 tonnes was recycled, which equates to recycling rate of 32%. It's estimated though that if everyone played their part, 70% of waste could be recycled.

These and more details are contained in the Council's 'Towards Zero Waste Action Plan (2012-2015)' which commits the Council to reducing the cost of managing waste and protecting the environment by:

- Promoting Waste Reduction
- Recycling More
- Going Beyond Legal Targets
- Sending Less to Landfill

Managing household waste cost ratepayers £15m in 2011, but there is scope for significant savings. Every bin lorry filled with black bin waste bound for landfill costs £800 to dispose of. The cost for a lorry filled with recyclable blue bin waste is just £80.

By 2015 the Council wants to achieve a recycling rate of 50% and it has identified eight key areas of work to help make this happen. Among the proposals are plans to:

- Introduce new food waste kerbside recycling for 50,000 homes
- Household collection of glass
- Open a new household recycling centre in Springvale Industrial Park
- Extend recycling services for businesses.

The full report can be downloaded from [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/waste](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/waste)

# BE SWITCHED ON TO SWITCHOVER

**The Digital Switchover is having a major effect on the number of old analogue TVs being recycled - so well done to everybody for being 'Switched On' about the need to recycle rather than dump unwanted TVs.**

Recycling officers at Lisburn City Council have reported that the number of TVs collected at its two civic amenity sites after the Switchover were significantly higher than last year.

Noeleen O'Malley, Lisburn City Council's Acting Assistant Director of Environmental Services, said:

**"In October 2011, 623 TVs and computer monitors were left at the Council's civic amenity sites with a total weight of 11.08 tonnes. During October this year, however, those figures jumped dramatically to 2,395 units and 43.32 tonnes. In November there was a similar picture at the Council's civic amenity site at the Cutts with 35.25 tonnes collected compared to just 18.38 tonnes last year.**

**"This is a significant increase and officers at the Cutts reported that they required, on average, one additional container per week to remove extra items following the Switchover. We're delighted that householders in Lisburn are so 'tuned into' the need to recycle!"**

Recycling officials at Belfast City Council, meanwhile, reported in October that they were taking in up to 1,000 TVs per day at sites.

Ricky Burnett, arc21's Operations and Policy Director, added:

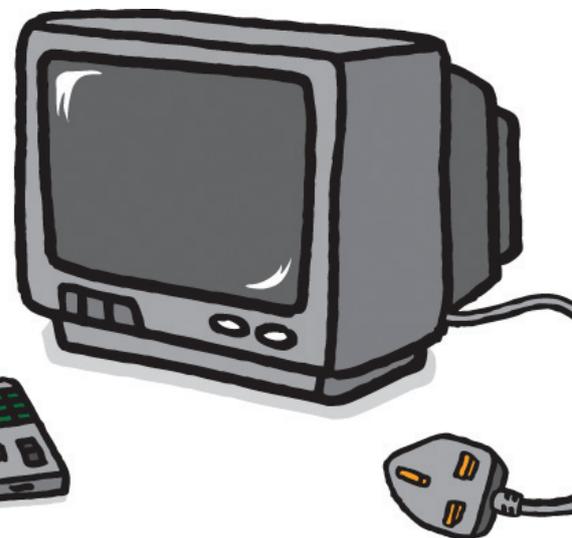
**"Not all of this additional electrical waste is TVs, of course, but a significant amount most certainly is and, while the amount of TVs being thrown away is likely to decrease now that the Switchover has been**

completed, there may still be people planning to get rid of existing sets. We would remind households that every TV can be upgraded with a set top box for the Switchover and call on anyone still seeking to dispose of unwanted sets to do so responsibly.

**"If they are still working, why not offer it to a charity shop or you could pass it on to another family through Freecycle, Freegle or other similar environmentally-friendly organisations. If your television doesn't work any longer and you wish to dispose of it, contact your local Council as it may be possible for it to be collected from your door as part of a bulky waste collection service."**

The Digital Switchover marked the conversion of television broadcasting from analogue to digital and would have impacted on any viewer in Northern Ireland's 650,000 households who received their TV signal via an aerial. It took place across the UK at different times during 2012, with the conversion happening in Northern Ireland on two dates during October.

