

Waste Education Service Newsletter

AUTUMN 2025

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Welcome to the Autumn edition of our newsletter!

We deliver **FREE** recycling and waste awareness workshops across the county to schools, community groups and businesses. Throughout the year we also support a wide range of community events.

Our workshops can include presentations on waste education, reduction and recycling, plus 'hands-on' activities, (including sorting out your recyclable waste).



For more information about our **FREE** recycling workshops, and to book, scan the QR code or go to:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling/waste-education-service



Did you know?

So far in **2025** our Waste Education Officer has carried out over **185 engagements** with more planned!

Eating seasonal fruit and vegetables is better for the environment

Seasonal food is food that is naturally ripe and ready for harvest in the UK at a certain time of year.

Eating organic, seasonal food means we don't have to import food from different climates around the world. It helps to make our diets more sustainable, supports our farmers and reduces our carbon footprint.

To help you, in your quest to eat seasonal produce, in each of our newsletters we will be publishing a list of seasonal fruit and veg you can eat. Starting with this autumn edition.



Find out more at soilassociation.org

Autumn seasonal food

What to sow in autumn

Broad beans

Fruit trees



Vegetables

Broccoli

Leeks

Chard

Courgettes

Cabbage, kale

Celery



Peppers

Sweetcorn

Winter squash and pumpkins – from October

Potatoes

Root vegetables – parsnips, carrots, turnips



Salads and herbs

Onions

Garlic

Cucumbers

Lettuce

Spinach

Fennel



Fruit

Apples

Blueberries

Blackberries

Figs

Pears

Plums



How long does it take for items to decompose?

When we put waste into our refuse bin do we think about how long they will take to rot down, (or decompose)? Probably not.

If that waste goes to an energy from waste facility, then most of it will be burned and the heat generated used to make electricity and/or heat local buildings. Any steel will be recovered for recycling whilst the ash will be turned into building materials.

If, however, the waste is sent to landfill then things are very different.

Any leftover food within the waste will start to rot, for example **an apple core will take around 1 month to fully decompose**. Rotting organic waste

such as food scraps, wood, card, paper and garden waste decompose in the absence of oxygen to produce methane gas, or CH₄, which is **25 times** more potent than carbon dioxide. **Methane is one of the Earth's most harmful greenhouse gases.**

Waste decomposition varies significantly by material in a landfill, from weeks for food scraps to **millennia for plastics and glass**. Factors influencing this include the type of waste, oxygen availability (or lack thereof), and moisture. Organic materials can break down faster, but their degradation is slowed by the lack of oxygen in a landfill environment, creating anaerobic conditions. **Non-biodegradable items like plastics and metals persist for hundreds or thousands of years**, with glass lasting for over a million years, and some materials like polystyrene never truly decomposing.

A disposable **nappy for example will take 500 years** to rot down in a landfill site, (which is 6 times the

average human lifespan in the UK at 82 years). This is due to the nappy's plastic components and the lack of oxygen in a landfill environment, which slows the decomposition of biodegradable materials. Some "eco" or "biodegradable" nappies may break down faster in proper composting conditions, but they can still take decades to decompose in a landfill.

Here in Cambridgeshire, we already have a **blue recycling bin for plastic bottles, steel and aluminium cans, glass, paper and cardboard** so none of these should be put into your general waste. From April 2026, weekly food waste collections will start across councils in England, (with most in Cambridgeshire starting then) so all food should be disposed of in this way.

So, before you throw something into your refuse bin why not think about what it is, and ask yourself should it really be in there?

Customer service team at Waterbeach Landfill

Recently some of the members of the customer service team visited the landfill site at Waterbeach, (thanks to the team at Thalia) and were amazed at the size of it! They saw the amount of waste that was being disposed of daily and were appalled. They all took home the message that not only do we need to start recycling more but that we need to buy less in the first place and keep items in circulation for longer.

We also spoke with them about the new food waste collections and how that will impact the amount of waste being thrown away. We then discussed the waste hierarchy and showed them that recycling is only fourth on the list, (after reducing, re-use and repairing of items) and that, (alone) it won't solve our current challenges.



