

**Zero Waste for Bisley**  
**Policy Proposal Paper for Bisley with Lyppiat Parish Council**

*Q: Why aren't our potholes being filled? Why is there a threat to our village schools?*

*A: Because the County Council is short of money*

*Q: Why?*

*A: WELL, PART OF THE ANSWER IS THAT SIX MILLION POUNDS OF OUR COMMUNITY CHARGE IS THROWN AWAY - CHUCKED INTO LANDFILL EVERY YEAR*

Our society so wasteful that this short paper cannot attempt at all to scope or detail the entirety of our waste problem; it simply flags some issues.

It introduces 'Zero Waste' as a community aim, and suggests some ideas as to how we might all do our bit to combat waste and enhance our quality of life. We hope it will stimulate debate and even more action in Bisley.

### **Zero Waste**

'Zero Waste' is an old idea. The philosophy of zero waste is directly related to addressing energy issues, and climate change. It means designing waste out of the system, step by step. Zero Waste provides a vision, yet can be practicable and applicable on a day-to-day basis. For those who argue that 'zero waste' is impossible, think of it as standing for a new way of thinking that addresses waste from the 'front end' with shared responsibility for the back end. Waste becomes a resource.

'Zero Waste' means we may avoid large-scale mass incineration – a technical and corporate 'fix' for 'throw away' politics.

'Zero Waste' has been adopted by a range of countries, cities and even some places in the UK (New Zealand ([www.zerowaste.co.nz](http://www.zerowaste.co.nz)), Toronto, Canberra, the State of California, many towns in Japan). Few places in the UK practice Zero Waste' but then no-one in the world looks to the UK for models of waste innovation and efficiency. Bath and North East Somerset was the first UK Council (2001) to commit to zero waste in 2001. Each year BANES has a 'zero waste' week in which it challenges communities and households not to throw away any waste at all. The policy has cascaded down to some of its parishes. Amongst the most well known of these is Chew Magna. Waste was the most important issue flagged in Chew Magna's Parish Plan, so as a result Chew Magna's 'Go Zero' campaign was launched. It has 1100 villagers signed up and even has its own carbon offset scheme.

In 2008 Gloucestershire County Council will announce a Zero Waste week.

### **The National and County Context**

Britain is regarded as 'the dustbin of Europe': 'Britain is the dustbin of Europe with more rubbish being thrown into landfill than any other country in Europe'<sup>1</sup>. The UK Government has been amongst the slowest in Europe to address waste.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Betison Chairman of LGA Environment Board

The UK dumped 335m tons of waste into the ground in 2004 (twice as much waste as Germany which has a bigger population), and this is twice as much as ten years previous. Half of this is construction and demolition, quarrying and mining. Household waste is 30m tons p.a. (about 9% of total) equivalent to half a ton per household.

The government has set targets that mean by 2010 local authorities will have to have cut the amount of biodegradable waste dumped into landfill by 75% of the 1995 total, to 50% by 2013, and 35% by 2020. Failure means fines of £150 for every ton over the quota, although systems might be developed for authorities to buy another unused allowance. In 2007 the government issued a new waste strategy with upwardly revised targets, as part of its climate change agenda.

**Gloucestershire County Council** is Gloucestershire's Waste Disposal Authority. Waste in Gloucestershire has doubled since 2000 and increased 30% in the last 10 years. 70% of Gloucestershire's waste goes into landfill and Gloucestershire's landfill void is declining. Of household waste 70% can be reused, recycled or composted and 68% is biodegradable. The County Council has a waste strategy from now-2020. It proposes a mix of increased recycling, cites a need for new landfill sites and/or incineration, and recommends wider education, and community initiatives. There is a lot of catching up to do since, for example, until the end of 2006, only 20% of Gloucestershire's schools had been visited to enhance children's understanding of waste issues. The strategy is useful if only for its glossary of terms. The summary (8 pages) or the full strategy (52 pages) can be downloaded off the website [www.recycleforgloucestershire.com](http://www.recycleforgloucestershire.com).

In 2007-8 Gloucestershire County Council spent **FIVE MILLION POUNDS** of our money sending our waste to landfill. In 2008-9 we - the public - will allow **SEVEN MILLION POUNDS** of our money to be spent sending waste to landfill. In each year following the County predicts that a further **ONE AND A HALF MILLION POUNDS** of our money will have to be used to fill landfill sites. Are we really happy about this?

