

# 8.0 Small Villages, Big Results



## 8.1 Why this theme?

In response to the 1999 European Landfill Directive, the Government set statutory targets for the recycling and composting of domestic waste. County Councils must recycle or compost 10% of household waste by 2002/03, 18% by 2003/04 and 27% by 2005/06. The overall target is to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill, compared to 1995 levels, by 25% by 2010, 50% by 2013 and 65% by 2020 (source: Northamptonshire County Council).

To meet these targets, Local Authorities can invest capital in expensive refuse sorting technology (see 7.2.2.2) or simply encourage and help residents to deal with the waste at source by composting and recycling. The problem with involvement schemes, such as recycling and composting, is that initiatives, facilities and campaigns are usually concentrated on areas of high population, such as towns or large villages, resulting in the environmental neglect of small villages and rural communities.

This theme will examine how Corby Waste Not successfully ran an innovative community-based waste project in a small village, helping to increase environmental awareness and help the residents develop free-standing environmental initiatives.

## 8.2 What we did

Projectworker Fiona Dowson helped Corby Waste Not to develop links and contacts with rural communities throughout the Borough of Corby. This initial networking developed a community-based Projectwork in Cottingham Village, carried out by Projectworker Dot Pocock.

### 8.2.1 Cottingham Village

Cottingham is a small rural community with approximately 300 households and 500 residents. The village is run by the Parish Council and has a primary school, a village shop, a church and two pubs, but no recycling facilities.

### 8.2.2 Assessing the situation

To establish existing levels of recycling and composting in Cottingham, Dot distributed a questionnaire to 50 residents. A total of 11 questionnaires were completed and returned. The results revealed that 69% of the residents returning the questionnaire already took their glass, paper aluminium and clothes to recycling facilities at supermarkets when shopping. Additionally, 54% of residents returning the questionnaire already composted their organic household wastes, rather than sending them to landfill. Although very



Figure 29 Fiona Dowson at a Corby Waste Not Community event

encouraging, both these figures were higher than expected and may be biased by an unrepresentative percentage of environmentally aware people returning the questionnaires.

An option appraisal exercise was conducted to identify the most viable and effective methods of helping the residents of Cottingham send less waste to landfill. Based on the information from the questionnaire and the typical composition of waste in dustbins in the UK (see figure 30), the appraisal revealed that the introduction of a kerbside paper collection scheme and the active promotion of home composting would achieve the greatest results for the minimum capital investment. The decision was taken to concentrate the Projectwork on helping raise resident's awareness of waste and encouraging home composting.

**About a third of household waste is kitchen and garden waste (Source: INCPEN)**

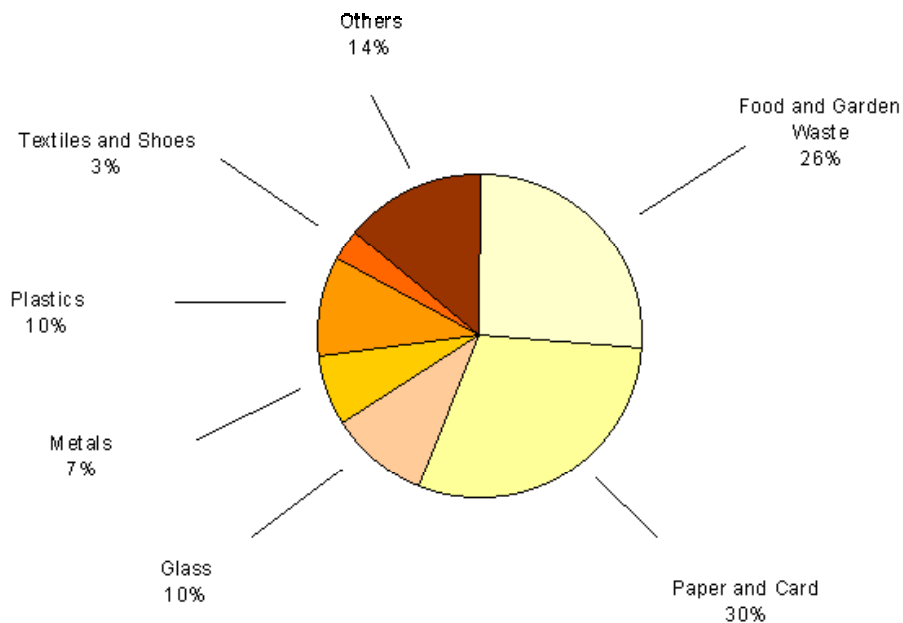


Figure 30 The typical composition of rubbish in a UK dustbin (source: Northamptonshire County Council)

