

Meeting Minutes – Waste Minimisation

Date: 11 September 2026

Time: 17:30 – 18:30

Location: Pathfinder House, Huntingdon

Attendees

Heidi Field (Huntingdonshire District Council)

Oana Hughineata (Huntingdonshire District Council)

Ana Pongrac (Huntingdonshire District Council)

Karen Valderrama Guerra (Huntingdonshire District Council)

Alan M.

Chris J.

Richard F.

Robin S.

Jan D.

Janice F.

Juliette B.

Steph J.

Apologies

Amanda T.

Ann B.

Cllr Dami Ademiniyi

Cllr Nathan Hunt

Cllr Paul Simpson

Ian A.

Mary G.

Melina L.

Nicola H.

1. Welcome and changes to the team

The meeting opened with a welcome from the Waste Minimisation Team, who introduced the current team and their areas:

- Heidi Field, Waste Minimisation & Performance Officer.
- Auriane Cirasuolo, Waste Minimisation Project Officer.
- Ana Pongrac, Waste Reduction Engagement Officer.
- Oana Hughineata, Operational Technical Administrator .
- Terri Willie, Assistant Waste Minimisation Officer.
- Karen Valderrama Guerra, Business Support Assistant.

2. Waste trends and general updates

- The recycling rate (dry mixed recycling, garden and food waste) was ~52.4% in August, against ~49.8% in August 2025. It has been ahead of last year every month since weekly food waste collections started at the end of March, and peaked at ~60% in June (numbers may change slightly).
- Food waste has held at roughly 400 tonnes a month since April (as it averages ~20 t a day).
- DEFRA figures show England's household recycling rate has sat in the mid-40s for more than a decade, which is well below HDC's average.

3. Current initiatives and projects

Non-statutory services

- Textile banks are collecting between 3 and 3.7 tonnes a month, and WEEE ~2.5t.
- The team has supported 126 litter picks so far this year.
- Bulky waste collections cost £40 for 1–4 items, £55 for 5–7 and £80 for 8–11.

Communications

- Social media has had 358,300 views and talks and events have reached 400 residents so far in 2026.
- The new “food waste” video, shared through parish council channels, reached 13,000+ impressions.

Contamination campaign

- Stage 1 cut contamination by at least 32% in the trial area. Over the same period it rose by 12% in the control area.
- Stage 2 is a larger pilot now under way, using bin hangers and letters for communal properties. It will capture more data and measure the impact on contamination.

4. Food waste collection service

- A resident survey ran from 6 August to 3 September and received 1,600+ responses.
- Of the online responses (99% of the total), 78% use the service every week, 9% use it occasionally and 13% don't use it.
- The most common reasons for using it were putting less in the general waste bin and the environmental benefits. The biggest concerns were odour and vermin, and having to buy caddy liners.

5. Questions answered

- **Can pill packets go in the recycling bin?** No. They are made of bonded plastic and foil, which neither HDC nor its processor can accept.

6. Discussion

The group was small but there was plenty of conversation, and several attendees shared their thoughts.

7. Next meeting / Actions

- The team will send round a poll with a choice of dates and times
- Circulate links to the Recycling & Refuse Collection Guide (attached in the minutes' email)
- Circulate recycling points - huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins-waste/recycling-centres.
- Circulate upcoming events (see below)

Upcoming events

Repair Cafés

- Repair Café, March – Saturday 19 September, 12pm–3pm
- University of Cambridge Repair Café – Wednesday 30 September, 1pm–4pm
- How to Run a Repair Café, Cambridge – Tuesday 13 October, 6pm–7:15pm
- St Ives Repair Café – Saturday 17 October, 1pm–4pm
- Godmanchester Repair Café – Saturday 24 October, 1:30pm–4:30pm
- Grafham Repair Café – Saturday 24 October, 1pm–4pm

Other events

- Recycle Week – 14–20 September
- RWM / ESS Expo, NEC Birmingham – 16–17 September
- Eco Café, St Ives – Saturday 12 December

Contact: wasteminimisation@huntingdonshire.gov.uk