

# Garden Waste Subscription Service

Town and Parish Councillor's Handbook



## Foreword

*As many of you are aware the way that Huntingdonshire District Council collects garden waste for our residents will change from the beginning of April 2024. Given the Council's priority to ensure we are financially sustainable and are able to continue to provide essential services, we have made the tough decision to introduce a charge for garden waste collections. This decision has not been made lightly and has undergone much scrutiny and rigor from all Councillors but will ensure that we can retain the service for those residents who value it.*

*As a Joint Administration our commitment is to offer residents meaningful opportunities to inform and input into the design of our Council services and to that end, we have undertaken a lengthy engagement exercise with our Town and Parish Councillors, along with local community groups. We wanted to hear from the people who are at the very heart of their local communities and understand the needs and concerns of residents, to inform and shape the new service we will offer. We have had a great response to this engagement opportunity with 32 of our local Town and Parish Councils attending to feed in their views and ideas. I would like to offer a personal thanks to all those the Councillors, Clerks and community representatives who took time out of their busy commitments to help us shape the new Garden Waste Subscription Service.*

*As a result of the engagement, we have compiled a Handbook for Town and Parish Councillors which provides you with the outputs of the sessions, so you can see how these have shaped the community initiatives that we are developing. We have also included a long list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to support local Councillors manage the change of service to residents. These were developed in the sessions where a number of concerns and misunderstandings were raised and addressed. In addition, there is a list of FAQs on the HDC website pages. Please direct residents to these pages, as we will be continually reviewing and updating information here in response to questions or clarifications identified during this changeover. [Garden Waste Subscription Service - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk)*

*We continue to look at new and different ways to keep our Town and Parish Councillors at the heart of how we deliver our Council services and would encourage you to join us in engagement opportunities in the future. Your continued input on the Garden Waste Subscription Service will ensure that we have taken on board the views of our communities, which has and will provide highly relevant information as we develop the new service.*

*Cllr Martin Hassall*

Executive Councillor for Corporate and Shared Services



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If you have any further questions or need clarification on information contained within this Handbook, please contact the Waste Minimisation team on [wasteminimisation@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:wasteminimisation@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

## 1. Introduction - an outline of the Garden Waste Collection Service

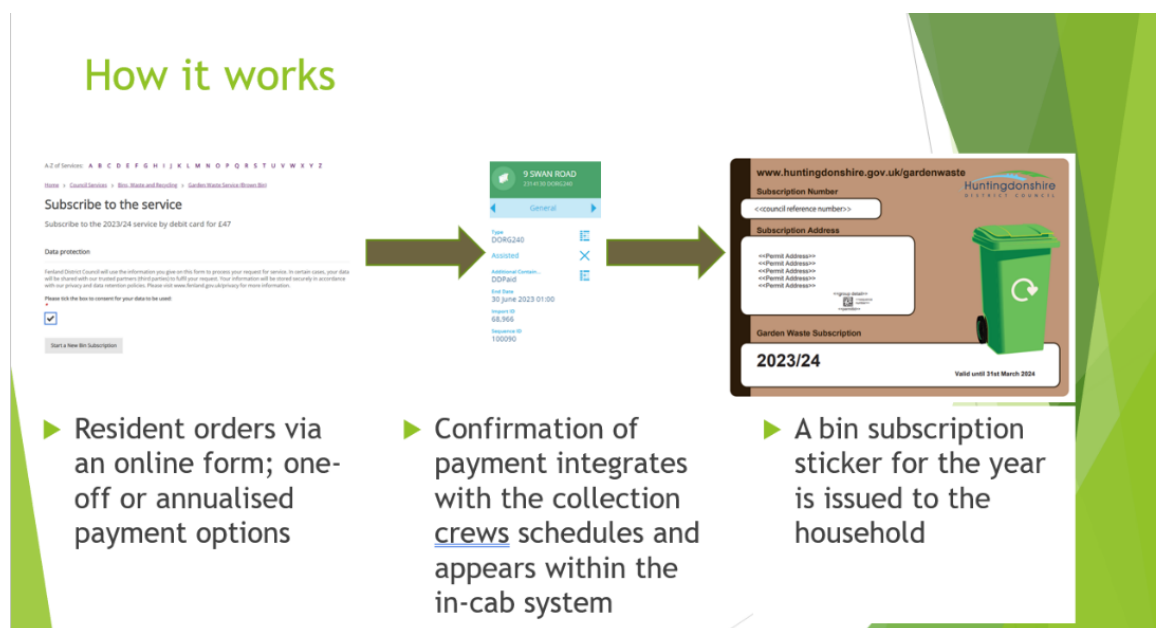
Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet Members have agreed to introduce a fortnightly garden waste subscription service that will come into effect in April 2024.

The optional service will cost £57.50 for one garden waste bin to be collected for the whole year. There will still be the option to purchase additional garden bins, and these will be charged at £30 for each additional bin, up to a maximum of four bins.

The existing free garden bin service will cease at the end of this financial year (31 March 2024) and be replaced with a new chargeable garden waste collection service from April 2024.

Residents will be able to sign up for the garden waste subscription service in early December 2023, with plenty of time for April 2024, when the subscription service comes into effect. This will allow the Council sufficient time to plan the new routes for collections across the district and how many staff and vehicles will be required.

## 2. How to subscribe to the service:



The new garden waste subscription service will begin on 1st April 2024. The service will cost £57.50 for one garden waste bin to be collected for the whole year, and £30 for any additional bin up to four bins.

### Standard Subscription Price: £57.50

Residents will be able to sign up for the garden waste subscription service in December 2023, with plenty of time for April 2024, when the subscription service comes into effect and take advantage of the Early Bird Discount.

### Early Bird Discount from December to 31st January

- **Direct Debit Payments: £50 per year for a minimum of 3 years**
- **One Card Payment: £50 for the first year, followed by £57.50 next year.**

To subscribe and find out more about this service, please visit: [Garden Waste Subscription Service - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/gardenwaste)

After you pay, you'll get an email confirming your subscription. Save this email so you can check your collection dates.

