

## Lower Compton Household Recycling Centre Update

### 1. Introduction

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026, the Parish Council held an Emergency General Meeting in response to changes to household waste and recycling arrangements put forward by Wiltshire Council.

These included:

- The proposed closure of Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) at Lower Compton and Purton, to be replaced by a new HRC in the north of the county.
- The implementation of a trial booking system for visits to six of its HRCs, including Lower Compton.
- General waste collection frequency to move from a fortnightly to a three-weekly collection cycle.

The Council passed the following resolution at the meeting:

*Derry Hill and Studley Parish Council opposes the decision of Wiltshire Council to close Lower Compton Household Recycling Centre in August. We call on Wiltshire Council to resume negotiations to continue operating the site, at least until such time as a replacement site in the Calne Area is made available. We believe that the closure of the site will be bad for residents, requiring them to take much longer trips to alternative sites, and is likely to result in an increase in fly tipping. We are disappointed that the decision has been taken without any prior consultation and call on Wiltshire Council to listen to the views of local councils and their residents.*

*We are further concerned about the decision to change to a three-weekly waste collection calendar, which will result in a poorer service for residents, and ask that Wiltshire Council reviews this decision and engages in proper consultation about the future of waste collection services.*

Councillors and residents subsequently attended a special meeting of Calne Area Board on the subject, which was attended by the Leader of Wiltshire Council, as well as the responsible cabinet members and officers.

The purpose of this paper is to update Council on subsequent developments.

### 2. Updates

#### Household Recycling Centre Booking Pilot

Wiltshire Council has introduced the booking trial at six HRC sites: Lower Compton, Devizes, Melksham, Purton, Salisbury and Stanton St Quintin.

The trial requires residents to pre-book visits to these centres from 14<sup>th</sup> September. Residents are encouraged to use the online booking system wherever possible. Anyone who is unable to access or use the online service can contact Wiltshire Council's Customer Services team for assistance in making a booking.

According to Wiltshire Council, the pilot *“has been introduced in response to increasing demand at Wiltshire's HRCs, which has led to operational challenges and queues at some locations. The council will use the pilot to assess whether a booking system can help reduce waiting times, improve customer experience and minimise disruption for nearby communities and businesses.”*

#### Lower Compton HRC

Wiltshire Council currently operates a network of ten HRCs: eight are owned by Wiltshire Council and operated by FCC Environment; two are owned and operated by Hills. Wiltshire Council still plans to close the two Hills HRCs, at Purton and Lower Compton, and replace them with a new council-owned facility in the north of the county.

Wiltshire Council states that the two sites *“are no longer fit for purpose, with significant constraints in terms of layout, capacity, and modern operational standards. In addition, the cost of maintaining the current contractual arrangements with Hills has become increasingly high and financially unsustainable over the long term.”*

The new facility is planned for the Royal Wootton Bassett Area, with an operational target date of March 2029. (Two sites are under consideration; both off the Marlborough Road to the south of Wootton Bassett.)

In February 2026, Wiltshire Council’s Cabinet agreed to keep both Purton and Lower Compton HRCs open for a limited period through short term contract extensions, specifically a three year + one year extension for Purton and a one year + one year + one year extension for Lower Compton.

#### Kerbside Waste Collection

From Spring 2027, Wiltshire Council will introduce a weekly kerbside food waste collection service.

The collection frequency for mixed recyclables and glass will remain fortnightly; this will be extended to include plastic bags and wrapping. Chargeable garden waste collection will also continue to be fortnightly.

General domestic waste collection will move to a three-weekly calendar.

Wiltshire Council hopes that these changes will increase their recycling rate to over 60% (from 42.4% in 2024/25).

Wiltshire Council ran a public consultation from 20<sup>th</sup> March to 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026 for residents to share views on upcoming waste and recycling service changes. The Future Waste Services page of Wiltshire’s website states that: *“Our teams are reviewing the information to help us provide targeted advice and communications to support the introduction of our new services coming in 2027.”*

### **3. Discussion**

#### Household Recycling Centre Booking Pilot

The HRC Booking System will put up additional barriers to residents using the recycling centres. This will particularly be the case for older residents who find online systems difficult to use.

While queuing is an issue at some locations, such as Stanton St Quintin, it has not been a noticeable issue at Lower Compton. It is therefore difficult to see how the cost of operating the booking system will make sense at this location.

While Wiltshire Council states that research by Defra has found no direct link between HRC booking systems and increased fly-tipping, it is important that this be monitored and understood during the pilot.

#### Closure of Lower Compton HRC

The proposed location of the replacement HRC at Royal Wootton Bassett would have little benefit to residents of Derry Hill and Studley, for whom the nearest alternative locations would be Melksham (Bowerhill Industrial Estate), Devizes (Hopton Industrial Estate) and Stanton St Quintin. Although the journey from Derry Hill to Melksham HRC is only 3.7 miles further, this is still a 72.5% increase in journey length and therefore significant.

The Lower Compton HRC site is well laid out, easy to use and popular with residents. Additionally, it is located on the same site as the Materials Recovery Facility operated by Hills. Moving the household recycling centre further away from the materials recovery facility will result in increased vehicle movements and carbon impact.

Wiltshire Council currently achieves a recycling rate of 42.4%, which is well below the regional average of 49.4%. Given the amount of housing development taking place around Calne and to the south of Chippenham, the closure of Lower Compton HRC is likely to have a significant impact on local capacity.

#### Kerbside Waste Collection

The introduction of kerbside food waste collection (to comply with statutory requirements) is to be welcomed.

