WASTE & RECYCLING

HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE RE-OPENING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

From Tuesday 26th May 2020 the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Panteg Way New Inn, Pontypool, will open seven days a week from Monday – Saturday, 7.30am – 4.30pm, and 9am-5pm on a Sunday. Last vehicle entry will be at the above closing time. Residents will have to pre-book a visit to the site. At this stage only cars will be permitted access to the site to assist in ensuring the greatest capacity for residents can be achieved, No vans or trailers will be allowed on site. This will be reviewed after 7 days.

To stay within the Welsh Government's coronavirus guidelines on essential travel, it is important that journeys to these sites are only made if waste cannot be stored any longer at home without causing risk to health or safety.

The health of residents and staff is always the highest priority, so everyone visiting the reopened sites will be expected to observe the new social distancing measures that have been put in place. This includes traffic management to control the number of visitors at any one time. As this will significantly reduce the capacity for visitors to the HWRC the Council warns that this could lead to extensive traffic queues building up at site entrances. The booking system is being brought in to endeavour to mitigate against this.

In line with the regulations in Wales, the requirement to take all reasonable measures to maintain physical distancing applies to the operation and use of the HWRC site. As such there is an obligation on the local authority and those responsible for the work to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres on site. This also applies to members of the public using the site and contractors removing material.

Please read the following guidance before visiting the site.

- You should only visit the site if you cannot safely store your waste at home. Only go if it is essential.
- There will be limits on the number of vehicles allowed on site to allow for social distancing. There may be delays accessing the site and possibly queues outside of the site.
- Social distancing measures are now in place, this also means site staff will not be providing any assistance to unload your vehicle.
- The Council is not operating a van and trailer permit scheme at the moment and access to the site is for cars only through the booking system.
- Please ensure you have booked a slot to visit the Household Waste Recycling. No booking slot means no entry. Please book online at https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Forms/Request/Household-Waste-Recycling-Centre-Booking.aspx or on Call Torfaen on 01495 762200.
- You must not visit the Household Waste Recycling Centre if you or anyone you are living with is in self-isolation or showing COVID-19 symptoms.”
- Only one person per vehicle where possible. Recycle what you can from home by using the Councils kerbside collections. No vans or trailers will be allowed into the site.
• **Only Cars will be allowed on site.** There are likely to be queues at the HWRC due to limits on the number of people being allowed into recycling centre at any one time. **Please be patient and respect the staff working at the centres.** If it is essential that you go to the HWRC, **remember to observe social distancing** and any other safety messaging in place. If you do not respect social distancing or are abusive to staff you will be asked to leave and the Police may be called.

• You must not dispose of household waste in a way that will cause pollution or harm people’s health. This includes burning it - **burning household waste is an offence, liable to prosecution.**

• **Fly-tipping is a crime.** Leaving items on the street or in parks, woodlands and fields is fly-tipping. This is a crime and could mean a fixed penalty of up to £400, or prosecution. Even if you mean well and leave items outside charity shops, or next to full recycling bins, this is still fly-tipping.

Below we have tried to answer some of the questions you may have regarding the reopening of the HWRC;

**Q When will the Household Waste Recycling Centre be open at Panteg Way New Inn, Pontypool and what times will it be open?**

A. Household Waste Recycling Centre will re-open from the 26th May 2020. The site will be open to members of the public from 7.30– 4.30pm from Monday - Saturday and 9am – 5pm on Sundays. Residents will need to book a slot to visit the site. The quickest and simplest way to do this is via the website https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Forms/Request/Household-Waste-Recycling-Centre-Booking.aspx Alternatively you can contact Call Torfaen on 01495 762200 if you do not have access to the internet. This has been implemented to endeavour to control the amount of vehicles using the site to aim to avoid significant queues and to manage compliance with social distancing. We ask that residents ensure that they stick to their time slots. If they do not they will be refused entry. The last vehicle entry will be at the above closing time to allow staff to cleanse and disinfect areas for the following day.