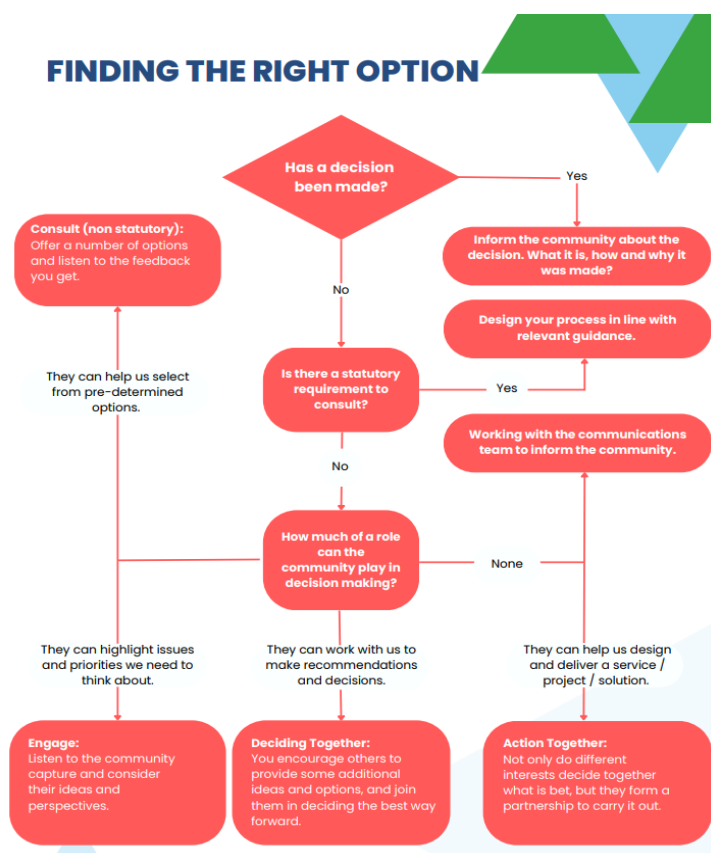
A sticker for your garden waste bin will be posted to your registered address. This sticker is an essential component of identifying your bin as part of the Garden Waste Collection Service. Please allow a reasonable delivery time. You can put this on your garden waste bin, so the crew members know you have paid.

The service will start on 1 April 2024, so you don't need to do anything until then.

### 3. Engagement sessions overview

The commitment to provide a number of engagement opportunities for local areas was proposed and approved by Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> August, as part of the implementation of the new Garden waste subscription service. The engagement opportunities allowed local residents to inform and co-design the details of the scheme. This will specifically touch on how to maintain the environmental, health and community priorities in their local area as well how to support those unable to afford the subscription cost.

The proposed schedule of engagement adopts the Council's new Engagement and Consultation principles as set out in the flow diagram below:



As per the principles, HDC aims to be transparent, fair and to provide feedback on the outputs and outcomes of the engagement discussion activity.

The objective of the engagement sessions was to involve our community, Town and Parish councillors, clerks, and community groups, in the decision-making process for a smooth transition and discuss current initiatives offered to residents. All invitees and those attending the session have had access to the Bang the Table online consultation portal, allowing them the opportunity to feed in their ideas on initiatives even if they were unable to attend the session below.

## 4. Garden Waste Initiatives; current and proposed offers:

### 1. FREE LOOSE COMPOST

Free loose compost is available for all Huntingdonshire residents at Waterbeach, Alconbury and March transfer station. Simply visit with a spade and a bag and you can help yourself. You collect your own soil improver from:

- **Waterbeach (postcode CB25 9PG)**  
Monday to Friday between 8:00am and 4:00pm and Saturdays from 8:00am to 01:00pm.
- **Alconbury and March Waste Transfer Stations (postcode PE 28 9PG)**  
Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm.

If residents cannot make it to any of the transfer station sites to load your own soil conditioner, then it can be purchased for £2.50 a bag at the Household Recycling Centres [Composting \(thalia.co.uk\)](https://thalia.co.uk)

The Council will be actively promoting Compost Awareness Week (w/c 5<sup>th</sup> May 2024) with incentives and promotional events to encourage residents to try composting in their homes. A schedule of locations will be identified across the week, where free compost will be available for residents to come and collect as much as they want.

### 2. COMMUNITY COMPOST SCHEMES

Advice on composting can be found through the HDC website - [How to set up home composting | Recycle Now](#)

We will continue to update and enhance these pages with details and case studies about Community Compost Schemes, so residents can learn more about how it works and how to set one up.

### 3. SUBSIDISED HOME COMPOSTERS

Residents in Huntingdonshire are eligible to buy 1 compost bin and get a second bin half price. For more information go to [Additional Garden Waste Bin and Composting - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](#) or you can visit the following website [Compost Bins | Shop Our Bestselling Composters | GetComposting](#)

We are working with Straight, for an HDC subsidy for a Blackwall compost converter 220litre @£25 per unit. HDC will subsidise £15 per unit meaning the resident will pay £10 per unit + delivery costs direct to Straight. Straight will ensure one purchase per household.

### 4. PARISH COUNCIL ALLOCATION FOR LAND MANAGEMENT

HDC waste minimisation team will create a form where parish councils can request bins, which they can allocate to residents to support them maintaining local green spaces. Once HDC receive a request there will need to be a site visit to agree whether this is a suitable area for a resident to manage.

### 5. SHARED BINS

Households will be able to make a personal arrangement with a neighbour to share the cost of a garden bin. If people share their garden waste bin with a neighbour, the householder which pays the annual charge will have overall responsibility for the bin as a bin can only be allocated to one address. It would be the responsibility of the named householder if the bin is contaminated, misused, or needs replacing.

The agreement to share bins is between the payer and their neighbour only. If circumstances change, then the payer remains the primary contact.



For more information go to [Additional Garden Waste Bin and Composting - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/AdditionalGardenWasteBinandComposting)

## 6. ASSISTED COLLECTIONS

Residents who are unable to take their bins out themselves and there is no other person living at the household who is able to help can apply to have assisted bin collections. This service is provided for all bin collection and not just for garden waste collections.

To apply go to [Assisted Collections - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/AssistedCollections)

## 7. FREE SATURDAY FREIGHTER SERVICE

Every Saturday from 6:30am-1pm, between the months of April and September (6 months) we would arrange for 26t waste collections vehicles to be situated at pre-designated areas in the district (up to a max of 5), where residents could visit and deposit garden waste material, the vehicle would be staff with one driver to facilitate the loading. (Areas have been identified based on geographical spread, along with availability of parking for HGV's) – PLEASE SEE APPENDIX 5

### FOR PARISHES NOT INCLUDED ON THE 4-WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

HDC will contact the outlying parish councils, not included on the 4-week schedule, to ask if they want 10 community bins for a community location. These bins will be accessible for local residents to use to deposit their garden waste and will be collected as part of the normal route scheduling for fortnightly garden bin collections. It will be the responsibility of the parish council to manage these bins, the same as a household ie: no contamination, out for collection on the collect day.

## 5. Frequently Asked Questions

### Why is the Council introducing a garden waste subscription service?

#### 1. Why is HDC introducing a garden waste subscription service?

Like many councils across the country, we are facing financial challenges. Over the next four years we need to find ways to save money or generate income as rising costs and inflation, combined with cuts in government grants, mean there is a threat that we could be in a potential deficit of £9.7m.

As a result, we face a balance between maintaining services we are legally required to deliver, so-called statutory services, with those that we know are highly valued but do not come with legal duties (non-statutory services). We want to protect against service cuts in all areas, but we must make some difficult decisions to ensure our finances are sustainable for future years.

Unlike household waste and recycling, there's no legal requirement to collect garden waste so councils can charge for collections. Councillors agreed that it was important to continue to offer a garden waste collection service for residents who value it and wish to use it, rather than stop it.

Around 65% of authorities across England and half of the waste collection authorities in the Eastern Region have already opted to charge for household garden waste.

