

1 News release

Wednesday 8 December 2021

2 Green bin collections suspended from Monday 13 December

Green bin collections across Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire are being suspended from Monday (13 December) because of the number of drivers and loaders absent - particularly with Coronavirus or self-isolating.

Crews are working hard to complete rounds that are scheduled for the rest of this week but after Monday (13 December), green bin collections will be suspended and are planned to resume on Wednesday 12 January 2022 in line with the previously published Christmas schedule.

In addition to staff shortages due to COVID-related reasons (sickness and self-isolation), there is a continued national shortage of HGV drivers as well as a lack of agency staff because of demand for them elsewhere such as in supermarkets and at online delivery services.

The suspension will allow crews to concentrate on emptying black and blue bins during the festive period when more waste and recycling is traditionally generated. Back in the summer, when the green bin service was threatened, the Councils gave advance warning that collections could be disrupted due to the pandemic causing staff shortages. This has now been realised.

Steps had already been taken to try and deal with staff shortages. Since September, Greater Cambridge Shared Waste has appointed 11 new bin crew members during a near-constant recruitment campaign. Six existing refuse loaders are also currently going through a driver training programme. However, with 30 members of waste operations staff absent today (Wednesday 8 December) it is no longer possible to continue planning to empty green bins from next week.

Many other councils, both in Cambridgeshire and across the UK, have already been forced to suspend their garden waste collection service.

For those residents that are expecting their green bins to be emptied this week, the message is to put your bin out as normal. If it is not collected on your usual collection day, leave it out, and it will be emptied by the afternoon of Tuesday 14 December.

During the green bin suspension, the advice for garden waste is to store this in the green bin or in a plie in the garden, or home compost, until collections resume. If necessary, it can be taken to the household recycling centres at Milton or Thriplow. As always, residents are being encouraged to waste as little food as possible, so they have less to throw away. For this period only, residents who do have food waste are being asked to put it into the black bin. Changes are now being made to update the online bin collection calendars at

www.scams.gov.uk/recycling-and-bins and www.cambridge.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-rubbish to reflect the suspension of green bin collections.

Head of Greater Cambridge Shared Waste, Bode Esan, said: “I really hope that residents will continue supporting our crews and understand that the decision to suspend green bin collections is not one that we have taken lightly. We have done everything we possibly can to keep all our collection services going, by working hard to cover for absences as well as recruiting new staff. However, we have reached the point where we can’t do this any longer and must prioritise emptying black and blue bins. Please help out our hard-working crews by storing any remaining garden waste and leaves from this autumn and minimise food waste as much as possible over the coming weeks and the festive period in particular.”