The UK generates 1.8 million tonnes of WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) each year. When a television is recycled, valuable raw materials such as copper, plastic and metals can be extracted for recycling, the hazardous materials separated and the glass recycled back into the electrical industry to make new televisions.



# EURO ROUND-UP



Austria tops the recycling charts

**While we're all struggling to come to terms with the announcement that Poland and Portugal have declined to participate in next year's Eurovision song contest, there's still one Euro-wide chart worth watching - the national recycling figures!**

The official figures for 2010 show that there has been little change in how waste is treated across the EU's 27

member states. Recycling rates (including composting) for municipal waste stood at 40%, 22% was thermally treated (primarily in Energy-from-Waste projects) while the remaining 38% went to landfill - the same figure as 2009.

On average, each person in the EU generated 502kg of waste, down from the previous year's figure of 513kg. The reasons for the fall are probably due to the economic slowdown which is reducing consumer activity and a greater emphasis on the importance of reducing and reusing waste.

Top recycler for another year was Austria with a highly impressive combined recycling / composting rate of 70%. Germany and Belgium shared second place with 62%, just pipping the Dutch at 61%. The UK and Ireland, however, still have much to do, with both countries reporting a rate of 39%.

Six European nations send 3% or less of their waste to landfill with the Germans and Dutch sending no municipal waste at all to landfill. Around 40% of their waste is converted into renewable green energy at Energy-from-Waste plants (EfW).

Unfortunately for the UK, 49% of our waste is still been landfilled and only 12% is being utilised for EfW. Hopefully, the number of major new waste infrastructure projects coming on board combined with improving recycling habits among the general public will lead to significant improvements over the next few years.

While the UK may be putting in an average performance, other EU member states need to undertake major investments to improve their recycling / composting rates. The figure for five nations is less than 10% with Bulgaria coming bottom of the list - 100% of its municipal waste goes straight to landfill. Romania wasn't far behind with a recycling rate of just 1%.

## Euro Recycling Chart

	Municipal waste generated, kg per person	Landfilled	Energy from Waste	Recycled and Composted combined
Austria	591	1	30	70
Germany	583	0	38	62
Belgium	466	1	37	62
Netherlands	595	0	39	61
Sweden	465	1	49	50
UK	521	49	12	39
ROI	636	57	4	39
Romania	365	99	-	1
Lithuania	381	94	0	6
Slovakia	333	81	10	9
Lativa	304	91	-	10
Malta	591	86	-	13

# EURO ROUND-UP TAKE 2

**This summer the European Commission published a detailed look at how member states are implementing EU waste legislation. Given the large divergence in recycling rates across Europe (see pg 6) there's little surprise that there are also significant differences in national approaches to fulfilling legal obligations.**

Issues examined included the number of outstanding waste infringements, how municipal waste is treated (ie, recycling, energy recovery etc.), implementation of the polluter pays principle and future planning.

Nations were measured against detailed criteria and marked out of a possible 42 points. Ten states, including the UK, were judged to be performing above average. Top score (39) went to Austria and the Netherlands, with the UK coming eighth with 32 points.

The only area where the UK scored no points was the existence of bans / restrictions on municipal waste going to landfill, but it was in the top tier for recycling rates, markedly improved recycling rates over the past three years and forecasting future waste generation and treatment capacity in its Waste Management Plan.

Five nations were judged to be "average", including the Republic of Ireland (14th overall with 19 points), whilst the remaining 12 were deemed to have the "largest implementation gaps".

Scores in this group ranged between just three for Greece and 18 for Poland. Some states in this group still do not provide universal household collection of municipal waste and provision of recycling services are generally poor.

The Commission argues that, apart from environmental considerations, the lack of progress on legislation is hindering the development of the EU's waste management and recycling industry.

## EU Waste Management Performance

	Points (Out of 42)
Austria	39
Netherlands	39
Denmark	37
Germany	36
Sweden	35
Belgium	34
Luxembourg	33
UK	32
Finland	31
France	31
Slovenia	25
Spain	21
Portugal	21
Hungary	19
Ireland	19
Czech Republic	18
Poland	18
Estonia	17
Slovakia	17
Italy	15
Latvia	14
Cyprus	11
Romania	11
Lithuania	9
Malta	9
Bulgaria	8
Greece	3



# PAWS UP FOR CHARITY

**Bryson Recycling the kerbside recycling contractor who works with several of arc21's Councils has welcomed a cute new addition to the company following on from the success of its annual '£1 a tonne' campaign in partnership with Guide Dogs for the Blind.**

The cuddly new Guide Dog puppy will be named Bryson due to the amount donated to the charity. Bryson will spend the next year being trained in basic obedience and social skills followed by intensive Guide Dog training before being matched with a blind or partially sighted owner.

