



11 March 2009

## **'e-clutter' your home this spring**

Warwickshire County Council has teamed up with Recycle Now and clutter expert Beverly Wade to launch the 'Don't bin it, bring it' campaign, urging people to recycle electricals or 'e-clutter' as part of a spring clean.

Small electricals such as old kettles and mobile phones may not be top of the spring-cleaning list. But research<sup>1</sup> shows on average we all have at least three unwanted electronic items cluttering up the home – and that's before digging around in the cupboards.

154 million<sup>2a</sup> small electrical products were bought in the UK in the last year alone, weighing a staggering 551,000 tonnes in total or 22kgs per household<sup>2b</sup>. But only around 10% of this was recycled.

Between April and December last year, families in Warwickshire recycled 1,139 tonnes of electrical waste<sup>3a</sup> – that's the equivalent of 4 irons, 11 hairdryers or 48 electric toothbrushes per household<sup>3b</sup>.

Decluttering guru Beverly Wade who runs Cluttergone, a Professional Decluttering and Organising Service, understands how easily clutter can mount up.

She said: "Many of us find it difficult to detach ourselves from old or unused items – often convincing ourselves that it's worth holding on to them 'just in case'. But more often than not these end up forgotten in the backs of cupboards or favourite hiding spots such as the garage or the loft.

"Spring is a traditional time for fresh starts so it's the perfect time to have a good sort-out and work out what you really want to keep. This year, why not start with your small electricals first for a change, then you can move on to tackle the rest once you're in the right frame of mind."

According to recent Recycle Now research<sup>4</sup>, three out of ten of us have never recycled a small electrical item. The main reason is lack of knowledge - knowing what can be recycled (41%) and secondly knowing where to take items (25%).

Small electrical items we say we already recycle include:

- 1) Mobile phone (20%)
- 2) TV (14%)
- 3) Computer (10%)
- 4) Toaster or Vacuum cleaner (9%)

However, other household items such as electric toothbrushes, battery-operated watches, electronic toys and hedge clippers were rarely recycled. Many items end up being thrown out with the household rubbish.

Cllr Martin Heatley, Warwickshire County Council's Portfolio Holder for the Environment, said: "I urge everyone to have a good hunt in those cupboards and lofts to get rid of the e-clutter we all accumulate."

Gerrard Fisher from Recycle Now said: "Electrical items that use disposable batteries, have a mains cable or need recharging can all be recycled. The raw materials can then be put to new uses; for example, a typical iron contains enough steel to make 13 food cans.

"So when you're spring cleaning this year, if you come across any old electricals, remember, don't bin it, bring it along to your local recycling centre in Warwickshire. There are 9 dedicated facilities for collecting waste electrical goods. You can find your nearest drop off point using our postcode locator at [www.dontbinitbringit.org](http://www.dontbinitbringit.org) or just check the county council website at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/hwrc](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/hwrc)"

Recycle Now has developed the following four-step plan to help you clear-out your e-clutter this Spring:

### **1. Getting started**

If clutter has been building up for a while, knowing where to start can be difficult. That's why it can help to start with a certain type of item – such as small electrical goods. It can be easy to feel disheartened, but it's okay if you don't get everything done straightaway – the key thing is that you've chosen to take a first step.

### **2. Why not try grouping like with like together**

A good way to start can be to choose one category of small electrical products – for example small kitchen appliances, personal care items such as hairdryers or shavers, DIY and garden electricals or electronic devices like mobiles and cameras. Then you can gather all the products of a similar type together. Looking in any little hiding places such as the garage, the 'junk room' or maybe the loft can also help. Somehow, it becomes much easier to discard that old personal stereo that you no longer listen to, when it's next to your shiny new mp3 player. If you start with the easy things - the items that are broken, worn-out or unused, it makes the whole process much easier. Normally it is best to make a decision quickly, and move on to the next item.

### **3. Can it be recycled?**

It couldn't be easier to check which electrical products can be recycled. If it has a mains cable or uses replaceable batteries or needs charging or has the crossed-out wheelie bin logo on it, you can recycle it.