Not all properties in Huntingdonshire require a garden waste collection service as they do not have a garden. Introducing a subscription means the service will only be paid for by those households that choose to use it. This is similar to bulky waste collections where only households requesting the service have to pay.

#### 2. Is charging for garden waste legal?

Yes, it is legal. Under the *Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2021* councils can charge for the collection of garden waste.

Unlike household waste and recycling, there's no legal requirement to collect garden waste and councils can charge for collections. The income from charging for garden waste collections would make the service self-financing.

### 3. Why can't the charge be added to Council Tax?

Council Tax itself is a mandatory payment which covers a variety of services such as fire, police, adult social care, and children's services including education. You may not use all these services, but you still have to pay Council Tax. We collect Council Tax on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, The Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Cambridgeshire Fire Authority, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority as well as town and parish councils across the district.

We keep just 7p of every £1 of Council Tax collected as the other elements are determined by the other organisations. The Council Tax we retain is significantly lower than our neighbours, and the national average for Shire Districts.

We explored paying instalments through the Council Tax monthly collection system. However, Council Tax payments are tightly regulated and there is no provision in law to allow for additional services to be attached to Council Tax.

### 4. Did you consider other alternatives?

We considered other options, such as pausing collections in the winter or collecting every three weeks. However, by introducing a subscription service that is provided all year round, we will be able to protect our frontline services and maintain a balanced budget and set a sustainable Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Currently the cost of garden waste collection is distributed among all taxpayers, through funding diverted from other services, regardless of their usage or benefit. By directly charging for this service, we establish a system where those who actively use the service contribute to its funding.

### 5. Did you consider seasonal usage i.e., winter months bins could be largely empty?

This was one of the options that we considered when different ways to fund garden waste collections were looked at. Unfortunately, a pause over the winter months would not cover the financial shortfall needed in the Council as we would still have to keep the same number of staff and vehicles on contract, even if the service was not offered over a few months.

### 6. Why have the public not been consulted on the proposals?

At a Full Council meeting in December 2022, Councillors agreed a set of budget principles. These principles included the need to protect frontline services and non-statutory services such as garden waste collections. Also, those services that compete in a commercial environment should not be a burden on taxpayers who cannot take advantage of them.

Councils sometimes have a statutory requirement to consult their residents, and this is especially true for issues such as planning, or redevelopments. Statutory consultations are bound by legal requirements and can have strict rules surrounding how they should be conducted. Guidance from the Local Government Association states that there are a number of situations where a consultation would not be required. This includes where a council's room for manoeuvre is limited (for example by statutory or budgetary restrictions) and as a result any consultation would not change the final decision.

Legally, we are required to set a balanced budget and given the financial challenges being faced, introducing a garden waste subscription service has been identified as one of the ways we can protect our frontline services and protect against service cuts.

#### 7. What will you do to support residents in lower income households in the district and/or those on lower Council Tax bands?

Not all households with a garden bin use the service - out of the 83% of properties that can access the service, 30% don't regularly use it.

For households on lower incomes, we will support residents through the Council Tax Support Scheme, that calculates the contribution required based on the benefits they receive. A review of this scheme in 2023 will ensure the most financially vulnerable residents are awarded the greatest level of Council Tax Support.

Residents in our district who need additional information, advice and guidance can contact the Residents Advice and Information team. The team will take time to assess the person's personal circumstances and work with them to suggest suitable and sustainable changes and access to small funding pots that can help them achieve their goals. We will continue to encourage residents on lower incomes to contact the Residents Advice and Information team to explore the ways they may be able to reduce their household expenditure and/or apply for funding if keeping a garden waste collection service is important in their household to maintain positive physical and mental health.

In addition, households on lower incomes can share bins under their own informal arrangements. However, only one household will be responsible for the subscription and comply with the Terms and Conditions of the scheme.

#### 8. What impact will this have on the environment and CO2e reductions?

Not all properties in Huntingdonshire require the service and only those residents who have a need for the service will subscribe. The introduction of a garden waste subscription service will reduce vehicle movement numbers and positively reduce the CO2 emissions of the waste collection service.

The forecasted CO2 emissions for a garden waste subscription service in Huntingdonshire is 802.79 tonnes. This is a 369.17 tonne reduction from our current garden waste service. These are based on the Carbon Warm factors calculations from DEFRA.

Garden waste can also be composted or used for mulch and these approaches are much better for the environment than our current collection methods.

#### 9. Will this lead to an increase in fly-tipping?

Officers have been investigating the likelihood of increased fly-tipping based on data from the 65% of English councils that already charge for garden waste collections. This data shows that the majority have not seen any increase in instances of garden waste fly-tipping, with only a handful reporting a marginal increase in the first year of implementation.

We have existing effective methods for clearing waste and prosecuting offenders and can issue anyone caught fly-tipping with a fixed penalty notice of £400. Serious offences of fly-tipping are punishable by an unlimited fine or up to five years in prison.

In addition, we have invested in new technology such as improved CCTV cameras as well as supporting national campaigns to tackle fly-tipping.

#### 10. Will this put pressure on the district's Recycling Centres?

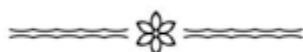
We have a close working relationship with Cambridgeshire County Council and will monitor demand with them to analyse whether there is any increased pressure on Household Recycling Centres.

#### 11. Does HDC make money on processing the garden waste it collects from residents?

Although HDC is responsible for collecting waste, Cambridgeshire County Council processes the waste we collect. Therefore, we do not operate the garden waste collection service to generate profit; rather, our focus is on facilitating the proper collection and disposal of garden waste material in an efficient and eco-friendly manner.

#### 12. What will you do with garden waste bins that are returned from households?

The collected bins will be placed back in stock and used when residents need replacements or take out a new subscription. Bins that are too worn for reuse will be recycled as our old bins currently are.



### What will the new garden waste subscription service include?

#### 1. What can I put into my garden waste bin?

If you subscribe to the service, the following garden waste can go in the garden waste bin: Yes please.

- ✓ Weeds
- ✓ Hedge trimmings
- ✓ Small twigs and branches (less than 2.5cm (1") in diameter)
- ✓ Grass cuttings
- ✓ Flowers, plants, and wind fall fruit.
- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Shredded paper
- ✓ Small animal bedding (vegetarian only) eg: for rabbits, guinea pigs, mice and rats

No thank you.

- ✗ Food waste
- ✗ Plastic bags or bin bags
- ✗ Flowerpots and trays
- ✗ Soil
- ✗ Stones or rubble
- ✗ Branches or logs (larger than 2.5cm (1") in diameter)
- ✗ Any other household rubbish
- ✗ Textiles
- ✗ Animal waste
- ✗ Compost and turf

#### 2. How do I dispose of my food waste now that it is no longer accepted with garden waste?

Approximately 70% of the food waste from UK households that is thrown away is edible. By cutting food waste the average UK household can save £500 each year.

We want to encourage our residents to reduce the amount of food waste that they are generating which not only helps the environment but saves you money too.

[Love food Hate Waste](#) provides tips to assist householders to reduce their food waste from how to store your food to make it last longer, portion planning to some great recipes to use up your leftovers.