"We want to thank everyone who made a special effort for this year's '£1 a tonne' campaign, which raised nearly £6000 for Guide Dogs for the Blind. As a result we have now named our very own puppy Bryson who will be a great asset to the charity," said Claire McCallum, Communications Manager for Bryson Recycling.

"The annual campaign encourages householders to recycle as much as they can through our kerbside box service. This campaign runs from December to March each year and for every tonne of recycling we collect, we donate £1 to a nominated charity, which goes a long way to helping those in need."

Bryson Recycling, part of Northern Ireland's leading social enterprise, the Bryson Charitable Group, offers a weekly recycling collection service to over 170,000 homes across the province throughout areas including, Ballymena, Belfast, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh and Newtownabbey.

Over 6000 people in Northern Ireland are registered as either blind or having visual impairment and out of this around 100 people are currently supported with a guide dog. Training a guide dog costs up to fifty thousand pounds over its lifetime and as the charity receives no government funding it relies solely on the



**Claire McCallum, Communications Manager at Bryson Recycling.**

support of the public. Guide Dogs also provide a range of other mobility services and advice to hundreds more visually impaired people every year.

Kathryn Peart, District Fundraiser from Guide Dogs for the Blind added "We are hugely grateful for Bryson Recycling's

decision to support our Name a Puppy Scheme. It's a major first step in the process of preparing a guide dog for the life changing job of supporting a blind or partially sighted person."



**Back in October young people across Castlereagh Borough enjoyed revamping their tired trends at Rubbish Monster Costume Design Workshops. These 'spooktacular' workshops attracted over 65 participants and a 'fangtastic' time was had by all!**

Funded by the Department of Environment's Rethink Waste Campaign, the workshops encouraged participants to get creative and consider what they have in their own home that could be reused and recycled. Waste materials were also kindly donated by Cookstown Textile Recyclers to help the kids could create unique Halloween costumes.

# RUBBISH MONSTERS DESCEND ON CASTLEREAGH

The Mayor of Castlereagh, Alderman Michael Henderson MBE, said:

"The aim of the workshops was for children and parents to have fun, be creative and make a Halloween costume from unwanted clothes. We want people to think differently about waste and hope this is one way to encourage children and their families to do so".

Alderman Gareth Robinson, Chair of the Council's Technical and Environmental Services Committee, said:

"Halloween is a great opportunity to get creative with scrap materials around the house and that is what the Rubbish Monster workshops are all about. Not only have they been great fun, but they also send a really important and positive message about reuse and recycling. Around 25% of textile wastes is reused or recycled annually in the UK. We can help to increase this by recycling our unwanted clothes and buying second hand".

Owen Lyttle from the Department of the Environment's Rethink Waste campaign added:

"We are delighted to fund these workshops, and are really encouraged by the enthusiasm of everyone who came not only for Halloween celebrations, but the spirit of reducing our waste by reusing waste materials for Halloween costumes. These materials - which would otherwise often have been destined for landfill - mixed with a bit of creativity, are clearly shown to be a valuable resource.

"For more information and ideas on easy and quick ways to reduce, reuse and recycle all year round visit our website [www.rethinkwasteni.org](http://www.rethinkwasteni.org) - you might be surprised at the big difference you can make with very small changes to your everyday lifestyle!"

If everyone in the UK bought one piece of charity shop clothing each year, it would save millions of gallons of water, tonnes of chemical dyes and help countless local charities.

# LARNE LEAPS AHEAD

**It has been revealed that Larne Borough Council is Northern Ireland's most improved council for recycling.**

New figures published in the Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics Annual Report 2011/12 have shown that Larne Borough Council has increased the overall amount of waste sent for recycling or composting by almost 15% since 2010/11 - a success that is unmatched by any other district council in Northern Ireland.

