



NEWS RELEASE

Abingdon traders lead the way on countywide 'greener' business scheme

Traders in Abingdon's Stert Street have been shown how they could cut more than 90 per cent from the cost of getting rid of their commercial waste.

11 Stert Street traders took part in a pioneering initiative to see if introducing waste-cutting measures and recycling more could produce significant cost and waste savings from small shops and businesses in one street. Now free waste audits are being made available to more Oxfordshire businesses.

The Stert Street traders agreed to have a free waste audit as part of a joint initiative by the Oxfordshire Town Chambers Network and Abingdon Chamber of Commerce. The audits, which look at the commercial waste produced by a business and recommend ways to cut costs and recycle more, were funded by Oxfordshire County Council and carried out by specialists from the Environmental Information Exchange (EiE) at Oxford Brookes University.

Their audit reports show that, between them, the Stert Street traders could cut £11,500 a year (93%) from the £12,300 cost of disposing of their commercial waste.

Jill Carver of Added Ingredients, who has just introduced a 'top-up-your-old-bottle' service for olive oil and wine vinegars to encourage her customers to re-use glass bottles, says: "This survey was too good an opportunity to miss as we all need to be doing what we can to look at improving on the amount we recycle. To be able to recycle and save money has to be a bonus. However, I'm all for re-using bottles first as in the case of our olive oil and vinegar dispensers and I'm also always on the lookout for products such as the recycled parchment paper and baking cases and aluminium foil that we sell."

Lisa Liddell, manager of The Nursery Shop (another of the businesses to have a free waste audit), says: "We hope that the findings of this audit will encourage the Councils to work closely with traders on developing and funding improved trade re-cycling facilities."

Anil Patel, partner at Price's Stationers, says: "We at Price's would encourage other businesses to undertake the audit. They will be surprised by how much they can recycle. We recycle almost 95% of our waste here."

Cost-saving recommendations made to the businesses included arranging a mixed recycling collection contract, doing more to re-use paper, and setting up a cardboard recycling scheme. EiE's Michael Esvelt says: "Stert Street businesses have a number of barriers to effectively reducing their waste, not the least of which is very little space for bins. EiE found that by working together on shared recycling contracts not only could costs be reduced, but much more waste could be diverted from landfill."

Dan Dempsey, Sustainable Business Officer at Oxfordshire County Council, says: "I'm really pleased that the traders of Stert Street have seen that they can make such massive savings whilst reducing their environmental footprint. Savings are often quite easy to make and we can advise businesses exactly how to go about it. I would encourage all businesses to get involved in this programme."

Oxfordshire businesses who would like a free waste audit should visit www.otcn.co.uk for more details or contact EiE by calling 01865 483299 or email eiewaste@brookes.ac.uk

The Oxfordshire Town Chambers Network (www.otcn.co.uk) is a communications network for town chambers and similar business groups. It covers 20 business groups with 1,400+ member businesses between them plus seven events networks.

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