

opinion

Let's make Suffolk the UK's most environmentally-friendly county

Cllr James Mallinder



You will have noticed this week a leaflet posted through your letterbox about how we can get our recycling right in Suffolk. As chair of the Suffolk Waste Partnership, a group comprising all the councils in Suffolk, I am determined to make Suffolk the most environmentally friendly county in the UK.

We all understand the need to care for the environment and by getting our recycling right we can all make a difference.

The latest campaign from the waste partnership is a reminder of what goes in the recycling bin. This campaign was necessary as we're finding that some residents are spoiling their recycling by putting an increasing amount of the wrong items in their bins. Sometimes things have been so bad we've had to reject the entire collection vehicle load. It then costs Suffolk taxpayers over £1,000,000 every year to remove these spoiled items and clean up the recycling.

Often packaging can be confusing and misleading, some items might state that it is recyclable or you might look at something and think 'well, it's made up of cardboard or it's made up of plastic and they're both recyclable', often it is difficult to get it right.

The best course of action therefore is to follow the advice on the leaflet or visit our website. You can put lots of items into your recycling bin including all kinds of paper and cardboard, food and drink cans, plastics bottles such as milk, squash or shampoo bottles as well as plastic pots, tubs, and trays. You can even recycle aluminium foil, books and empty aerosol cans.

Just make sure everything is as empty, clean and dry as possible and that it goes in loose. Please avoid putting bagged items in.

We now need your help to improve our recycling rates and tackle spoiled recycling. Currently around 10,000 tonnes (about 20%) of spoiled recycling is collected from Suffolk homes every year. This is the same as one in five lorries full of recycling going to waste.



Cllr James Mallinder putting out his recycling - do you know what can and can't go in your recycling bin?

Picture: SUFFOLK WASTE PARTNERSHIP

You can really make a big difference by keeping these top 'offenders' out of your recycling bin:

- Glass
- Black sacks and other plastic bags
- Food waste
- Cartons - such as Tetra Pak or other juice or plant-based milk alternatives
- Nappies
- Clothes and textiles

Some of these items can still be recycled, just in other ways or

elsewhere. Glass bottles and jars can be taken to your local bottle bank. Textiles in good condition can be donated to charity when they are collecting again or taken to a nearby textiles recycling bank. Cartons and Tetra Pak can be recycled at your local main recycling centre when you next book a visit.

Food waste straight-up doesn't go in the recycling bin. Plain and simple. Put fruit and veg waste in your home composter or in your regular rubbish with any

other food waste that you can't eat. You can also save over £700 a year by getting #Food Savvy at www.foodsavvy.org.uk

Nappies cannot be recycled. They contain many different materials and cannot be broken down. Think of the people that are sorting through your recycling by hand - they don't want to have to deal with your child's nappies. Always put these in your regular rubbish bin, or try using eco-friendly alternatives like cloth nappies.

Together we can get our recycling right and waste less. By doing this we are all helping to make the environment a better place.

More information about what you can and can't recycle can be found at www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk or follow us on our Twitter, Facebook or Instagram accounts

Cllr James Mallinder is chairman of Suffolk Waste Partnership.