What is landfill? 'Landfill is disgusting' (quote Cll Stan Waddington County Portfolio Holder for Environment). Landfill produces more damaging gases for our environment than simply carbon dioxide – a toxic mix of methane, dioxins and other gases adds to climate change. Landfill sites attract vermin (rats, seagulls) and for those living with 2 miles of a landfill site it is a serious potential health hazard.

### **Stroud and Bisley**

Stroud District Council has put waste & climate change at the top of its agenda for change. They point to the need for a culture change, 'breaking the link between economic growth and environmental degradation'. Stroud DC did not take up Bisley Parish Council's consultation recommendation that SDC adopts a zero waste strategy. Stroud is the best 'recycling' district in the County, yet fails on targets – in part because it does not provide a green waste collection

Bisley has demonstrated its interest in recycling through the number of households who compost their own food waste, and its support for the Community Composting

Scheme (only the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the County). There has also been a call for cardboard recycling facilities led by the District Councillor.

If Bisley aims for Zero Waste it could be

1. Financially beneficial: there is no doubt that the Government will introduce new levies on landfill, and these will undoubtedly percolate down to the individual householders either through the community charge, or through charging for waste collection individually – 'Pay as you Throw'. There may be local employment opportunities.
2. Environmentally beneficial: if Bisley is already addressing its waste locally it will be reducing the wider environmental impact and will be well prepared for change – whether this is a reduction in central service or whatever the strategies adopted by other tiers of government.
3. Socially and educationally beneficial: Community responsibility for waste will require more knowledge about waste, and may result in any number of opportunities and more sharing of local resources (a Bisley 'Free-Cycle'?)
4. Practically beneficial – waste can become energy to heat and light the villages

### **Community Action**

As part of the Village Design Statement, **it is recommended** that a community forum is dedicated to waste and a series of practical actions agreed towards 'Zero Waste'.

### **Key Question: How can we use Bisley's waste *in* Bisley?**

1. Do we have high enough levels of one kind of waste to feed it into a local energy system?
2. How might waste create one or two more local jobs?
3. What is the biggest waste issue in Bisley – is it food or is it energy?
4. How will taking responsibility for waste locally help the parish financially?
5. What kind of information do we need to make our waste useful to us in the same way that our green waste now makes our compost?
6. How can we best engage young people and the schools in the process

Do we need

- a questionnaire to find out what people throw away?
- Another community composting scheme?
- Food waste 'in vessel composters' for schools and pubs?
- An aerobic digester project – like the Archers? If so where will it be located?
- Visits to see what others are doing?

### **Should Bisley Parish Council**

- **Adopt a policy for Zero waste**
- **Ask residents to complete a questionnaire on the website**
- **Ask Parish organisations & schools to sign up and reduce their waste**
- **Agree one key joint action in 2008-9 to take the next step towards Zero Waste?**

## **APPENDIX: Some Principles for addressing Waste**

The principles of addressing waste are not new and are well known. They are known as the 4 'R's :

- Refuse
- Reduce
- Re-Use
- Recycle

**Refuse:** This should be simple but is harder than it seems. Refusing packaging is sometimes not acceptable to suppliers, but try it and see.

**Reduce:** Do you really need that article? Excessive consumption creates excessive waste; don't buy too much, save money as well as the environment. Think about journeys taken and assess if they are really necessary – emissions are waste, and have a long-term impact on the environment and on health, even if they are invisible at the time. Buy local.

**Re-Use:** There are still local suppliers of bottled milk - support them. Cut down plastic bottles and use as 'mini-greenhouses' to protect plants against slugs. Top Shop is creating new fashion out of discarded textiles - Charity Shop dressing can be a sign of creativity. Reuse or source local / recycled materials for building. Join Stroud 'Free-cycle' - one person's discarded object might be another's salvation.

**Recycle:** SDC collects glass, tins, paper, plastic, white goods (on request) and cardboard (businesses). SDC is considering a local form of cardboard recycling. Green waste is now tackled by the BCCS, but the biggest waste in Bisley probably comes from food. Most domestic households do compost, but the pubs throw away tons of food waste a week. How they can they compost on site?