There will always be some food waste and if you have or are thinking about [home composting](#) or a [wormery](#), these are an ideal way to create soil conditioner for your garden.

You can also put food waste in your grey refuse bin. The contents of these bins are treated via a [Mechanical Biological Treatment plant \(MBT\)](#)

Currently 37% of grey bin waste is food waste. We do not expect a significant increase in this percentage based on the analysis of other councils that charge for garden waste collections.

By law, we cannot charge for the collection of food waste. Technically, no food waste should be placed in your garden waste bin. The Council is fully committed to continuing to provide residents with advice to help them minimise the amount of food waste they generate. Learn more here: [Pledge to Fight Food Waste - RECAP](#)

3. I currently have communal garden waste collections with properties sharing a number of bins. How will the garden waste subscription work in these instances?

Individual properties will need to sign up to the subscription service. You are more than welcome to share the bin/s with your neighbour/s, but the bin will be the responsibility of the subscriber.

4. Do Schools need to sign up for a garden waste subscription?

No, Schools are eligible for this service free charge as long as the bins are used for education purposes whereas school as a gardening club or similar.

5. We currently have garden bins for the users of our churchyard/cemetery. Do we need a garden waste subscription?

Yes, all churchyards and cemeteries who require a garden bin collection will need to subscribe to the service in the same way as a domestic property.

6. Can I share a bin with my neighbour? If so, how will this be managed?

Households will be able to make a personal arrangement with a neighbour to share the cost of a garden bin. If people share their garden waste bin with a neighbour, the householder which pays the annual charge will have overall responsibility for the bin as a bin can only be allocated to one address. It would be the responsibility of the named householder if the bin is contaminated, misused, or needs replacing.

The agreement to share bins is between the payer and their neighbour only. If circumstances change, then the payer remains the primary contact.

7. If a resident moves into the district, will they be charged for a full year, regardless of when the annual subscription starts?

Yes, this is the current scheme as the upfront cost is required for the administration overhead, scheduling and fulfilment of the service ie: number of staff and vehicles needed to cover all the collections. We would not be able to operate a rolling on/off subscription scheme from the date a resident paid an annual fee.

8. If a resident moves out of the district, will they be offered a refund on any unused period of the collection/disposal service?

No, there would be no refund as the annual charge ensures we can plan the right number of staff and vehicles to provide the service across the district for the year. This is the same as our current scheme for subscribing for an additional bin.

9. Can an annual subscription be transferable from a previous resident to new one when a property changes hands?

We have no way of knowing if the homeowner has changed. In the current scheme, the household will only be contacted ahead of the next renewal period, when the annual payment is due. If there is a paid for bin at the property when a new residents move in, it will continue to be collected.

10. If a collection is missed, will a refund be offered?

There are multiple reasons why a collection may not take place. Our standard collection policy will still apply and there would be no refund. If we were at fault, then we will collect the missed bin. However, if collection conditions are beyond our control (adverse weather, roads closed etc), OR the resident did not put out the bin for collection OR the bin was contaminated, then the bin would only be collected on the next scheduled collection, as long as any contamination is removed.

11. How will the collection crews know I have paid for a collection each year?

When we receive your payment, we will send you a unique addressed sticker to put on the rear of your garden bin. A new sticker will be issued each year upon payment of the subscription. If you subscribe to more than one bin, you will receive a sticker for each bin.

On collection day you will need to place the bin out for collection before 6:30am. Please make sure the handle faces the road and the subscription sticker is clearly visible. The collection vehicles also have 'in-cab' technology to see which households have subscribed to the service.

12. As the bins belong to HDC, what measures will be in place to stop neighbours putting garden waste in someone else's bin.

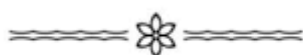
Residents can share bins as a way to reduce costs. As with the current system there is no 'policing' of who puts waste in which bins and the Council do not have the resource to manage this.

13. Can I buy my own garden bin instead of the HDC ones?

No, we will not empty garden bins that do not meet our specification (including make, model and logos), so cannot offer the service using other bins.

14. Why is the cost of the second bin lower in comparison to the first?

The cost of the service covers the staff, vehicles, and fuel to cover the district. Therefore, there is a much-reduced cost for additional bins as the staff and vehicles will already be providing a collection for the first bin. The charging for a second (and subsequent) bins is being considered as a way to potentially offer subsidised bins to those in greatest need.



## What do I need to do when the change comes into effect?

### 1. I don't currently have a bin. Can I still sign up for the service?

Yes, you can sign up and pay for the service at any time. Once you have paid for the garden waste subscription service, the Council will arrange for delivery of a garden bin. You will also receive a subscription sticker in the post.

### 2. Can I have more than one garden bin?

Yes, you can have up to a max of 4 garden bins per property. However, please be aware that you will need to pay an annual subscription for each bin to be collected.

### 3. Can I have a slimline garden bin?

Yes. You can specify the size of garden bin when you subscribe. The cost of the subscription remains the same for both bin sizes as the subscription is for the emptying of bin.

### 4. If I don't have a garden bin at my property, how long will it take to be delivered once payment has been received?

Your new bin will be delivered within 10 working days. Please be aware that we refurbish and reuse old bins where we can so you may not be issued with a new bin.

### 5. How often will my garden bin be emptied?

Your garden waste will be collected once every two weeks throughout the year.

### 6. What should I do if my garden waste collection is missed?

We will only return for missed collections if:

- The bin was placed out before 6.30am on the day of collection.
- The right collection point was used.
- In the case of assisted collections there was access to get the bin, for example, the gate was unlocked
- The sticker indicating the bin has been paid for is clearly displayed on the rear of the bin, under the handle.
- A rejected hanger has not been put on the bin.
- A crew report has not been received regarding the bin, for example heavy, excessive waste.
- The missed bin has been reported within 3 days of your normal day of collection.

We will not give refunds for missed collections. Report a missed collection to us and we will arrange recollection if the circumstances above have been complied with.

To report a missed collection, go to [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/missedbin](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/missedbin).

### 7. What do I do if I don't want to subscribe to the garden waste service?

Anyone with a current garden bin who doesn't want to subscribe to the service will keep their bin until July 2024 as we want to minimise the impact on residents and the situation where we collect unwanted bins and then re-issue them if people change their minds.

Please note that only empty garden bins will be collected and removed so do not fill them. Check back after 1 April 2024 for further details of how to request a garden waste bin removal. Please also be aware that if you decide to subscribe to the scheme after your bin is removed you will need to pay the subscription price and the cost of having another garden bin delivered to you.



#### 8. What can I do with my garden waste if I don't join the scheme or if I have excess waste?

The Council will only collect garden waste that is loose and contained within a paid for garden waste bin.

Home composting is the most environmentally friendly way of dealing with garden waste. To purchase a subsidised compost bin, visit [www.getcomposting.com](http://www.getcomposting.com) or call 0800 316 4454.

Cambridgeshire County Council Household Recycling Centres in Bluntisham, Alconbury and St Neots take household garden waste materials. See their website for details and opening times. [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling/household-recycling-centres](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling/household-recycling-centres)

#### 9. Will I get a refund if I decide not to use the service for a period of time or want to stop part way through the year?