Larne was also among the top two most improved district councils in terms of household waste sent for recycling or composting - an increase of over 7% between 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Geraldine McGaughey, Larne Borough Council's Chief Executive, said:



"It is a fantastic recognition of the vision and commitment of elected members and the dedication and effort of staff who secured funding close to £500,000 to roll out key projects that Larne Borough Council is the most improved council area in terms of recycling.

"A number of initiatives have impacted on the Council's success, in particular: the new household recycling centre at Larne south; the introduction of glass collection via blue bins; and the introduction of a contract whereby black bag waste disposed at recycling centres is sent for processing.

"We expect a further uplift this year due to the roll out of kerbside glass collection and a new contract which will enable additional materials to be added to the blue bin in the New Year.

"Of course, key to all of this activity is the continued enthusiasm and interest of residents. Once the new measures are in place we will be once again be engaging with, and aiming to motivate, all residents to maximise their recycling. Many people do not realise that it is possible to recycle up to 90% of household waste, so it remains a priority for the Council to ensure that residents are informed about the benefits of recycling and encouraged to play their part in improving Larne's recycling rates even further in 2013."

# EUROPEAN WASTE REDUCTION WEEK

**It wasn't a case of "too many cooks" when Environment Minister Alex Attwood joined gourmet chef Raymond McArdle in turning surplus food into a delicious three course Christmas dinner.**

The occasion, in support of the European Week of Waste Reduction, was hosted by the Council for the Homeless NI (CHNI) and FareShare Island of Ireland (IOI) to show how quality food which otherwise would be dumped, could be put to good use for homeless people.

The Minister rolled up his sleeves to help out with cooking and serving the food, and also joined some of the guests in sampling the festive meal.

Emphasising the contribution made by FareShare and CHNI, the Minister said: "Some months ago, I heard about a "meal" organised for hundreds of people from food that would otherwise be thrown out. It was a great idea. Today that idea came to Belfast.

"This meal, made from ingredients which would otherwise go to landfill, shows how initiatives such as FareShare can make a real difference. FareShare receives perfectly good food and redistributes it to a network of community organisations that support homeless and other vulnerable people.

"I commend FareShare and CHNI and their volunteers for the work they are doing in helping people in such difficult economic times. I also thank Raymond for his delicious meal, and for helping make the event so special."

CHNI's Margaret Henry added: "The Council for the Homeless is delighted to support the European Week of Waste Reduction. Our Belfast FareShare depot is going from strength to strength and we are demonstrating to the food industry and the general public that no good food should be wasted.

"We are also hugely grateful to the Environment Minister for joining us today, and to chef Raymond McArdle for using his cooking skills for the second year running to help us raise awareness of homelessness and to highlight the positive difference FareShare can make."

Raymond McArdle added: "I just don't think it's right that so much good quality food is being thrown out on a daily basis, especially when there are numerous homeless organisations which could use it to feed people in need.

"I am really pleased to support the Council for the Homeless NI's FareShare project because I want to do my bit to help local people who are homeless or those who are struggling. FareShare successfully combines a substantial reduction in needless food waste and channels it to the most worthy cause of all, feeding those who are hungry."



For information on how you can rethink your waste log on to [www.rethinkwasteni.org](http://www.rethinkwasteni.org) or [www.ni.lovefoodhatewaste.com](http://www.ni.lovefoodhatewaste.com)

## CORPORATE PLAN 2012 - 2015

A key challenge for arc21 is to plan how best our region can manage its waste - ensuring that environmental, legal and value for money considerations remain to the fore.

Being prepared for the future is an issue arc21 takes seriously and for that reason we've just published our third corporate plan, setting out our objectives until 2015.

The way in which waste is managed will continue to change, with the emphasis ever more on treating waste as a resource rather than a problem.

Thankfully we are now in the era of life cycle analysis and carbon accounting,

with the treatment of waste being more strongly linked to energy production. This switch in emphasis mirrors the course of travel arc21 is already on and will continue to inform our provision of waste services.

Another major issue is the forthcoming shake-up of Local Government, the most radical change for 40 years. The Review of Public Administration will reduce the number of Councils from 26 to 11 and transfer additional duties and responsibilities to Local Government. Part of that debate includes questions over the best structures for waste management and that may impact on both arc21 and its Councils.

