



Winchester City Councillors Report to Parishes September 2025

Food waste Collection Update

Residents will be receiving very soon, if they haven't already, a letter, about the new food waste recycling. You will receive everything you need, to start recycling your food waste in the three weeks before your collections start. These include:

- a small kitchen caddy (5L) to collect your food waste in
- some compostable caddy liners to get you started
- a leaflet with information on how to recycle food waste
- a small grey (23L) outdoor bin for each private household, or larger (140L) shared wheelie bin for communal properties.

There will be a staggered start for the collections. If you go to [Winchester.gov.uk/foodwaste](https://winchester.gov.uk/foodwaste) and put in your post code you can find out when the food waste collection will start where you live. (My date is Wednesday 10th December). There will be no change to your other collections.

So why bother? Unused food and food leftovers currently make up about 30% of each household's black bin and being able to recycle this will significantly reduce the amount of waste sent for incineration. Instead, it will be used to generate clean, green energy and nutrient-rich soil improver for our farmers. Recycling food waste will have a big impact on our carbon emissions across the district – saving about 1900 tonnes of CO₂e per year. That's about the same emissions as driving around the world in a petrol-powered car 190 times!



There is a dedicated special bin truck for this service



Food waste kitchen caddy and outdoor bin

Water Quality

There is a tendency for us all to see others as the problem and failing to recognise that we all are the problem. The majority of people care very deeply about the state of our rivers, but fail to recognise our own contribution to the poor state of our waterways.

Recent research by Dr Ros Robinson at the University of Portsmouth found 121 chemicals in the Test and Itchen rivers. Of these 61 were from pharmaceuticals and personal care products and 60 from plant protection products. Thus, just over 50% of all the chemicals detected originated from households, with a significant proportion coming from household cleaning products including soap,



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shampoo, washing-up liquid, dishwasher tablets, laundry detergent, fabric softeners, surface cleaners, oven cleaners, drain cleaners and the like. Some of these products are actually labelled as being **“Harmful to the aquatic environment with long lasting effects”**.

How do household chemicals get into our rivers and groundwater? Wastewater from houses, either from baths, showers, toilet, washing machines, dishwashers or sinks goes down the house drain, either to a septic tank in rural areas or to a wastewater treatment works where there is mains drainage. The treatment process in all these systems is much the same, with the treated liquid wastewater being discharged to a river, watercourse or a drainage field. There is no specific treatment of the many household chemicals, pharmaceuticals or personal care products, which pass through the system largely untreated. Some of these chemicals can be harmful to both aquatic organisms and humans.

The Upper Itchen Restoration Group has published a very useful guide to how we can ALL help improve water quality in our rivers. So, though our chalk rivers might look ‘gin clear’, they are not clean....and it’s not all due to raw sewage and the water companies!

Which cleaning products should I use?

It is difficult to be definitive on which products to use but those least likely to be harmful to our aquatic environments, and to ourselves, are products made from natural ingredients. Manufacturers that use natural ingredients include Ecover, Method, Bio-D, Smol, Muck Munchers, Miniml, Ecozone, Tru Earth, Almat (Aldi) and The Greeb Co. Waitrose sell their own range of ECOlogical range products which are labelled as safe for septic tanks.

Avoid products with phosphate, parabens (anti-fungal and preservative agents), triclosan (anti-bacterial agent), synthetic fragrances, PFAS, ammonia, phthalates, stilbenes (whiteners), liquid polymers, chlorine or bleach, and those much-advertised products which actually state that they are harmful to the aquatic environment. More information can be found in the UIRG [Leaflet on Household Cleaning Products](#)

Micro Particulates

The Upper Itchen Restoration Group is also studying the effect of micro-particulates about which little is known, so far study has concentrated on marine environments (including the Lower Itchen and Langstone Harbour). The potential impact of micro-particulates on the Upper Itchen has not been considered previously. Most work on micro-particulates has focussed on marine (including the Lower Itchen and Langstone Harbour), not freshwater environments, and no published research is known from the Upper Itchen or on chalk streams in general. It is known that micro-plastics pose a threat to aquatic ecosystems, through entry into the food chain, as synthetic polymer fragments <1mm in diameter are in the size range of basal planktonic food items for invertebrates and other consumers, leading to trophic transfer. Potentially a very serious problem.

Local Government Reorganisation

Your councillors attended a briefing on the RGO on Monday evening. A collective submission of twelve of Hampshire districts is to be sent to the Government later in the month, following a Full Council Meeting



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and a Cabinet discussion. It includes agreement for four unitary authorities on the mainland and with the IOW recognised as a separate one. HCC and East Hants will be putting in a separate document with their ideas. The submission runs to some 200 pages and also includes lengthy appendices. The WCC comms team have spent a lot of effort into community engagement. Interestingly many emphasised that the delivery of efficient local services and the recognition of local identity, local decision making were rated more highly than geographic boundaries. There was concern that over-large unitaries will become more distant from communities. What next? Following consultation the Government will accept one model or adapt them. Timing is very critical with proposals being announced in March 2026.

More information to follow.....

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