Reduce food waste... Co

Rowen Halstead, (who is one of the chefs running our food waste workshops) has written the following topical article about food waste. **Why not try his recipe at home?**

After the relentless summer heat, weeks without rain, and a dire harvest of summer vegetables from my vegetable patch, I, for one, will be relishing in October's chill and dampness. Just the thought of muddy fields and misty mornings cools my body down as I sit here in 27 °C August heat. It comes as no surprise that, with the world's current climate issues, the seasons for our produce and the types of produce we receive are muddled. What was once a typical Autumn harvest has turned into a late summer harvest. I have never seen a year as good for Apricots in June, but ironically, too much sun was shining for sunflowers. These are issues that farmers will have to continuously shift and adapt to, making an already perilous profession even more strenuous. So, with all that in mind, why waste their hard work?

Let me take you back to early November 2024, where a group of avid gleaners, brought together by **Still Good Food**, congregated on one of these misty mornings in one of these muddy fields that I long for. Their mission was simple: collect as many leftover pumpkins as possible from the ruins of the pumpkin patch for redistribution and a very special event. Every year, an estimated **18,000 tonnes of pumpkins get wasted**, which is the equivalent of **120 blue whales**. Four in ten people don't even know their Halloween pumpkins are, in fact, edible. Over the course of a few hours, our tireless efforts gathered an **astonishing 2 tonnes of abandoned pumpkins**, varying from the majestic Crown Prince variety to the classical Gold Medal, throwing in a few ornamental Munchkin pumpkins, also. Whilst many of these pumpkins were **redistributed to schools, hospitals, prisons, and other food hubs** across Suffolk and further afield, a small proportion went towards a special **free supper club**, cooked by me, aimed to raise money for **Still Good Food** and raise awareness of how we can utilise every part of the pumpkin.

To start, a pumpkin and potato terrine with a smoked pumpkin velouté. Then slow-roasted and steamed pumpkin, with pumpkin treacle, savoury pumpkin seed granola, ricotta, and a carrot top and nettle sauce. And to finish, a pumpkin cheesecake with pumpkin skin marmalade, which would be rude not to share the recipe for. **Why not try this at home?**



Pumpkin Cheesecake with Pumpkin Skin Marmalade

Serves 8-10

Ingredients:

For the cheesecake: 350g Pumpkin, peeled and deseeded, 600g cream cheese, room temperature, 1tsp cinnamon powder, 1/4tsp ground nutmeg, 1/4tsp ground cloves, 240g brown sugar, 1tsp vanilla essence, 20g cornflour, 4 eggs, 150g sour cream.

For the marmalade: 100g pumpkin skin, 200g orange juice, 100g sugar.

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 200C.
2. For the cheesecake: Cut the pumpkin into rough cubes. Steam the pumpkin until soft then transfer to a food processor with the cinnamon powder, ground nutmeg, and ground cloves. Blend until smooth.
3. Place the cream cheese in a stand mixer bowl and add the pumpkin puree, sugar, vanilla essence, and cornflour. Mix with the paddle attachment until smooth and well combined.
4. Gradually add the eggs one at a time whilst the mixer is on slow. Finish by adding the sour cream.
5. Line a spring bottom tin (roughly 23cm) and place it in a deep tray. Pour the cheesecake mix into the tin then pour warm water into the tray around it so that the water comes up halfway.
6. Bake the cheesecake for 40 minutes until it has the slightest jiggle when you move it. Remove it from the oven and let it cool on the counter.
7. Whilst the cheesecake is baking make the marmalade. Finely slice the pumpkin skins and place in a saucepan with the orange juice and sugar. Place over a medium heat and cook until most of the liquid has cooked out and you are left with a thin syrup, and the pumpkin skins are 'candied'.

Supporting...



stillgoodfood.org



lovefoodhatewaste.com

ook Pumpkins!



Pumpkin Soup

Ingredients:

2 tbsp Olive Oil, 1 White Onion (finely sliced), 2 Cloves Garlic (crushed), 1kg Pumpkin (peeled and deseeded), 2 tsp Smoked Paprika, 2 tsp Ground Cumin, 700ml Vegetable or Chicken Stock, 150ml Double Cream, Whey, Coconut Milk.