No, we are unable to refund any payments for this service.

#### 10. Will you replace lost, stolen or damaged garden waste bins?

The household is responsible for the security of the wheeled garden waste bin. If your bin is lost, stolen, or damaged you can request a replacement however a delivery fee will apply.

If the collection crew are responsible for damaging a bin or if it falls into the rear of the collection vehicle, we will replace the bin free of charge.

#### 11. Are all properties suitable for this service?

We will work hard to help customers access the service. However, some properties may not be suitable due to lack of space to store the bin, or to put it out for collection.

HDC reserves the right to decide whether or not we can provide the garden waste collection service via the garden waste bin.

#### 12. How quickly after I pay can I expect the service to start?

Once we have received payment we will arrange for a letter of confirmation and subscription sticker to be sent to the property. All subscriptions purchased in advance will be posted in bulk during early March each year.

If a resident subscribes to the service after the renewal period has started, they will receive the letter and stick pack up to 4 working weeks after subscribing, depending on the chosen method of payment ie: immediate card payment or setting up a Direct Debit payment.

#### 13. How will your collection crews know I have paid for a collection each year?

When we receive your payment, we will send you a unique addressed sticker to put on the rear of your garden waste bin. A new sticker will be issued each year upon payment of the subscription. If you subscribe to more than one bin, you will receive a sticker for each bin.

#### 14. Can I pay by direct debit?

Yes, there will be the option for an annual Direct Debit payment to be set up.

#### 15. Can I pay by instalments?

The payment can only be made in one payment and not in instalments because payment schemes are extremely expensive to administer and manage and are also open to abuse, for example residents taking out subscription then cancelling after the summer months.



### 16. Will I still pay the full subscription if I sign up part way through the year?

Yes, you can sign up to receive the service at any point during the year. The annual subscription runs from 1 April until 31 March each year. If you sign up part way through the year you will be charged for the full year. The subscription will need renewing before the next April for the service to continue. Subscribe online at [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/gardenwaste)

### 17. Will my Christmas trees be collected?

Under the current service Christmas trees are collected from those with a garden waste bin. From 1 April 2024 we expect that collections will be made in the same way, that is for those who have subscribed to the service. Residents who don't sign up can take their real Christmas tree to the local household recycling centre for free. In addition, we have been partnering with the East Anglian Children's Hospice (EACH) for a number of years now and for a donation, residents can have their real Christmas trees collected (subject to their Terms and Conditions).

## Appendix 1: The engagement sessions details

Date	Time	Type of session
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> September	12:00-13:00	Virtual (Teams meeting)
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> September	16:00-17:00	Virtual (Teams meeting)
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> September	18:00-19:00	Virtual (Teams meeting)
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> October	09:00-10:00	Virtual (Teams meeting)

An invitation was sent out via the email networks to Town councillors, Town council clerks, Parish councillors, Parish council clerks, and Local environmental community groups to attend an engagement session on the dates above. The number of attendees was limited to 20, and invitation links were sent to those requesting to attend the sessions.

### Discussion of the session:

- The first section explained about the background to the garden waste subscription service:
  - Background on Garden waste subscription service
  - Details about the current garden waste service
  - Current initiatives already available to residents.
- The second section Included consideration of a number of new initiatives that could be implemented alongside the subscription service, and to come up with anymore. These include but were not limited to:
  - Saturday freighters
  - Subsidised price home composters
  - Utilising the existing community composting champions' network
  - Free loose compost
  - Support for lower income residents
  - Local land management green bin incentives
  - Local business sponsorships for free bins
  - Free bin allocations to Town and Parish councils – for discretionary distribution
- Councillors were also encouraged to feed in their thoughts about communication channels to support residents, common Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that needed to be provided and how residents on lower incomes could be supported further.

## 1. Local Community engagement sessions: delivered in September 2023

Buckden P C	Gt Paxton P C	St Neots T C
Bury P C	Hemingford-Abbots P C	Tilbrooke P C
Bythorn and Keyston P C	Hemingford-Grey P C	Warboys P C
Colne P C	Hilton P C	Wiston P C
Conington P C	Houghton and Wyton P C	Yaxley P C
Earith P C	Huntingdon Eco Action Team	Yelling P C
Easton P C	Huntingdon T C	
Elton P C	Old Weston P C	
Farcet P C	Ramsey T C	
Fenstanton P C	Resident H	
Folksworth P C	Sibson-cum-Stibbington P C	
Godmanchester T C	Somersham P C	
Great Staughton P C	Spaldwick P C	

58 people booked in over:  
 Wednesday 20th September (12-1pm)  
 Sunday 24th September (4-5pm)  
 Thursday 28th September (6-7pm)  
 Monday 2nd October (9-10am)

## Appendix 2: Feedback from the Engagement sessions

### 2. Community initiatives analysis: online survey - 14 respondents

INITIATIVE	POSITIVE SUPPORT	IMPLEMENTATION
Free loose compost	50%	Promotion of existing sites Compost Awareness Week w/c 5th May 2024
Community compost schemes	43%	HDC garden bin and composting pages with case studies and information on how to set one up
Saturday Freighters	43%	4 weekly rota covering market town locations and some villages. Review after 6 months
Subsidised home composters	29%	Investigation of supply from 'Straight' - compost bin provider for County Council subsidised scheme
Parish council allocation for distribution to those in need	29%	Combined with land management idea to trial for a period then evaluate
Local land management green bin incentives	21%	Parish/town councils to request the number of bins needed for management of non-HDC maintained land
Local businesses sponsorship	14%	<b>Not progressed</b>

#### 1. What are the best communication routes for your residents? What routes would you advise?

- Huntingdon Magazine quarterly (March June, Sep and Dec) 10 500 – Direct as it goes through door. Facebook Page. Community pages Huntingdon living / residents pages even though not managed by us.
- Letters, hanger on the bin to announce the implementation of the new scheme, early notice into the local magazine, leaflets.
- Parish magazines
- Mailing lists
- Noticeboards

- Neighbourhood watch
- Socials
- Parish meetings
- Paper form to give residents the option to subscribe via a hardcopy.
- How to (videos on home composting).
- Door to door leaflets
- Free monthly newspaper in Ramsey & Warboys (99% of houses in the areas) - different Facebook accounts in the areas.
- Word of mouth

**2. What role do you wish to play to ensure a smooth transition?**

- Do as much as we can when it comes to communications and exploit all the channels of comms that are available to us but limited.
- Informing residents about the upcoming changes in garden waste collection through workshops, notice board and parish meetings.
- In addition, we deliver a certain amount of info to local schools / doctors / libraries / community centre coneygear community centre Huntingdon/ Care centre. We just need the tools. Our role is to support.

