

New education programme

Working in partnership with Carymoor Environmental Trust (CET), SWP is launching a new [waste education programme](#). It offers 90 fully-funded half-day sessions in primary schools, typically starting with a whole-school assembly and then two classroom-based activity sessions. Schools are seen as an effective route to improve understanding of the importance of waste reduction and recycling in everyday life among thousands of children and their families. It is hoped this can become an ongoing programme. CET is writing to schools inviting them to express interest.

Avonmouth resource recovery

SWB members and the SWP managing director attended an event organised on 2 February by contractor Viridor to mark the start of the construction phase of the Resource Recovery Centre (RRC) being built at Avonmouth. Once running, the RRC plant will transform residual waste from Somerset and elsewhere in the region into energy to power up to 44,000 homes.

Plastic recycling

Recent media coverage of plastic pollution (partly driven by the Blue Planet and partly by China's refusal to accept low quality material) has raised public concerns.

Somerset's kerbside sort system and focus on waste as a valuable resource enables us to still recycle almost everything (94%) in the UK, with all food waste and garden waste reprocessed here in Somerset.

Through Recycle More we are committed to collecting even more types of plastics, but it will take concerted action from SWP, consumers, producers, the waste industry and national government to address the particular challenges we face with recycling mixed plastics. SWP is looking at what more we can do ahead of rolling out Recycle More from 2020, and developing a campaign to advise the public on what actions they can take to reduce, reuse and recycle plastic waste as well as what steps local authorities are taking.

Recycle More

Five leading waste management companies attended soft market engagement sessions with the SWP procurement project team late last year. All responded positively to the approach to the services and approach outlined by SWP. The sessions helped SWP understand the key issues that would affect the bidders' attitude to risks. This will assist the project team in managing the procurement process through competitive dialogue. Eunomia Research and Consulting has been retained to provide commercial and technical advice throughout the procurement process.

The next stage of the project is to compile the contract documents by end of March 2018, prior to posting the contract notice in the Official Journal of the European Communities. We remain on track to procure a new collection contractor and have procured a new fleet of recycling vehicles by March 2020.

Recycling site surveys

SWP officers recently undertook user surveys at all recycling sites, with a particular focus on our most used sites. The surveys covered public site usage and perceptions of health, welfare and safety. Collated results will help inform future site management.

Crew abuse

There have been a number of incidents highlighted recently of assaults on and abuse of collection crew members. These included a driver having her phone smashed, a crew harangued in a road rage attack, and a loader pushed over – all simply because they were trying to do their job.

In order to make collections, vehicles need to be on the road and in some circumstances that inevitably means short delays for following traffic to avoid putting crews, other road users and pedestrians at risk. Abuse and attacks are completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. SWP and Kier will be meeting with Avon and Somerset Constabulary to explore what more can be done to clamp down on this.

Back to the floor

SWP managing director Mickey Green recently enjoyed a “back to the floor” experience when he took part in Kier’s hands-on induction training. Mickey will soon be going out with recycling and refuse crews.

Latest media releases

Recent media releases and web posts included:

- [Dozen recycling sites take single-use coffee cups](#)

- [Teabags and plastic – all the news fit to drink](#)
- [All change for collections – but all sites open Saturday-Sunday](#)

Somerset Waste Board

SWP is the executive arm of SWB, with two members nominated by each of the six Somerset partner councils, one of which must be the portfolio holder for waste and/or the environment. The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected at the Board AGM from its membership. The next SWB meeting is on Friday 23 February 2018. SWB meeting agendas, papers and reports are available [online](#). For more on SWP, SWB and waste services: www.somersetwaste.gov.uk.

SWB membership by council is:

- **Mendip** – Cllrs Nigel Woollcombe-Adams (Vice Chair), Nigel Taylor
- **Sedgemoor** – Cllrs Dawn Hill, Gill Slocombe
- **Somerset County** – David Hall, Clare Aparicio Paul
- **South Somerset** – Cllrs Jo Roundell Greene, Derek Yeomans (Chairman)
- **Taunton Deane Borough** – Cllrs Patrick Berry, Steve Ross
- **West Somerset** – Cllrs Martin Dewdney, Brenda Maitland-Walker

Information on SWP services

For all advice and information, visit www.somersetwaste.gov.uk. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Sign-up to our e-zine on our [website](#). All partners’ customer service helplines can assist with service enquiries.

