

## **Garden Waste Service – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. How much is it to sign up to the service?**

The annual charge is £40 per green bin, however, if you sign up between 11<sup>th</sup> January and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021, there is an early bird charge of £35 per green bin.

To ensure there is no disruption to your service, you will need to sign up by 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021 to allow time for your permit to be delivered.

### **2. Is this charge compulsory?**

No. The service will only be available to residents that register for the service. If you do not register and make the payment, your green bin will not be collected and there will be no charge to you. Therefore, if you do not have a garden or do not want to pay for the collections, you do not need to do anything.

### **3. Will you take my green bin away if I am not paying for the service?**

We can arrange to collect your green bin if you decide not to sign up to have your bin emptied, however, we would recommend that you give this a few months to decide after the subscription service is in place. If we do remove your bin and then you decide you would like to sign up for the service, there will be a £42 charge for a new green bin plus the £40 subscription.

### **4. What should I do with my food waste?**

You can place up to three food waste caddies for collection on your scheduled garden waste collection day. The food caddies will be available free of charge, on request.

### **5. Can I put the garden waste in my grey rubbish bin?**

No. 95% of the waste in the grey bin is taken to an energy from waste facility, they cannot accept garden waste at this plant. If there is garden waste in your grey bin, it will not be emptied.

The collections crews will be monitoring bins for hidden garden waste and a thorough check will be made if evidence shows previous contamination.

### **6. Can I put garden waste in my blue-lidded recycling bin?**

No. The recycling in the blue-lidded bin is sorted at a materials recycling facility, they cannot accept garden waste at this plant. If there is garden waste in your blue-lidded bin, it will not be emptied.

The collection crews will be monitoring bins for hidden garden waste and a thorough check will be made if evidence shows previous contamination.

### **7. Can I pay monthly or pay for a one-off collection?**

The annual charge is fixed for one year from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. The charge must be paid in full and there is no pro-rata rate available.

### **8. Can I put additional bags at the side of the bin?**

No. The charge is per green bin and only bins showing the official permits will be emptied, residents can have as many bins as required.

### **9. What if I lose or damage my bin?**

The green bin will be replaced in line with the Council's Fees and Charges Schedule and a replacement permit will be supplied.

### **10. What happens if I damage or lose my sticker?**

You can request a replacement sticker. There will be a £5 charge for each replacement and your previous permit will be cancelled. You will be asked to provide evidence of the damaged sticker.

### **11. What happens if I don't receive my sticker?**

When you have paid for your subscription, the details will be sent to our contractor to provide the welcome pack. This can take up to ten working days. If you haven't received it after this time please call us and we will look into the issue.

### **12. Can I share a bin with my neighbour(s)?**

Yes. This will be a private arrangement between residents. The collection crews will only collect green bins displaying a valid permit from the household at which it is registered.

### **13. Will the garden waste collection be a done all-year round?**

Yes. In order to provide residents with a weekly food waste collection (one week with your green waste and one week in your grey bin) the emptying of green bins is carried out all year. There may be occasions due to exceptionally inclement weather etc. when the collections will be suspended. Full details will be provided on the Council website if there are any interruptions to the service. No refunds will be given for unexpected disruptions to the service.

### **14. What if I move house?**

If a resident moves within the District, their subscription can be transferred to their new address. You will need to contact SDC to arrange for a new permit to be issued. No refunds, in whole or in part, will be issued if a subscribing resident moves outside of the District during the year.

### **15. What if I wish to cancel my subscription?**

There will be a cooling-off period of 14 days in which you can cancel your subscription as long as you return your permit intact to us. After the cooling-off period, no refunds will be issued.

### **16. What if other residents use my bin?**

You are responsible for keeping your green bin secure, to ensure other residents cannot put items into your bin.

### **17. Can I continue to use sacks for my garden waste?**

We would encourage subscribers to use a green bin, where possible. We can provide a green bin free of charge when you sign up to the service, if you have room to store the bin.