Directions:

1. In a large saucepan, heat the olive oil over a medium heat. Add the sliced onions and crushed garlic, and cook until translucent and soft. Turn the heat down whilst you prepare the pumpkin.
2. Dice the peeled and deseeded pumpkin into 2cm rough chunks. Add to the onions and garlic in the pan and continue to cook over a medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring regularly to prevent sticking.
3. Add the smoked paprika and ground cumin, and toast with the other ingredients for a minute before adding the stock.
4. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes, until the pumpkin is very soft.
5. Add the cream (or alternative), bring to the boil, then transfer to a blender, or use a hand blender to blitz the soup until smooth.
6. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and enjoy with crusty bread, pesto, and toasted pumpkin seeds.

"Every year, an estimated 18,000 tonnes of pumpkins get wasted, which is the equivalent of 120 blue whales"



Seasonal cooking demonstration

Join us for a cooking demonstration with a professional chef and learn how to use seasonal ingredients to make delicious food!

You'll also learn about food waste prevention from Cambridgeshire County Council's Waste Education Officer, take home a recipe card, and try the food you'll have learned how to make at a tasting session.

In the spirit of waste prevention, please bring your own mug and spoon if possible.

A full list of ingredients and allergen information will be provided.

Free and all welcome but booking required. Parents/carers to always stay with their children.

The event will take place at Cambridge Central Library (3rd Floor) on Saturday 1st November from 11.30 - 1.00pm

To book visit this website or scan the QR code:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1715563078349?aff=oddtcreator>



Rowen Halstead

As a chef Rowen spent over 13 years working in some of the best kitchens in the UK and across the globe. During that time, he witnessed first-hand the immeasurable amount of avoidable food waste that was produced due to a lack of knowledge, concern, and creativity.

By utilising his culinary skills and knowledge Rowen has created delicious sustainable recipes that are easy to produce in the home, reduce food waste and save households money.

Rowen is passionate about the need to educate children about food waste, the effects it has on our planet, and believes the best way to do this is through cooking.

Email: wastenotrowen@gmail.com

My waste minimisation pledge



Why not get involved in your own waste minimisation pledge and inspire your family and friends to reduce waste by showcasing practical steps towards a lower-waste lifestyle, demonstrating that significant waste reduction is achievable, and establishing new norms around conscious consumption. Every small step towards zero waste makes a difference. Your personal journey will be a powerful example for others to follow.

Your mission: Documenting your waste minimisation pledge.

When: Choose a specific period (e.g. one week, two weeks, one month, or a year) during which you actively focus on reducing your waste, sticking to pre-defined boundaries.

What to do

Set goals: Identify specific areas where you want to reduce waste (e.g. clothing, food packaging, single-use plastics, electricals).

Set boundaries: Adopt new habits to achieve your goals such as 'no-buy' rules for certain items, buying in bulk, making items from scratch, buying second-hand, re-selling on Marketplace, repairing instead of replacing, refusing unnecessary items.

Document progress

Daily log: Keep a log or diary of your efforts, successes, and challenges. This can be a video diary or written, highlighting "waste wins" or moments where you avoided creating waste.

Maintain openness throughout, you do not have to be perfect; at times you might find yourself not keeping to the pledge. This is equally valuable to record and discuss, especially reflecting on your thoughts, feelings and actions.

Photos/videos: Take photos or short videos of your efforts, for example your capsule wardrobe throughout the pledge, a bulk-buy haul, your "top tips" at the end of the period.

Your reflections and sharing

When: Throughout and at the end of your pledge period.

What to do: Share your personal takeaways and journey via your chosen platforms.

Short written and/or video Reflections piece(s) discussing:

- Your initial goals and how you approached the pledge.
- Specific strategies you found effective.
- Any surprising discoveries or difficulties you encountered.
- The overall impact on your consumption habits and perspective on waste.
- Practical tips you would offer to others starting their waste minimisation journey.

Sharing your journey platform:

Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, TikTok, etc.
– wherever you are most active.

What to share: Regular updates during your pledge (e.g. weekly check-ins, tips, photos).

When you've finished your pledge why not submit your final written reflections and some images to wmt@cambridgeshire.gov.uk for potential inclusion in a future newsletter!