**Q When can I visit the Household Recycling Centre?**

A. We ask residents to ensure that they only visit the site if they find it is necessary i.e. they are struggling with their waste and that waste is causing a health and safety issue.. We expect the site to be exceptionally busy so if your journey is not essential and your waste can wait we advise postponing your visit for now. **Please remember you will need your booking time slot to gain access. Please do not turn up at random times as you will be turned away.**

**Q Who is overseeing the new system, and how?**

A. FCC Environment have reorganised the layout of the recycling centre and introduced social distancing measures. Only a limited number of cars will be allowed on site at any one time. Staff will not be able to assist residents to offload their waste consequently, residents should leave the site as quickly as possible to allow the next car in.
Council staff will patrol the roads surrounding the recycling centres to guide the public. Traffic management such as traffic lights, cones, traffic signs, diversions and one way systems will be implemented to help the flow of traffic. If the queue becomes too long, residents may be turned away and asked to return at a later time.

Q. How many cars will be allowed on site?
A. There will be restrictions on site and there will only be a few cars allowed on site at any one time. Please follow staff instructions.

Q. What type of vehicles will be allowed access to the site?
A. Only cars will be allowed access to the site in the first instance. This will be kept under review. We will provide further information over the coming few days regarding arrangements for vans and trailers.

Q. I have booked a time slot but turn up in a different car to the one we have booked in.
A. Please ensure that you turn up with the vehicle that you booked the time slot with as if you are not on the list with your vehicle registration you will not be let into the site. Only booked cars will be allowed in.

Q. What will happen if I turn up at the right time with a car that is booked in with the right vehicle but I have a little trailer on. Will I be allowed access?
A. You will be told as you approach the queue that whilst the contents of the car can be emptied, you will not be able to empty the contents of the trailer.

Q. What are the social distancing restrictions in place?
A. You will be directed to a designated space and you will be expected to follow the social distancing rules as instructed.

Q. What can I bring to the site?
A. The full range of household waste and recyclable materials can be brought to the site. However we would not expect a full house clearance. The waste must only be brought in a car and the waste should only be brought to the site if you cannot safely store your waste at home.

Q. What is an essential trip?
A. Residents should only visit the Household Waste Recycling Centre to dispose of waste that is posing a risk of injury or harm to health if left at home. Most waste can be safely stored and we encourage all residents to store waste wherever possible.

Q. What waste can I bring?
A. You can bring the normal waste you would normally bring to the HWRC. However the waste that you do bring should only be the waste that cannot be stored safely and/or poses a risk of injury or harm to health to you at home. Staff at the
entrance will be asking residents about their waste to make sure residents are only making essential journeys.

Q. Is it safe to open?

A. Yes. We have put in place measures to keep staff and residents safe on site. However, residents should still be staying at home and only visiting the site when absolutely necessary.

Q. What if people don't follow the new rules?

A. They will be asked to leave the site. The sites will only remain open whilst it is safe to do so, and we of course take that seriously. If residents are acting in an irresponsible manner then we may have to close the site and/or change the way we work.

Q. Will you relax the rules if the queues get too big?

A. No. These new measures are in place for everyone’s safety. If the queues are too big then it is likely that some residents are making non-essential journeys and may be turned away.

Q. Why shouldn't vulnerable residents visit?

A. Public Health Wales guidance states that vulnerable residents, including those over 70 should be strictly limiting interactions with other people, and so therefore should not be visiting the Household Waste Recycling Centre. We will not be asking for proof of age and rely on residents taking Public Health Wales advice seriously.

Q. Why are you only letting a few cars into the site at a time?

As with many shops and businesses we have implemented strict social distancing measures to protect residents and staff when on site. We have limited the number of vehicles allowed on site so we can safely manage this. This may mean we operate a “one in one out” approach, just like a visit to the supermarket. We hope residents understand and will remain patient.

Q. Is there extra cleaning on site?

A. Yes. The sites will be cleaned regularly and staff will be wiping down surfaces that are regularly used. We would ask that residents wear gloves wherever possible as they would normally when coming to sites.

