

Public to access Suffolk's Recycling Centres from Thursday by appointment only

A new online booking system will be in place when Suffolk's Recycling Centres re-open on Thursday <May 14>. This appointment-only system is necessary to help reduce traffic disruption and queueing on roads around the sites and help manage additional demand on the waste sites. There are also new temporary restrictions and guidelines in place at all sites to support the safety of staff and members of the public.

Suffolk County Council has been working with its contractor FCC Environment to put plans in place to re-open all eleven sites to make sure that visits to the Recycling Centres are as safe as possible for residents and staff. In order to reopen the sites safely, people will need to book a time online when they can arrive and dispose of their waste. Through the online booking process, the council wants to limit the length of queuing on roads outside the Recycling Centres, which have occurred elsewhere in the country when sites have reopened. If you do not have an appointment, you will be denied access and turned away from the site.

Those who are shielding or at greatest risk of Covid-19 should continue to follow Government guidance and not visit a Recycling Centre.

There will be a phased approach to opening the sites fully in order to ease congestion and prioritise residents. There will also be a set of new temporary rules, which residents must check before arriving at the sites.

During phase one, these temporary rules include:

- No access to site without pre-booking
- Cars and pedestrians only - no vans, trailers or commercial-type vehicles
- One adult to unload, unless 2 adults needed for heavy items
- No staff assistance to unload vehicles
- No chargeable waste accepted (soil, rubble, hardcore or plasterboard)
- No trade waste
- No textiles or re-use items accepted

The booking system is designed to support social distancing by ensuring that only a safe number of visitors can access the sites at any one time. It will also help reduce waiting times for visitors and manage traffic to avoid a dangerous build-up of cars on the highway.

The booking site will be live from 3pm tomorrow <Tuesday 12 May>, with the first appointments being made for Thursday. To make a booking, please visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/recyclingcentres or call 0345 606 6067. In order to control the queues residents without a booking will not be able to enter the site. Residents must not arrive on site more than 5 minutes before their allocated time.

In line with the Government's recommendation, Suffolk County Council is urging residents to only make a booking if their waste or recycling cannot be stored safely at home or disposed of through other legitimate routes. Visitors are also advised to wash their hands before and after visiting site and gloves should be worn during the visit. Pre-sorting waste into material type before visiting the site will help to speed up your visit and reduce waiting times.

Each of the eleven sites has a detailed traffic management plan, along with a maximum number of people that will be allowed on site at any one time to maintain safety. The traffic plan has been worked out in partnership with Suffolk Highways, to limit the impact on roads around each site.

Any waste you have which is contaminated or suspected to have being contaminated with COVID 19 must be double-bagged and kept at home for 72 hours before it is brought to site.

Suffolk County Council will be reviewing the temporary rules each week, but will only be able to move towards the normal way of operating the sites when it is safe to do so.

Paul West, Cabinet Member for Waste said: "We want to thank all Suffolk residents for bearing with us whilst the Recycling Centres have been closed.

"When social distancing and the lockdown was introduced by the Government, a decision was made to temporarily close the centres across Suffolk. This was in line with other sites across the UK.

"The new pre-booking system is designed to keep the public and staff as safe as possible on our sites. This controlled approach to the re-opening the centres will reduce waiting times as well as traffic congestion. We realise that there will be a large demand for appointments and ask residents to be patient during the first few weeks and only bring waste or recycling that cannot be safely stored at home.

"In the meantime, please don't be tempted to dump or fly-tip the waste that would in normal times go to the Recycling Centres. This remains a criminal offence and prosecutions will be sought."

People who are, or have anyone in their household, suffering from Covid-19 symptoms, or have been diagnosed as having the virus must not visit Recycling Centres. Please follow the government's guidance on self-isolating and shielding.

ENDS

Suffolk County Council closed Recycling Centres from 24 March in response to Government guidance on essential travel. All other authorities in the region also closed their sites and over 90% nationally have done so.