### 8.2.3 Involving and motivating the whole village through inclusive activities

A main feature of the Projectwork at Cottingham was a week of themed lessons and activities involving over 120 children at Cottingham Primary School. The week coincided with National Science Week and revolved around fun activity days designed to highlight the importance of recycling. There were activities for different Key Stage groups, including competitions to build things out of waste materials, an activity day on the 3 R's (Reduce, Re-use and Recycle), competitions to guess how much waste the children generate whilst at school, inter-class waste-based quizzes and a whole-school art competition to make the best self-portrait out of recyclable materials (also see 9.2.2). The Parish Council was involved in the education week by agreeing to act as judges in the art competition.



A cheese, wine and compost evening was held in the village hall. The aim of the evening was to introduce the concept, methods and benefits of home composting to residents through a relaxed, informal event and a quiz. There was a good turnout at the meeting, the concept of home composting was well received and the evening was considered a success. However, as with the questionnaire biases, the effectiveness of the event may have been reduced as a result of attracting people already interested the subject, resulting in a degree of preaching to the converted.

Dot also worked with the Parish Council to develop longer-term aims and objectives for environmental initiatives in the village. As a result, it was agreed that the Parish Council would recruit a Parish Environment Officer to keep the environmental momentum going through active promotion, events and articles in the parish newsletter.

Involving the Village School, Parish Council and residents through fun events helped to get the village talking about recycling and composting. The Projectwork shows how inclusive environmental initiatives can deliver actual reductions in waste whilst helping to bring a community closer together.



Figure 31 Dot Pocock with children at Cottingham Primary School

### 8.2.4 An update on Cottingham

Cottingham is now part of the Corby Borough Council kerbside paper collection scheme (see 7.2.2.2) and has a Parish Environment Officer. Cottingham Village Shop, Church and the Village School have received StudentForce Community Eco-Checks (see 3.2).

## 8.3 National example

### Steward Community Woodland Community Composting Scheme

Steward Community Woodland is a sustainable working woodland and conservation project in Dartmoor. The group runs a composting scheme that provides facilities for composting garden waste from the local community. The scheme raises awareness of environmental issues and gives the Community Woodland an opportunity to engage with the wider local community.

For every tonne of waste diverted from landfill sites, the project receives landfill tax recycling credits from Teignbridge District Council. It is hoped that further income will be generated from the compost itself.

The scheme is aimed at providing composting from bulky garden waste which many people do not have room to compost themselves. Such wastes usually make up a significant proportion of the material going into landfill sites. The scheme does not collect

cooked kitchen wastes. Information about home composting and worm bins is also provided in order to encourage people to handle such wastes at home.

The exact location and design of the bins was discussed with the Environment Agency, which has the authority to give the scheme permission on the basis of their site inspection and the risk assessment carried out. See 8.7.2 for contact details.

## 8.4 It's over to you...



### 8.4.1 Aims

To help the residents of small communities understand the importance of them doing their bit to reduce waste; to provide small communities with the knowledge and contacts required develop waste minimisation initiatives; to bring residents together to collectively reduce waste.