#### 4. How to find your local recycling centre

Many local authority recycling centres accept waste electrical and electronic products, but it's worth checking the postcode locator first at [www.dontbinitbringit.org](http://www.dontbinitbringit.org) to find your nearest one – or simply visit [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/hwrc](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/hwrc)

Beverly Wade and Recycle Now have also developed a quiz to help people identify how prone they are to e-cluttering. So if you're unsure whether you're a Clutterbug or a Committed Recycler, find out your e-clutter score at [www.dontbinitbringit.org](http://www.dontbinitbringit.org)

### Ends

For more information contact Caroline Faulkner at Warwickshire County Council on 01926, James Gilheany, Fishburn Hedges, 020 7839 4321, email: [james.gilheany@fishburn-hedges.co.uk](mailto:james.gilheany@fishburn-hedges.co.uk) or Susan Nisbet, PR Manager at WRAP on 01295 819677/819695, email: [susan.nisbet@wrap.org.uk](mailto:susan.nisbet@wrap.org.uk)

Note to editors:

#### Source for statistics:

1. YouGov online survey of 1,684 adults (aged 18+) in England commissioned by Recycle Now in November 2008.
- 2a. Market sales figures for year ending September 2008 were supplied by GfK NOP. The 154 million small electronic products bought included: 23 million mobile phones; 29 million kitchen appliances (kettles, toasters, mixers, etc.); 23 million personal appliances (hair care, shavers, etc.); 20 million personal audio devices (e.g. mp3 players); 7.5 million LCD TVs; and 5.4 million laptop PCs. Waste electrical figures are those according to the Environment Agency's statistics from July 2007 to July 2008.
- 2b. Environment Agency figures for electronic and electrical equipment purchased in the UK July 2007 – June 2008. Categories 2 – 9 are classified as 'small': Small Household Appliances, IT and Telecoms Equipment, Consumer Equipment, Lighting Equipment, Electrical and Electronic Tools, Toys Leisure and Sports, Medical Devices, Monitoring and Control Instruments. The weight of an average item of waste electrical and electronic equipment is 1kg.
- 3a. Warwickshire County Council data.
- 3b. Calculated using ONS data on households:  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/householdestimates/livetables-households/>  
Average weights calculations based on the following estimates:

	Typical weight (kg)	Typical plastic content (kg)	Typical metal content (kg)	No of yoghurt pots that could be made from that weight of plastic	No of steel cans that could be made from that weight of metal
Kettle	0.808	0.395	0.469	79	8
Toaster	2.019	0.383	1.408	76	25
Iron	1.386	0.477	0.720	95	13
Portable vacuum cleaner	0.702	0.415	0.147	83	2
Electric toothbrush	0.109	0.050	0.031	10	0
Shaver	0.204	0.076	0.091	15	1.5
Hairdryer	0.497	0.202	0.109	40	2
Ghetto blaster	3.068	1.339	0.604	267	11
Games console	1.718	0.697	0.510	139	9

- 1,751 face-to-face interviews in England (weighted to be nationally representative) conducted via the GfK NOP Random Location Omnibus on behalf of Recycle Now in November 2008,

#### **Notes to editors:**

- WRAP helps individuals, businesses and local authorities to reduce waste and recycle more, making better use of resources and helping to tackle climate change.
- Established as a not-for-profit company in 2000, WRAP is backed by government funding from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Working in seven key areas (Construction, Retail, Manufacturing, Organics, Business Growth, Behavioural Change, and Local Authority Support), WRAP's work focuses on market development and support to drive forward recycling and materials resource efficiency within these sectors, as well as wider communications and awareness activities including the multi-media national Recycle Now campaign for England.
- Recycle Now is a campaign to encourage people in England to recycle more things more often. Six out of ten of us now describe ourselves as committed recyclers, compared to less than half of us when the campaign began in 2004.
- More information on all of WRAP's programmes can be found on [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk) and for more information on the Recycle Now campaign visit [www.recyclenow.com](http://www.recyclenow.com)