Q. Will staff be keeping 2m apart?

A. Yes, wherever possible. Staff have been trained in new social distancing measures. National guidelines recognise it is not always possible in the waste sector to remain 2m apart, extra precautions are advised in such circumstances. We will review the current safety guidance regularly and have measures in place to increase their safety.

Q. Why aren’t trailers or vans allowed?
A. Residents should not need to bring more waste than can fit inside a vehicle. The Household Waste Recycling Centre is opening for essential trips only, where the waste cannot be stored safely at home. Visits by vans and trailers would significantly reduce the numbers of visitors the site could handle. This could prevent other householders from undertaking essential journeys. However we will be reviewing access to the site after the first few days of operation and plan to introduce specific arrangements for vans and permits.

Q. Why should vehicle windows be closed?
A. The safety of our staff and residents is important and keeping windows closed is a vital barrier to stop spread of infection. Staff can talk to and advise residents with the window shut.

Q. What about residents with disabilities, will you offer assistance?
A. We strongly advise against visiting the site if you are unable to unload your vehicle. Someone who lives in the same home could visit instead.

Q. Will the reuse shops be open?
A. No. Visiting a reuse shop is currently not identified as essential travel. We do not want to encourage non-essential travel.

Q. Will traders be allowed to visit?
A. No. The service is prioritising residents from Torfaen and will not have capacity to allow traders in. This will be reviewed regularly.

Q. Why didn’t you open earlier?
A. We closed the sites as a trip to the HWRC was not classed as essential, so residents wouldn’t be making trips to the HWRC as it would be against Public Health guidance. The Welsh First Minister announced on the 7th May that he would be changing the Welsh Regulations to allow visits to recycling and waste sites. These have now been changes so visits are now permitted in Wales. Prior to the change in regulation a visit to the site was not viewed by the Police as an essential journey and could have resulted in the driver of the vehicle being fined. Since the change in regulation, we have been working with other Welsh Local Authorities, Police and site staff to ensure we had measures in place to ensure it was safe to open.

Q. What if I have waste relating to coronavirus infection?
A. If any households have had COVID-19 symptoms the residual waste should be double bagged and left for 72 hours before being putting in your residual bin or brought to the site.

Q. Can I walk waste into the site?
A. Walk in access with waste will not be allowed.

Q. Will anyone on site be able to help to unload?
A. Unfortunately due to staff having to comply with social distancing they will be unable to offer assistance to unload items.

Q. **Is the Van Permit Scheme in operation at the site?**
A. The Van Permit Scheme is temporarily suspended and vans and trailers will not be able to access sites. If your vehicle would normally need a permit, please assume that it will not be allowed on site and will be turned away. This will be kept under review.

Q. **Can I come to site in a van or bring a trailer?**
A. Vans, trailers and commercial vehicles **will not be allowed** on sites when they open from **Tuesday 26th May 2020**. We are keeping this decision under review and hope to be able to start to provide access for these types of vehicles through our Permit Scheme in the near future.

Q. **How many people can be in the car?**
A. One person per car to visit our site – If you need someone else to drive the car or need help with your waste, one person from your household can accompany you. However only one person will be allowed out of the car to dispose of the waste.

Q. **Can I bring my children or my pets with me?**
A. Do not bring children or pets to site unless you really have to. If you do bring children or pets they will not be allowed to leave the car.

Q. **Are there any traffic restrictions at the site or on the surrounding roads?**
A. There will be queues and there may be restrictions on the highways and roads leading up to the sites, there will be traffic marshals at the site and we ask people to be patient, polite and adhere to any advice they may give. Staff are working under unprecedented circumstances and will be trying their best to provide a service to you.

**PLEASE NOTE RESIDENTS SHOULD ONLY VISIT THE HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE TO DISPOSE OF WASTE THAT IS POSING A RISK OF INJURY OR HARM TO HEALTH IF LEFT AT HOME. MOST WASTE CAN BE SAFELY STORED AND WE ENCOURAGE ALL RESIDENTS TO STORE WASTE WHEREVER POSSIBLE.**