Essential hashtag: Please tag www.facebook.com/CambridgeshireCC/ in all your social media posts related to this project. This helps us track and amplify your efforts!

Thank you for getting involved! Your participation is invaluable in helping Cambridgeshire become more sustainable by modelling new behaviours.

Our thanks to Ashley Dolling @ Fenland District Council for giving his permission to share this article.

HWRC WINTER OPENING HOURS

As from 1st October 2025, residents are reminded that Household Waste Recycling Centres are now operating their winter opening hours, for more details please search on our website or scan the QR code.

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk



GREAT CABLE CHALLENGE

Are you one of the millions of people with a 'drawer of doom', full of old, tangled cables?

You're not alone - and now's the perfect time to do something about it.

To mark **International E-Waste Day on the 14th October**, Cambridgeshire County Council is taking part in Recycle Your Electricals' **Great Cable Challenge** - a nationwide campaign to tackle the millions of cables and other electricals sitting idle across the UK, to save the copper inside them from going to waste.

Why take part?

Across the UK, we bin and stash away **627 million unused cables** - enough to reach the moon AND BACK! This is part of the growing e-waste challenge, which is now the fastest growing source of waste in the world, and in the UK.

Like any electrical, each one of these cables contains valuable materials that can be reused and recycled into new items like mobile phones, laptops, smart watches, clean energy and even medical equipment.

But right now, too many are just stashed away in drawers or worse, being thrown away and ending up in the bin.

Be part of the solution!

Join the millions taking one small action to make a big difference - and take part in the **Great Cable Challenge this October**.

Take action in your local community

Are you part of a local community or action group? Recycle Your Electricals is looking to partner with local groups who want to take action and make a positive impact. If you're interested, get in touch at hello@materialfocus.org.uk

About Recycle Your Electricals

Recycle Your Electricals is a UK-wide recycling campaign motivating and making it easier for everyone to reuse and recycle unwanted electricals, ensuring we make the most of the valuable materials in them. The campaign is run by the not-for-profit Material Focus.

To find out more visit
materialfocus.org.uk



Everyone can do their bit:

1. Just bag up your old cables – and any other unwanted or broken electricals.
2. Pop your postcode into Recycle Your Electricals' locator to find your nearest repair, donation or recycling points. There are so many great options across Cambridgeshire, from on-street bring banks to local retailers offering in-store recycling.
3. Help save hundreds of kilos of copper from going to waste!
4. Share the message on your own channels! Snap a picture of your bag of cables ready to be recycled. Don't forget to tag us and use **#GreatCableChallenge** in your posts!

Don't know where to start?

Check out Recycle Your Electricals handy Cable Guide!

With 35 of the most used cables, the guide provides easy-to-use visuals to match cables to their original electricals. If the electricals or the cables are no longer working or they aren't needed anymore, simply bag them up and recycle them!

To find out more visit
recycleyourelectricals.org.uk



Calling all schools, community and adult groups in Cambridgeshire!

Waste Prevention Education Free Workshops

To book a visit to your school or organisation and for more information please contact wmt@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

FREE workshops at any location across the County include:

- Tailored educational workshops for **school, community and adult groups**.
- Learning what waste is and what we can do to **prevent, reuse, repair and recycle** it, sort it for recycling or make something from waste material.
- Videos showing the **processes** involved in **sorting and recycling waste**.
- A discussion around **climate change** and an explanation of what an **individuals carbon footprint** looks like.
- Workshops are ideal for **classroom settings** and pupils work in **groups on a variety of tasks**.
- A typical workshop lasts around **60 minutes**. We can deliver up to **three workshops per day** and can visit a school for **two days** if required.

We offer outreach visits on weekdays, in the evenings and at weekends.

Contact us if you have an upcoming event in Cambridgeshire you would like us to support.



For more information about our FREE recycling workshops, and to book, scan the QR code or go to:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling/waste-education-service



www.facebook.com/CambridgeshireCC



www.x.com/CambsCC



www.linkedin.com/company/cambridgeshire-county-council



Thalia
Waste Management



Working in partnership with
**Cambridgeshire
County Council**