**3. What do you see as the key frequently asked questions that we need to respond to?**

- People just assume that the green bin is a statutory bin service, and they don't know the difference - big piece of work to do to ensure that people know the difference and that this is outlined prior to charging (FAQ)
- Will we be receiving a weekly food waste caddy? (FAQ) That is the next thing.
- What is going to happen about additional fly tipping?
- CO2 emissions reduction
- Do we consider any other languages to share the information?
- How can we identify the most vulnerable people that do not ask for help?
- Why we are doing this.
- Why now
- What alternatives were considered and why these were not taken forward?
- Alternative options on disposing of garden waste.
- If a resident already has a DD in place for their additional bin, will this continue?
- Food waste
- Removing green bins.
- What other options have been considered in order to face financial difficulties rather than charging for Garden Waste Service.
- FAQ about whether or not the cost of the incentives actually outweighs whether or not to offer free bins
- Does this mean that soon you will start charging for normal refuse bins? Is this green bin charge a precursor for charging for the others further down the line?

**4. Within the framework of the scheme, how can we support all segments of your community? Are there specific groups in your local community that need additional support?**

- Elderly people
- More details around sharing bins.
- Ensuring everyone is aware – getting residents to spread the word amongst neighbours/family members.

- Information about community compost and allotment association offering compost facilities.
- Food recycling would be great – this should be implemented sooner rather than later. Weekly.
- More details around sharing bins.
- Ensuring everyone is aware – getting residents to spread the word amongst neighbours/family members.

#### 5. Initiatives/Incentives

- Alternative compost bin offer – the current offer does not work for all residents.
- Saturday Freighters – not suitable for some villages – more details around proposed areas. Great Paxton are keen to host a freighter.
- Community compost schemes – will work in some villages but not all due to the make-up of the village.
- How on earth do you actually make the call on who would receive the free bin should they be on low incomes? How do you set out that criteria?
- Maintaining the communal areas - that is a very good idea, those people who look after those areas should be recognised by being offered a green bin, may cause an increase in those people who are willing to and offering to help out in their local area - positive for the community.
- Freight idea – small gardens might help / Key time is edge cutting time - Area modern estate.
- If we were offering out free bins for parish councils, how would that process actually work and how would we know how many we would need for each area.
- Potential to link with allotments - we need to know who members of the allotment is associations.

## Appendix 3: Feedback from attendees about the delivery of the Engagement sessions

**Remote Access System:** Users have found Microsoft Teams less user-friendly and somewhat challenging for remote access, especially in domestic environments. Suggestions have been made to consider alternatives like Zoom for a better user experience.

**Engagement Sessions:** The sessions for local parish councillors have been well-received. Participants appreciated the organization, the opportunity for engagement, and the small group size facilitated easy participation for all attendees. Users also noted the importance of raising awareness about council tax allocation.

**Charging Decision:** Some users expressed concern about the lack of information regarding charges for additional bins. They emphasized the need for clarity on the charges for the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth bins.

**FAQs Document:** A suggestion was made to improve the structure of the FAQs document by moving the heading 'No thank you' to the top of page 6 for better readability.

**Request for Best Practices:** Users have expressed interest in gathering information from other councils that have implemented similar schemes, such as Fenland and Peterborough, to identify and incorporate best practices into our implementation.

## Appendix 4: Results of the initiatives survey

### 2. Engagement and communication analysis - 14 respondents

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION
Do you feel you have received adequate information to date about the garden waste subscription service?	Yes (36%), Neutral (21%), <b>No (43%)</b>
How much of an impact will the introduction of a garden waste subscription service have to your local community?	<b>Large (57%)</b> , Neutral (36%), Small (7%)
What specific impact do you think will need to be managed in your local area?	Composting (7%), <b>Fly-tipping (71%)</b> , Food waste (7%), Grey bin composition (14%)
Are there particular groups of people that will need additional support for this change?	Digital inclusivity (21%), <b>Low income/elderly (43%)</b> , Rural residents (7%), Composters (7%), N/A (21%)
Are there any examples of good practice you know of that can be considered when designing and developing the garden waste subscription service?	Free compost (7%), Free compost bins (7%), Reduced winter service (7%), Subscription support (7%), <b>No (71%)</b>

## Appendix 5: Suggested areas for collection points on a 4-week rota basis. (Maps Attached)

### Week 1

- Yaxley – Great Drove
- Stilton – High Street near golf Course
- Sawtry - Caresco
- One Leisure - Ramsey

### Week 2

- Hill Rise Car Park St Ives
- One Leisure Outdoor Centre
- Burgess Hall St Ives

### Week 3

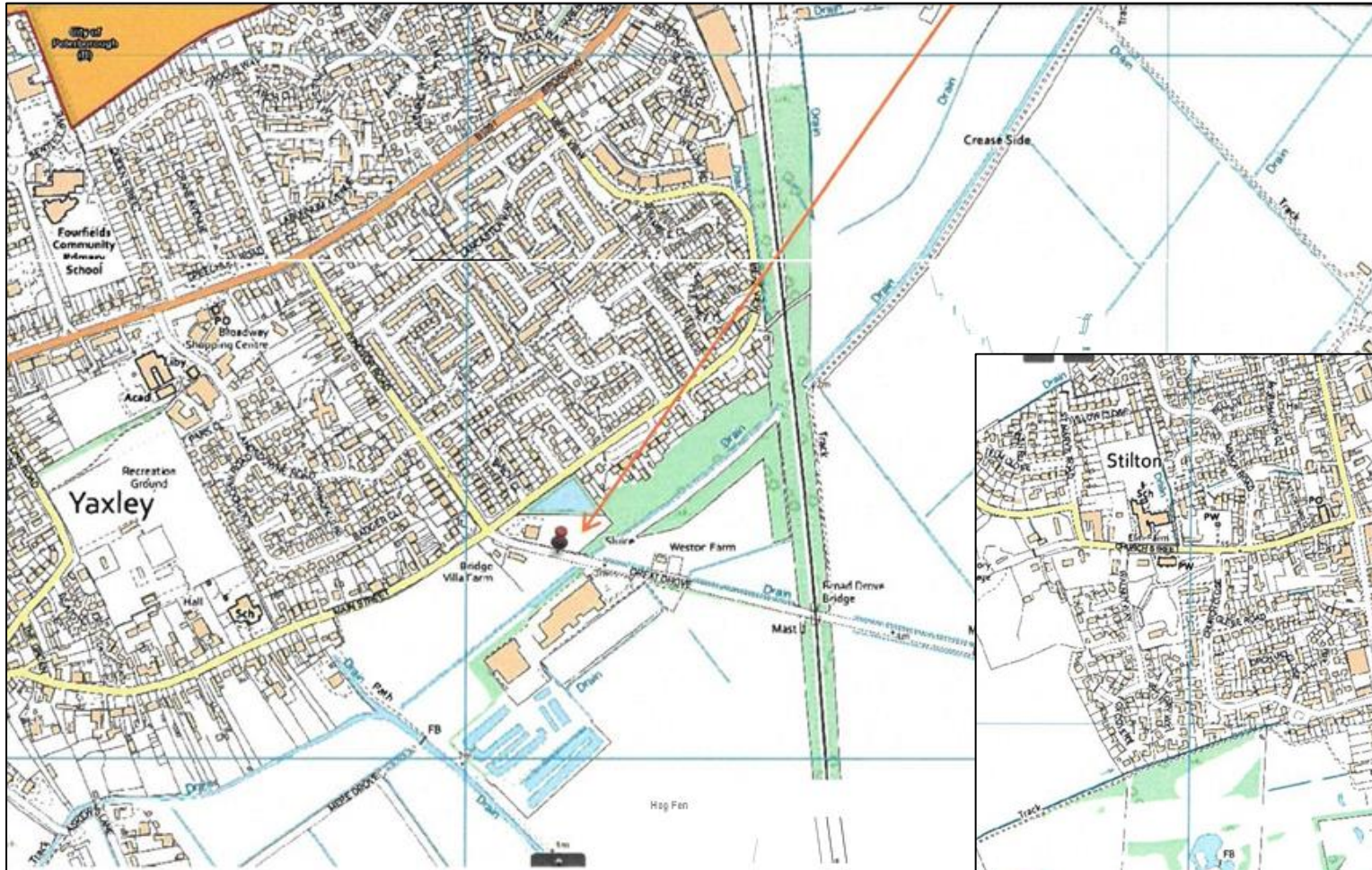
- Eastfield House
- One Leisure - Huntingdon
- Godmanchester Yard
- Riverside Car Park