The Corporate Plan sets out what arc21 must do - within the means available to us - to meet this changing environment and the needs of Councils and ratepayers. It includes 12 specific objectives including the implementation of a Revised Waste Management Plan and the promotion of waste minimisation.

**For more information download the plan at: [www.arc21.org.uk](http://www.arc21.org.uk)**





# OUR SCRAP WITH METAL

**February 2012 witnessed the start of a unique campaign aimed at stimulating and increasing the capture of metal packaging for recycling in the arc21 region. The objective was to advise the public about the benefits of recycling metal packaging and just how easy it is to do.**

arc21 joined forces with Alupro, an organisation that deals with the aluminium packaging industry across the UK, to devise the campaign with the support of the Department of the Environment. The combination of advertising on 130 buses, as well as bin lorries, five weeks' of high profile radio adverts and over 800,000 creatively branded leaflets was the most ambitious metals recycling campaign ever run in the UK. Such has been its success that

it will be used as the template for other initiatives throughout GB.

"Where does the metal you recycle end up?" was the core question put to the public, supported by facts such as "recycling a can uses 20 times less energy than making a new one". These quirky and helpful aspects of metal recycling on leaflets, banners and radio ads helped get across the message across that recycling takes little effort, but makes a big difference.

The prime objective, however, was to increase the amount of metal being recycled across arc21. Using a Waste dataflow it was possible to compare recycling figures before the campaign (July to December 2011) against figures both during and after the campaign (January to June 2012).

The data analysed indicated that the campaign has had a positive impact. The amount of metal packaging recycled

during and after the campaign increased by 5.35% when compared to a similar period just prior to the publicity drive. The amount of other related packaging and paper recycling also increased by 2.89% during the same timeframe.

The data demonstrated that whilst the amount of waste reduced from one period to another, the amount of metal packaging and other similar type materials received for recycling also increased, with metal packaging sustaining the highest proportional increase.

By turning drink cans into kettles, empty aerosols into watches, food tins into music players and foil trays into cameras, recycling really is making a massive difference to our environment.

The possibilities are endless and it doesn't require a lot of effort to make a BIG difference.

# NI WASTE PLAN UNDER REVIEW



**Changes are afoot to the way Northern Ireland manages its waste. The current waste strategy 'Towards Resource Management' dates back to 2006, but it is currently in the process of being revised in line with the EU's Waste Framework Directive. The Department of the Environment is consulting on the proposed changes.**

The draft revised strategy will shift the focus of waste management from resource management to resource efficiency. In waste management circles this is understood to mean that resources are used in the most effective way possible while minimising the impact of their use on the environment.

This will not require a major reformulation of the existing strategy, but it will require the development of existing policies and be more focussed on deliverable results.

Known as 'Delivering Resource Efficiency', the draft strategy seeks to introduce challenging new targets and actions that will:

- Mitigate climate change
- Promote the Green Economy
- Support Joined-up Government by contributing to sustainable development, energy policy, economic growth and health and well-being.

Some policy issues have also been considered on an all-island basis to ensure that, where possible, a complementary approach exists on both sides of the border.

The draft strategy also contains plenty of new, specific targets such as:

- A 60% recycling target for local authority collected municipal waste
- Statutory requirements on waste operators to provide specified data on commercial and industrial waste
- More challenging collection and recycling targets for packaging and electrical waste
- A restriction on food waste being landfilled
- The potential devolution of landfill tax
- The implementation of legislation on carrier bags

The revised plan will run until 2020, but some targets, such as those relating to climate change, will take a longer term view.

As one of Northern Ireland's three waste management groups, arc21 will also be revising its waste management plans in line with the Province-wide consultation. Details of arc21's revision are due to be published in spring 2013.

Anyone wishing to comment on the NI-wide 'Delivering Resource Efficiency' plan can download the proposals from the Department of the Environment's website [www.doeni.gov.uk](http://www.doeni.gov.uk). The deadline for submissions is January 18th, 2013.