Reusable sacks will be available to purchase where a wheeled bin is not practicable. **Do not use the online subscription service if you need to use sacks, you will need to contact us on 01789 260628 to pay for the garden waste service.**

### **18. I have a smaller green bin, will it cost the same as a larger green bin?**

The charge is £40 per green bin and is the same whether it is a 240-litre bin or a 140-litre bin. Residents with a smaller 140-litre bin will be able to exchange it for a larger 240-litre bin, on request, at no cost, when you subscribe to the service.

### **19. What if my permit is stolen?**

The permit will have the address printed on it, so it cannot be used at a different property. The collection crews will also have a full list of properties who have paid the subscription. There will be an admin fee of £5 for all replacement permits, you would need to contact us to arrange this.

### **20. What if my bin is missed?**

Your green bin(s) needs to be on the boundary of the property by 6am on the scheduled collection day. If the collection is missed, we will return to empty the bin in line with our current arrangements. In exceptionally inclement weather, the contents of the bin may freeze and it may not be possible to empty the bin. In these cases, we will not return until the next scheduled collection day, however, arrangements can be made to collect additional waste on the next collection.

### **21. I have paid for my 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> bins to be collected, what happens to this payment?**

These new charges will supersede the old service. You will be able to subscribe to have as many bins emptied as you require. Please contact us to discuss your current subscription.

### **22. Why are you charging for the collection of garden waste?**

The collection of garden waste is a discretionary service not a statutory service – i.e. one that the Council is not obliged to provide. We had the choice to charge for the service or possibly discontinue it completely. We felt that it would be fairer for residents to have the choice to pay for a service or not, rather than not having a service at all.

We are not allowed to charge for the collection of domestic waste (i.e. grey bin) under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. There are also limits to how much the council tax can be increased and it was felt it would be fairer to charge only those residents that use the service.

### **23. Will this encourage more fly tipping?**

We have conducted benchmarking with other councils where they charge for the collection of garden waste. This has shown that there is not a significant increase in fly tipping when charges are introduced.

Any fly tipping that occurs will be dealt with as per our current arrangements.

Fly tipping is a crime, any person found guilty of fly tipping will be dealt with, in line with SDC's Local Environmental Quality Enforcement Policy.

### **24. How can I dispose of my garden waste if I do not want to pay for the service?**

The most environmentally friendly way to dispose of your garden waste is by home composting. Warwickshire County Council offer discounted home composting bins on their website: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/green-waste/composting/2?documentId=632&categoryId=20032>

You can also take your garden waste to a Household Waste Recycling Centre. Please do not mix food waste with garden waste when taking it to these sites. To find your local centre and opening times please visit <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/recyclingcentres>

**25. Can I pay by direct debit?**

No. Due to the administrative burden and the costs involved, this option is not currently available.

**26. Are there any concessions for the garden waste service?**

No, the price is the same for everyone.

**27. Can I subscribe to the service if I move into the area and how much will it cost?**

You can subscribe to the service at any time throughout the year but the subscription year is fixed from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. The charge is £40 per green bin per subscription year, we do not offer a pro-rata rate.

**28. We are a village hall/charity, do we still have to pay for garden waste collections?**

Yes. All garden waste collections will be fully chargeable from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

**29. I have an Assisted Collection Service, will it still continue?**

Yes. If you are currently registered for the Assisted Collection Service, then this will still continue as part of the new garden waste service.

**30. If I don't sign up for the service can I still have my Christmas Tree collected?**

Yes. We will still collect a Christmas tree for each property, even if you have not subscribed to the service. Please contact us to make the arrangements.

**31. What about recycling rates?**

At present, the residents of the District have achieved very good recycling rates. SDC's current recycling rate of 60% ranks the District as tenth out of around 340 local authorities in England. This will inevitably fall as a result of the introduction of the new service. SDC is confident, however, that this will recover over a short period time as residents increasingly become familiar with what should go in each of the bins. At the moment, up to a third of the waste currently going into residents' grey bins should be in the recyclable (blue-lidded bin). With small changes in the decisions of more residents over what goes into which bins, SDC can at least recover its current position in the league table.

**If you have any further questions, please contact us on [streetscene@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:streetscene@stratford-dc.gov.uk) and we will reply as quickly as possible. This sheet is updated as we receive new questions.**