### Week 4

- Catworth Layby
- Tilbrook Layby
- Paxton Pits
- Riverside Car Park
- One Leisure – St Neots



## Week 1

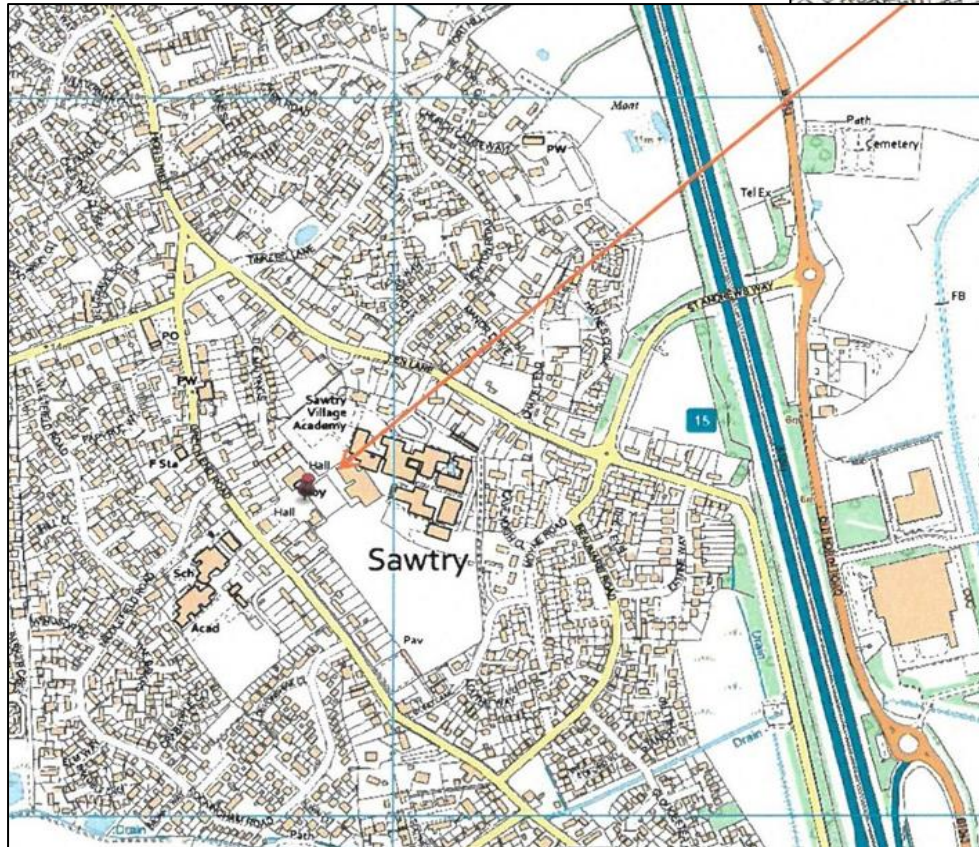


Yaxley – Great Drove



Stilton – High Street





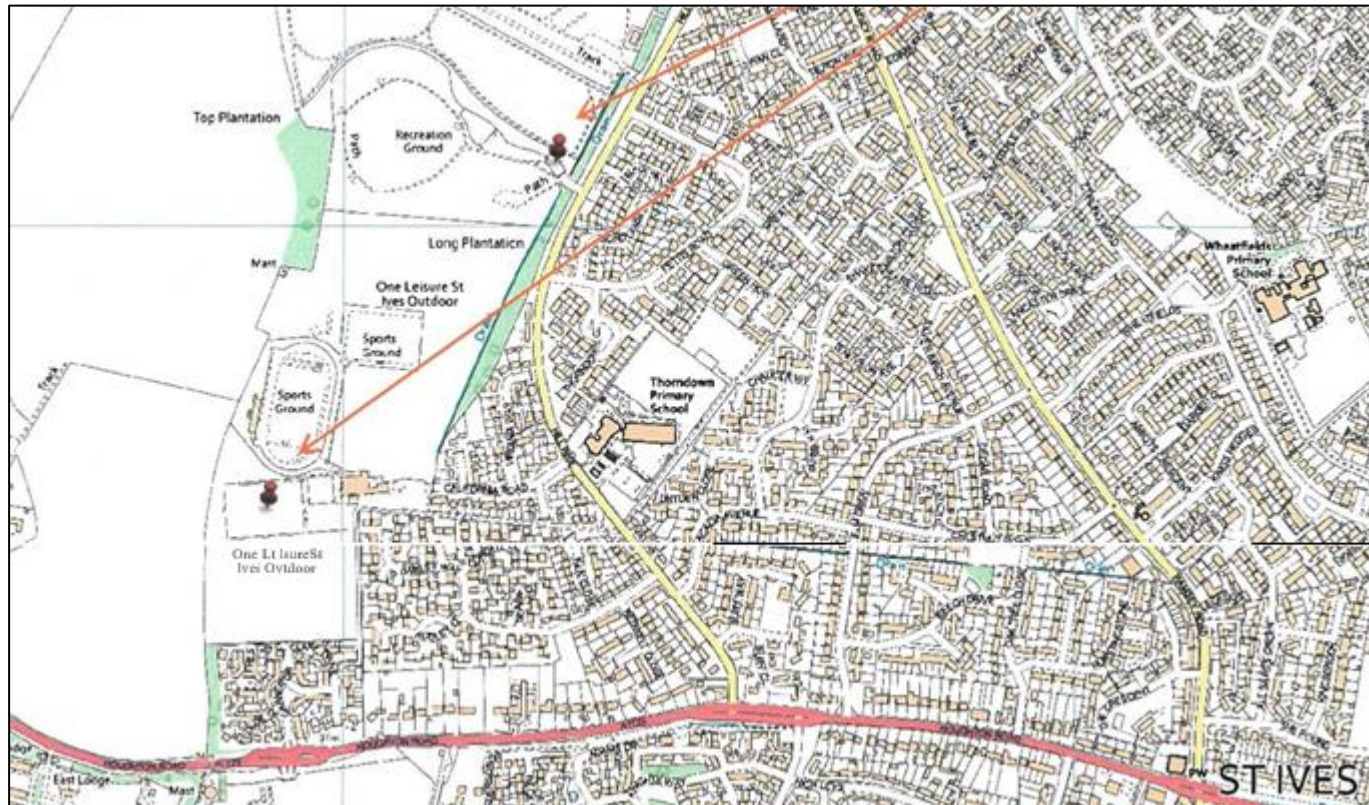
Sawtry



Ramsey – Abbey Road



## Week 2



St Ives – Hill Rise and





St Ives – Burgess Hall



## Week 3



Huntingdon – Eastfield House