# BAGS OF OPPORTUNITY?

**You may not have realised it yet, but from April 2013 retailers who provide you with single use carrier bags will have to charge you 5p for each bag, rising to 10p in 2014. Bags for Life - those which can be used again and again - will also come with a 10p charge from 2014.**

The Department of the Environment is hoping to significantly reduce the estimated 250m plastic bags which are used each year in the Province.

Making the announcement, the Environment Minister, Alex Attwood, said:

**"There is no doubt that carrier bags are a scourge on the environment. Evidence from other countries demonstrates that a bag levy is a simple and effective means to reduce substantially the negative environmental impact of carrier bag consumption. A proposed ten pence levy on single use carrier bags and lower cost reusable carrier bags can bring about significant environmental improvement."**



The charge is not restricted to just plastic bags, but any bag which is intended to be used just once and is made from plastic, paper, plant-based materials or natural starch.

There are, however, a number of exemptions. These include bags used solely for unpackaged items such as food intended for human consumption (e.g. loose fruit), sharp implements, items supplied under prescription or items supplied within a transport setting (e.g. train, planes, buses etc).

Wales has already introduced a similar scheme with research showing that in the first six-months of operation the proportion of people bringing their own bag has jumped from 61% to 82%.

The Republic of Ireland introduced a plastic bag levy in 2002, leading to a 90% fall in the use of plastic bags. It has also raised €173m for the Irish Government.

## INTER-CONTINENTAL RECYCLING

**You may not believe it, but the recyclable materials you put in your blue-bin are part of a global recycling business which employs 1.6m people. According to the Bureau of International Recycling the industry handles 600m tonnes annually with a combined turnover of £200bn.**

Reprocessors - the companies responsible for turning recycled materials into new items - operate globally in an international market for materials ranging from paper to textiles to plastics. Every year the UK alone exports in excess of 10m tonnes, particularly as there isn't enough capacity to reprocess metals, paper and plastics locally.

The Environmental Services Association, a waste management trade body, argues that this overseas demand for UK material has helped the country achieve a near quadrupling of recycling rates over the last decade.

Like any market, however, prices for recycling material fluctuate, as does demand. In China, for instance, demand for material has reduced in recent years. One reason is improving environmental standards which are leading to a crackdown on imports of sub-standard material. Contaminated containers are being quarantined in Chinese ports and, on occasion, will be returned to the UK.

Waste paper is one of the UK's main exports with 4.4m tonnes going overseas in 2011. Prices across the board were down on the year - mixed paper has fallen



from a high of £90 - £98 per tonne in February to £50 - £70 in November, while cardboard has dropped from £105 - £116 to £84 - £90.

# NORTH DOWN RECYCLING SURVEY

**Between April and September 2012, North Down undertook a survey of almost 3,700 houses in the Borough to assess participation and contamination rates in the Council's kerbside recycling and composting collections. Contamination - which simply refers to the wrong waste ending up in the wrong bin - is an issue for all Councils as it can seriously hamper recycling efforts.**

The survey assessed how many householders put their bins out at least once every six weeks. The figures were:

**Green (composting) bin: 52%**

**Blue (recycling) bin: 77%**

The difference in rates between green and blue reflects the point that not all houses have gardens. Green bins, however, can still be used for food waste as long as the correct COMPOSTABLE liners for



food waste are used. Overall, the Council estimates that one third of households surveyed are not yet recycling.

With regard to 'Contamination' the survey found that not many incorrect items were placed in green bins (only 2%), but that blue bins had a 33% contamination rate. Of this 33%, the following items were found:

- **Plastic containers: 61%\*** (recycling logos do not always mean an item can be recycled in your area)
- **Mixed bags of rubbish: 11%** (these should be put into grey bins)

- **Plastic bags: 8%** (these should be put into grey bins or recycled - a number of supermarkets provide recycling points for bags)
- **Juice cartons: 7%\*** (for now these should be taken to one of the Council's five 'bring banks')
- **Take-away pizza boxes: 4%** (these can be ripped up and put in your green bin).

\*Hopefully, the changes to collection services detailed on pg 4, will help reduce contamination rates across arc21 caused by rigid plastic containers and beverage cartons.

