

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Issued by: Connor McLoughlin

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BAGS PROTECT RECYCLING FROM WETTEST MAY IN DECADES

All recycling collected in Wokingham Borough during the wettest May in decades was completely protected from the elements following the rollout of waterproof recycling bags. Almost double the amount of rain fell compared to an average for May in recent years, but all residents' recycling was deemed as a high-quality material and accepted.

Waterproof recycling bags were introduced as paper and card processing plants put in place stricter rules on how wet material can be recycled. The recycling bags are easy to carry, made of durable, waterproof material and have a Velcro fastening so all recycling is kept sealed and dry. Each household has initially received two recycling bags with more available if required.

In December 2020, one of the wettest months of last year, more than 500 tonnes of recycling from Wokingham Borough Council was rejected by the processing plants, with most of this being because it was too wet. This is the equivalent to almost 40 double decker buses in weight.

Month	Recycling container	Rainfall (mm)	Recycling not processed due to being wet (tonnes)
December 2020	Open top black box	73.7	500+
May 2021	Sealable waterproof bag	85.3	0

Throughout May there were 23 days of rain and a total rainfall of 85.3mm, almost double the average for the month during the last 30 years. Despite the downpours, no paper and card from Wokingham borough residents was rejected and it was sent to paper and card recycling companies for reprocessing into new products.

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The implementation of waterproof recycling bags across the area has meant the borough is back to its best with recycling. Recycling rates for April and May are more than 50 per cent and higher, and on track to increase in the years ahead.

“The data shows our switch to waterproof recycling bags will help boost the council’s recycling rate throughout the year ahead, without concerns about the wetter months,” said Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment and leisure. “I’d like to thank residents for their patience while deliveries took place and praise everyone for making use of them, which will have a lasting positive impact on the borough, its recycling rate and wider climate emergency goals.”

Any residents needing additional waterproof recycling bags can collect them from our community hubs, including the Council’s Shute End office or libraries in Wokingham, Woodley and Lower Earley as well as Earley town council offices. Details for each location and its opening times can be found on the council’s [recycling bag webpages](#).

Initially extra bags are being limited to two additional bags per household but soon residents will be able to get more bags. Announcements will be made in due course. Residents are being encouraged to [reuse their old black recycling boxes at home if they can](#).

Wokingham Borough Council is aiming for a 70 per cent recycling rate by 2030. It’s part of a wider plan to tackle the [climate emergency](#) and make the borough carbon neutral by 2030.

- ENDS -

Further information:

1. More from Cllr Parry Batth, executive member for environment and leisure, on parry.batth@wokingham.gov.uk
2. Alternatively, contact the council’s communications, engagement and marketing team on CEM@wokingham.gov.uk