Huntingdon – One Leisure





Huntingdon – Riverside Park

Godmanchester – Bridge Place





## Week 4

Brington – Layby near Brington

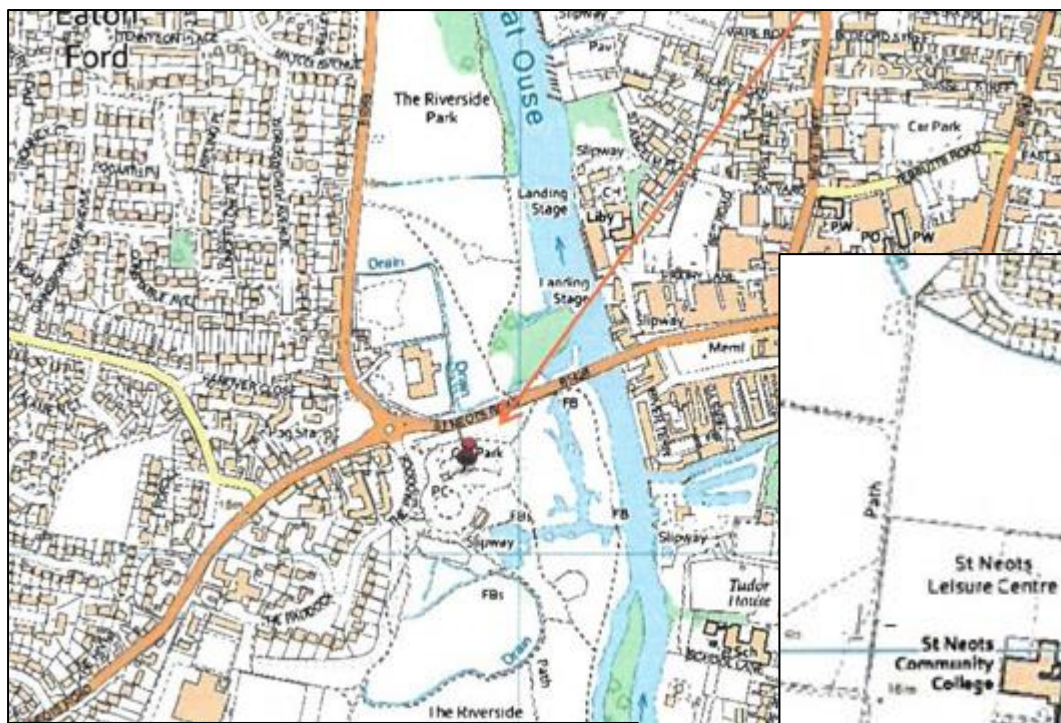


Tilbrook –  
Layby between Kimbolton and Tilbrook

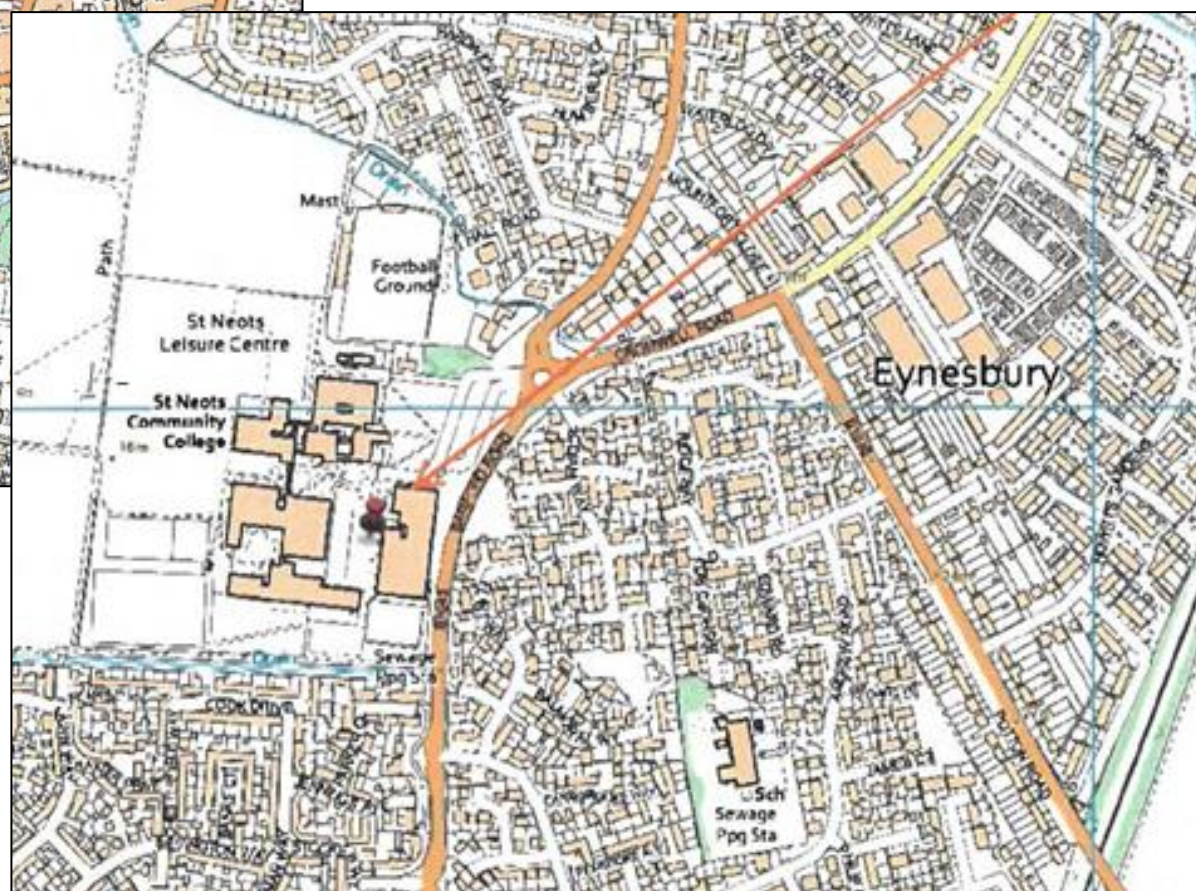


Little Paxton – Paxton Pits





St Neots – Riverside Park



St Neots – One Leisure