## BALLYMENA'S RECYCLING IS ON THE MOVE

**Ballymena's civic amenity site is on the move - but only temporarily. In November services were relocated to Pennybridge Industrial Estate. The move will allow a major grant-aided programme of works at the Waveney Road site to create a modern facility with a wide range of recycling facilities.**

Speaking about the move, Councillor Hubert Nicholl said:

"The Waveney Road site has served us very well and we are delighted that Ballymena's recycling rate has increased from 32% to 38%. However, without refurbishment and expansion, the site is just not capable of meeting the future recycling targets of 50%.

"Whilst the temporary relocation may cause some inconvenience, it will



undoubtedly lead to a much improved facility for residents. I am very confident that by early next year the new improved Waveney Road civic amenity centre will be operational and able to provide the people of Ballymena with the widest range of recycling services. It will also be more spacious and easier to use with a much improved traffic flow system."

The Council also ran a competition (now closed) to support the recycling of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). Anyone bringing an electrical item to the temporary civic amenity site at Pennybridge Industrial Estate was in with

a chance of winning a Kindle Fire HD or a Kindle eReader.

Councillor Nicholl added:

"Anything that has a plug can be recycled, for example, kettles, toasters, fridges, computers and even electric toothbrushes! So please do not place any of these items in your black bin, no matter how small."

The competition was run in conjunction with ERP, one of the UK's leading WEEE and batteries recycling schemes.



# 'U' JOINS THE THREE 'RS' IN ANTRIM

**We've all heard of the Three 'Rs' - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, but in Antrim they've struck out for a bit of alphabetical variety with the introduction of 'U' for 'Upcycling'.**

Upcycling is the latest eco-trend, taking something disposable and transforming it into something of greater use and value - recycling with an upgrade.

During the autumn four upcycling masterclasses were held in the Borough at the recently refurbished Clotworthy House.

The classes looked at how to make vintage cake stands using old crockery and glassware, paper lampshades and the upcycling of old gems and jewellery into new unique pieces. There was also a Trash to Flash Fashion day to turn old, tired garments into new funky wardrobe staples through hand stitching and embellishments.

Our throw-away society sends a staggering amount of material to landfill, but as the classes demonstrated, it's possible to turn 'junk' into something worthwhile.

Upcycling is all about creating something unique, saving money and doing your bit for the environment - all at the same time! So what are you waiting for? It's time to create instead of consume!



# KIDS' CORNER

## WORDSEARCH



The message remains the same from Arc21 in this edition of Wasteline; we want more kids on board and involved in waste management, helping Northern Ireland become a cleaner place by reducing, reusing and recycling. Have a go at our Wasteline Word Search which includes some key words from this edition. Good Luck!

Answers are available on the 'arc21 and You' section in arc21's website: [www.arc21.gov.uk](http://www.arc21.gov.uk) Make sure you have a go before taking a sneaky peek though!

See if you can find the following recycling words in our wordsearch: **arc, batteries, energy, glass, landfill, pollution, recycle, reuse, tyres, waste and wasteline.**

## QUIZ TIME

It's the Christmas Season and it's time once again to test your knowledge on waste and recycling. The answers to each of these seven questions can be found in this magazine. A list of the answers can be found at [www.arc21.gov.uk](http://www.arc21.gov.uk) so you can check to see how you did. Good luck!

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- From April 2013 retailers who provide you with single use bags will have to charge you 5p for each bag; who much does this rise to in 2014?  
A) 10p  
B) 80p  
C) £13
- Ballymena's civic amenity site is on the move - but only temporarily. Where have services being temporarily re-located to in?  
A) Blue/Green  
B) Purple  
C) Brown
- What colour bin will soon be able to accept both rigid plastic containers and waxed beverage cartons?  
A) Blue/Green  
B) Purple  
C) Brown
- The European Commission published a detailed look at how member states are implementing EU waste legislation. What country in the European Union received the highest score?
- How many tonnes of batteries were recycled in the arc21 region in 2011/2012?  
A) 141  
B) 700  
C) 1,000,000
- Belfast City Council has calculated that in 2011 the City sent 80,000 tonnes of waste to landfill - that's how many times the weight of the Titanic?  
A) 2  
B) 6  
C) 12
- If not properly reused, recycled or disposed of, one waste item covered in the magazine can damage the environment, affect local communities and undermine legitimate businesses. Which is it?  
A) Waste tyres  
B) Old wellington boots  
C) Pencil cases