

Driver supply challenges

Finding enough staff for kerbside collections – particularly the vital drivers for Somerset’s recycling and rubbish trucks – is proving a challenge, especially as Hinkley C and the impact of Brexit compound an entrenched national shortage of HGV drivers.

SWP is working with contractor Kier to improve recruitment strategies and take a fresh, innovative approach. This includes: improved advertising and promotion; fully-funded driver training programmes; competitive rates of pay (£11.28 per hour, with overtime at £16.92); international recruitment initiatives, and a £300 sign-on bonus.

For potential employees across Somerset looking for well-paid, reliable employment that keeps you fit, makes a positive contribution to Somerset’s environment and gets you home with plenty of the day left (great for mums, dads or anyone looking for a work/home life balance) the number to call is Smart Solutions on 0117 916 0760 .

Kerbside knife warning

Our crews work hard day in day out and ensuring they go home safely every day is of paramount importance to us. A sharp knife carelessly left in a recycling box led SWP to issue reminders that knives and sharp objects should **not** be left in kerbside recycling boxes as they can cause injury, or be picked up by children or those with criminal intent.

Knives should be taken with care to recycling sites; broken glass should be well wrapped to ensure no risk and

added to rubbish bins; syringes must be disposed of in a sharps boxes, which SWP collects and replaces but must first be obtained from a doctor or pharmacy.

Collection contract procurement

Discussions will shortly begin with a range of companies that responded to the tender notice in the Official Journal of the European Union for the new collections contract. Procuring a new contractor will enable the introduction of the Recycle More kerbside service with extra recyclable materials taken weekly – including many more plastics – and three-weekly rubbish collections.

These talks aim to clarify our expectations, helping ensure bids deliver best value to taxpayers and meet our high environmental and service quality aspirations. Bidders’ detailed proposals are due by the end of September and will show their proposed working methods, resource levels, vehicle selection and depot plans. We will then enter a final stage of negotiations with bidders.

Somerset Waste Board will review the outcome of the first stage of the competitive dialogue process and any changes to the final specification at its meeting on 19 October. A final decision will be taken by SWB in March with the new contractor delivering services from March 2020. Our hardworking Kier staff will transfer to the new contractor.

Plastics update

The government will be consulting on its plan to ban sales of plastic straws, drink stirrers and plastic stemmed cotton

buds. New facilities taking plastic food and household pots tubs and trays (PTT) at all recycling sites are proving very popular, as is the SWP Pledge Against Preventable Plastics (sign up [here](#)). SWP is the Somerset hub for Refill, helping cafes and other outlets, including County Hall in Taunton, become water refill stations. For more, see <https://www.refill.org.uk/refill-scheme/refill-somerset/>

Answering your questions

There are many ways to get any query about recycling or rubbish answered by SWP, including the six customer services teams of our partner county and district councils, as well as SWP's web contact form – details here: <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/contact-us/>. Many people reach SWP on Facebook; we now have over 3,400 followers. SWP is also answering questions via its information stand at libraries; after visiting Taunton and Bridgwater libraries, we will be at Frome, Minehead and Yeovil libraries in coming weeks. SWP is keen to keep parish councils informed, such as by attending the Sedgemoor parish cluster groups, regular Mendip parish forums, and South Somerset area meetings. And SWP managing director Mickey Green will be speaking and answering questions at the Somerset Association of Local Councils AGM in October.

Latest media releases

Recent communications included:

- [Plastic pledge marks World Environment Day](#)
- [Found today in a Somerset recycling box: kitchen knife](#)

Upcoming campaigns will focus on driver recruitment and plastic action.

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 the AGM on Friday 29 June 2018. SWB meeting agendas, papers and reports are available [online](#).

For more on SWP, SWB and waste services: www.somersetwaste.gov.uk.

SWB membership (as notified to SWP):

- **Mendip** – Cllrs Nigel Woollcombe-Adams (Vice Chair), Nigel Taylor
- **Sedgemoor** – Cllrs Dawn Hill, Gill Slocombe
- **Somerset County** – Cllrs David Hall, Mike Pullin
- **South Somerset** – Cllrs Jo Roundell Greene, Derek Yeomans (Chairman)
- **Taunton Deane Borough** – Cllrs Patrick Berry, Hazel Prior-Sankey
- **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.