### 8.4.2 Actions

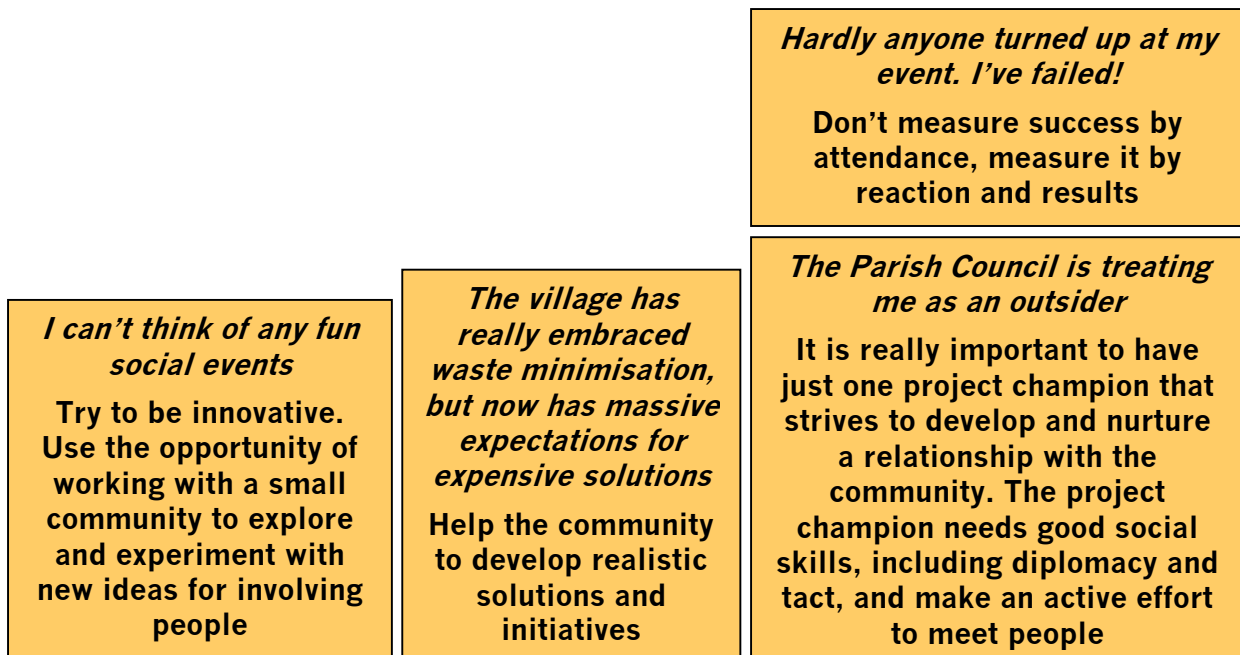
If you live in a small village or settlement, get community representatives together to discuss the feasibility of running a community waste reduction programme. Decide what you want to achieve and how you are going to do it, then get advice and support from community environmental organisations (see 8.7.1) and research potential funding opportunities (see 13.2.3.2). When planning the programme, try to include as many residents as possible by involving social groups (such as the Parish Council or village school) and social spaces (such as the village shop or pub). Plan and run informal and fun activities that will motivate the community into collectively reducing waste.

- **Awareness**
  - **Problems of landfill**
  - **Importance of doing your bit**
  - **Alternatives to landfill**
    - **Re-use**
    - **Composting**
    - **Recycling**
- **Networking**
  - **Church**
  - **Community centres**
  - **Farms**
  - **Local businesses**
  - **Neighbourhood Watch Group**
  - **Parish Councillors and Clerks**
  - **Pub**
  - **School Parent Teacher Associations**
  - **Shop**
  - **Village Hall**
- **Involvement**
  - **Fun Events**
  - **Rewarding**
  - **Inclusive**

## 8.5 Summary

The Projectwork at Cottingham revealed that residents were enthusiastic and keen to reduce waste, but need simple guidance to help them be effective. Bringing the community together by involving the Village School and the Parish Council, inviting involvement and inputting knowledge were all catalysts in helping the residents to develop an environmental momentum. The result has been a motivated and able community working together to develop lasting initiatives to reduce waste.

## 8.6 Troubleshooting



## 8.7 Contacts

### 8.7.1 Community environmental organisations

 The Countryside Agency  
[www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk)

Community Matters  
[www.communitymatters.org.uk](http://www.communitymatters.org.uk)

Going for Green  
[www.goingforgreen.org.uk](http://www.goingforgreen.org.uk)

Northamptonshire ACRE

[www.ruralnet.org.uk/~northantsacre](http://www.ruralnet.org.uk/~northantsacre)

## 8.7.2 Composting

Subsidised home composter  
[www.stewardwood.org.uk](http://www.stewardwood.org.uk)

## 8.7.3 Recycling

The Recycling Consortium  
[www.recyclingconsortium.org.uk](http://www.recyclingconsortium.org.uk)

## 8.7.4 Funding

See section 13.2.3.2.