

Statement on Re-cycling to Council – 10th Sep 2020

Cause – up until 15th July

Effect – Combe Hay Lane



Facts

The Household waste and Re-cycling centre (Tip) in Bath opened for the first-time after lockdown mid-March on the 18th July. The slots, only available on weekends, filled almost immediately, although when I first went, I was the only car there. They finally opened (booking only) 7 days a week from July 27th, some two months after the vast majority of comparable Councils.

15th July – new sign

First Saturday – 18th July (all slots booked)



1. When Keynsham Tip opened at the end of May, we were the **last** Authority in the South West to do so; the Government had requested them to be opened at the end of April, a full month earlier.
2. By the middle of July in Bath we were the **last** City in England and Wales to have its own Household Waste and Re-cycling centre open.
3. Overall, we were also the **last** Unitary Authority to open – all the others were in early/mid-May, with invariably all their sites being opened at the same time (Plymouth an exception).

We only had one site open until 9th July, some two months after most others, with Bath opening on the 18th July, pretty much the last in the whole country.

We now appear to be the **last** Authority in the South West to still have an inefficient booking system, often no more than half-full, and so the waste goes on!

The six main reasons given at the time as to why the Bath Tip could not be opened were as follows:

1. Social distancing cannot take place there for the public
(Cllr Wood - 30th April)
2. The site is dangerous, and the health of workers is at risk, as they would be unable to keep at a safe distance
(Cllr Wood letter to a local resident – 22nd May)
3. The site is being closed down for re-development and won't ever open again. (Former Lib Dem Councillor candidate Adam Reynolds - 28th Jun - Nextdoor) – alongside his request that people 'suck it up' and go to Keynsham
4. The Lower Bristol Road will be made unsafe due to increased queueing
(Waste department Office 29th Jun – cited as the only reason)
5. Cars cannot socially distance (Waste Department Office to local resident – 6th July)
6. There are problems with having enough staff since tips were advised to be open some 12 weeks ago, as they are off sick, shielding or isolating
(CEO BANES on Webinar 29th Jun – also cited as the only reason) –

COMMENT: Backed up by staff at the Tip in August and another Councillor who stated too many were shielding. The whole of BANES had at that time 545 shielding, so this is unlikely – too many sick for 12 weeks – hopefully not; isolating for 12 weeks through conditions such as asthma – possible but alarming.

Re-Cycling

Before this administration took over, we had drastically improved and were 18th best in the country – Project Manager Pam Jones (58.7%) – Now it can be virtually guaranteed that we will be falling behind. People not able to go to a local enough Tip have been:

- a. Paying to have larger items removed by the Council – unfair, and often not collected on time or completely (examples available)
- b. Putting extra things out in black bags – causing extra landfill
- c. Fly tipping – Health and cost implications
- d. Leaving stuff outside Charity shops that is patently not sellable – Shaw Trust in George Street just one example.

The summary for me is when I went to report a missing bin collection:

- The BANES website to report missing bin collections states ‘Please do not report missing bin collections.’

Questions that might or maybe should be asked

1. How embarrassed are you that we are the last in the country to offer any service back to our City taxpayers, never mind the present inefficient and wasteful one?
2. How much extra fly-tipping has there been since the Tip was closed?
3. Of the six reasons given by Council or Councillors, which one was actually the case?
4. How many of the HWRC staff were furloughed or employed in other sites, or were they off on full pay?
5. As announced on 6th March last year – Odd Down was meant to be an alternative for Bath’s ‘unsafe’ HWRC – No plans or alternatives seem to be available; if any, what are they?