Clearly, the decision to move general waste collection to a three-weekly collection cycle is a decision driven by cost. Nevertheless, Wiltshire Council believes that it will help improve recycling rates in the county. Their data shows that around 35 percent of material currently placed in household waste bins could be recycled, and that food waste and plastic bags and wrapping make up over 45 percent of residual waste. They therefore believe that the changes being introduced will significantly reduce the amount of rubbish left in general waste bins.

Notwithstanding this, it can be anticipated that a three-weekly collection cycle for general waste may well cause problems for large families and could lead to issues with odour, infestations, litter and fly-tipping.

### Next Steps

These issues were further discussed at the Calne Area Parish Forum on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, and in a follow-up meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> August.

Cherhill Parish Council is running an active campaign against the closure of Lower Compton HRC. More recently, they have written to Wiltshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Waste, Cllr Gordon King, with a series of questions. A copy of this is included as Appendix A.

Calne Town Council further discussed the issue on 28<sup>th</sup> September at a meeting of Full Council. Calne TC resolved to oppose the introduction of the booking system at Lower Compton HRC and to lobby Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire MPs to ensure that the Calne area retains a household recycling centre for future generations.

## **4. Recommendation**

It is recommended that Council writes to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate and Waste re-stating our opposition to the closure of Lower Compton HRC and asking the following questions:

In respect of the proposed closure of Lower Compton HRC:

- Could you set out the reasons why the current Lower Compton HRC is not fit for purpose and what changes would be required to upgrade it to modern operational standards?
- Do Wiltshire Council intend to publish a Cost Benefit Analysis justifying the replacement of the Purton and Lower Compton HRCs with a new facility at Wootton Bassett?
- Will Wiltshire Council publish a Carbon Impact Assessment of the changes, taking consideration of additional journey times to the replacement HRC, as well as the transportation of materials from the replacement HRC to the Hills' Materials Recovery Centre at Lower Compton?
- Has Wiltshire Council considered taking on the operation of Lower Compton HRC directly under a negotiated long-lease arrangement?
- Will the replacement of Lower Compton and Purton HRCs with a new HRC in Royal Wootton Bassett increase or decrease the capacity of household recycling centres in Wiltshire?
- Given the extent of housing development taking place around Calne and to the south of Chippenham, and the need to improve recycling rates above the current level of 42.4%, has Wiltshire Council assessed the HRC capacity required to meet future needs to a reasonable planning horizon.
- When Lower Compton HRC closes, will Wiltshire Council extend the opening hours of our next nearest HRCs at Melksham and Devizes?

In respect of the HRC booking system trial:

- How long will the trial of the booking system go on for?
- How will the results of the Booking Pilot be assessed?
- Will Wiltshire Council publish data on the impact of the system on use of the HRC?
- Will Wiltshire Council be assessing whether the booking system trial has an impact on incidents of fly-tipping in the county?

**Appendix A – Copy of Letter from Cherhill PC to Cllr Gordon King**



24th August 2026

To:

Cllr Gordon King,  
Member for Waste and the Environment,  
Wiltshire Council,  
County Hall,  
Bythesea Road,  
Trowbridge,  
Wiltshire BA14 8JN

**By email**

Dear Cllr King,

**Plans to Close Household Recycling Centres at Lower Compton and Purton**

I write in your capacity as Member for Waste. We had attempted to correspond with your predecessor in this position, Cllr Paul Sample, but sadly did not get very far at all. I attach a copy of our email to him of December 2025, together with his brief reply which eventually came when prompted. I also attach a copy of our Press Statement of January 2026. I don't propose to repeat all the points we have raised in these communications.

Obviously our Parish Council is most concerned regarding the future of Lower Compton HRC, in our parish, but we are working closely with Purton PC re their own HRC which is under threat, and also with Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council over the planned replacement HRC in their town.

Our Parish Council has some questions for you please:

- 1) When can we expect Wiltshire Council to publish a **Costs Benefit Analysis** for the proposed closure of HRCs at Lower Compton and Purton? Such an analysis should include a replacement facility elsewhere, currently proposed for the site at Royal Wootton Bassett.

- 2) When will a **Carbon Impact Statement** be published for this scheme? This is particularly important when you consider that Wiltshire Council is committed to going carbon neutral by 2030.
- 3) Why has a **distinction been made between the HRCs at Lower Compton and Purton**? Purton HRC, until recently, appeared to have another 3 years but Lower Compton HRC only one more year, albeit on a rolling basis.
- 4) Why however is there now a reference on Wiltshire Council's website to it being a further 4 years at Lower Purton and 3 years at Lower Compton? **Which timeframe is correct** and why is there still this unfathomable distinction between the 2 sites?
- 5) Previously, Wiltshire Council has indicated that the facility at Lower Compton needed to be upgraded. What **specific upgrades** are required there and what would they be expected to achieve? We ask because this is such a well used and well run facility.
- 6) The **proposed booking system** in our view is likely to be something of a disaster and is quite unnecessary. During this pilot scheme period are those HRCs concerned going to be open 7 days a week to cope with the demand? If not then how many days a week are proposed?
- 7) What **alternative sites**, if any, are there to that proposed at Royal Wootton Bassett?
- 8) Finally, there has been very little **communication and consultation** between Wiltshire Council and the relevant local councils affected by these proposals. What improvements in this regard can we expect to see and when?

We very much look forward to hearing from.

Yours sincerely

Peter Johnson  
Clerk, Cherhill Parish Council