

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The problem

Haddenham Summerfest is an annual one-day event attracting over 4000 visitors. The event includes three music and performance stages and a vast family area with activities for children. The various ale, beer, lager, cider etc tents offer a wide selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. A wide variety of street food is available through individual vendors occupying a 44-meter stretch of the site. The site covers approximately 4 acres. Each year an attempt is made to ensure that recyclable material is dealt with appropriately.

The solution

The festival committee teamed up with the Parish Council and an environmental action charity 'Zero Carbon Haddenham' to explore ways to improve recycling on the site. It was decided to monitor and manage recycling by controlling access to recycling bins through a smaller collection point, the recycling hub, where people are directed to the appropriate recycling bin. With the support of a grant from the Buckinghamshire Waste Prevention Team, a managed recycling hub was set up within the festival site, with signage and a roaming trolley to use during the event.

The results

A total of 12 volunteer 'Binfluencers' supported the project, manned the 'recycling hub' and patrolled the site, particularly gazebo designated areas, asking people to place recyclables in the mobile trolley.

The recycling hub was set up and attended by volunteers from 10.30am until 8pm. A considerable number of conversations about the importance of recycling took place.

The following materials were collected.

- 12kg of plastic bottles and aluminium drinks cans
- 24kg clean cardboard and paper
- 12kg of compostable serveware
- 7kg of glass bottles
- 9.7kg of food waste (+ similar amount from the street food traders at the end of the day)





The results

In contrast (outside of the 'recycling hub') a further ten 1100ltr recycling bins are in use across the site. Three of these are located behind the bar area and not accessible to the general public. These contained glass bottles and cardboard only. Seven further recycling bins were dispersed throughout the site. These were clearly marked as recycling only and were accessible to all festival attendees. These bins were up to 50% contaminated with a wide range of non-recyclable material and so will be treated as general waste by the contractor.

Twelve general waste bins are dispersed throughout the site. These were all full by the end of the day. They all contained large quantities of recyclable material.

Conclusion

The recycling hub is considered to be a success, not least because it raised the profile of recycling at this community festival. It is considered by the management committee of the festival to be a small start at tackling a serious problem in a serious way. Further festivals, Winterfest in December 2024 and Summerfest July 2025 will incorporate recycling into the overall plan of the site from the earliest opportunity.



It is recommended to reduce the number of un-attended recycling bins and to have two recycling hubs, strategically placed, so they are easy to find. Unattended recycling bins should be focused on single type recycling to improve the quality of recycling and should have very clear signage.

The general waste bins should be labeled 'non-recyclable waste only, all recyclable materials to the recycling hub'.

All food traders on site are trying hard to avoid plastics and now opt for the slightly more expensive compostable alternatives for serving food. Whilst these can be industrially composted, the current contractor requires a very high level of food waste before compostable trays, cups etc can be included in the food waste. As a consequence we collect and monitor compostable material separately, but this goes into general waste for incineration. At future events we should negotiate to ensure the contractor takes serveware for industrial composting even if this adds to the expense of the waste contract.

The signs trolley and other equipment is now available to use free of charge from the 'I'd Like to Borrow' site operated by the Haddenham and Waddesdon Community Board.

