

Don't Rubbish Newcastle

BAN Waste Community Events  
Summary Report

2002

## **BAN Waste**

Byker and Newcastle Waste, BAN Waste, is a city-wide community organisation working in partnership with Newcastle Council to look at the best waste strategy for the city. BAN Waste was established in January 2000 in response to widespread concerns about plans to replace the existing incinerator in Byker with a new large one. It has established a Select Committee, made up of Newcastle residents, to inform both the Council and the public about issues to do with waste. The Select Committee has produced an Interim Report and will produce its Final Report in 2003

### **Aims**

The aims of the Community Events were

- raise the general understanding and encourage debate about waste
- to discuss the findings of the Interim Report with the public
- to help people be involved in influencing decisions in Newcastle

Although BAN Waste does not have the power to implement policy it has worked to increase the public's opportunities to influence decisions. The aim was for BAN Waste, with its limited resources, to reach out as much as possible to residents of the city.

The Community Events aimed to be welcoming to the public – this was considered in the design of the flyers, the activities on the day and the layout of the venues. We aimed for Events that were informative, welcoming, accessible and fun.

This was achieved by presenting information in several clear formats, providing activities for both children and adults, and providing refreshments.

Activities for children both encouraged them to think about waste and allowed their parents time to discuss waste issues in a more relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. We gathered the views of the public in several different ways and provided information on aspects of waste management and reduction, as a means of raising understanding.

## Publicity

BAN Waste publicised the events by

- Publishing an article in the Council's free newspaper, CITYLIFE
- Sending a press release to all the local media which gained coverage on local radio and newspapers
- Publicising through local community groups' networks
- Distributing 14,000 leaflets and 140 posters to community co-ordinators, ward committees, schools, community groups, churches and other places of worship, shops, dentists, doctors, libraries, swimming pools, and finally door-to-door near to each venue
- Exhibiting the BAN Waste display boards at a local amenity, in most cases the library, a week before each event

## Venues

The seven events were held in different venues, covering a wide area of Newcastle. It was important that the venues would be both accessible and widely used by the public, as the aim was to integrate the events into the community. The events were arranged in places that people regularly use, such as Libraries and Pools, or held in partnership with a local community group.

Byker            East End Pool and Library  
Grange        Northumberland Wildlife Trust  
Heaton        Trewhitt Road Community Centre  
Elswick       Elswick Pool  
Blakelaw      Blakelaw Library  
Sandyford    Hotspur Primary School  
Westerhope   Westerhope Methodist Church Hall

## Attendance

Over 350 adults and 200 children attended the 7 Community Events.

Ward	Date	Adults	Children
Byker	Saturday, February 2	100	50
Grange	Sunday, February 10	60	40
Heaton	Saturday, February 23	50	25
Elswick	Saturday, March 2	50	35
Blakelaw	Thursday, March 7	15	30
Sandyford	Saturday, March 16	45	25
Westerhope	Saturday March 23	60	30
<b>Total</b>		<b>380</b>	<b>235</b>

## **Content of Events: What Was On**

All parts of the events aimed to exchange information.

### **Providing BAN Waste Information**

- Copies of the summary and full Interim Report were available
- Members of BAN Waste attended to answer questions and give further information

### **Activities**

- Sculpture: using scrap materials to make a 10-foot long lacewing
- Junk Music: workshops making musical instruments from 'junk'
- Rag Rug: making a rug from scrap material with a design based on the Interim Report's cover
- Model Making: from scrap materials
- Face Painting
- Quiz: 2 simple quizzes for children about waste
- Refreshments

### **Displays**

- BAN Waste: display boards about the Interim Report and BAN Waste's activities
- Eco-Panels: display about the role of Eco-Panels
- Carrier Bags: hundreds of bags were strung up to highlight the problems they cause
- Real Nappies: outlining the environmental, financial and health benefits of using real nappies
- Compost: compost bin and wormery
- Recycled Plastics: display showing how to make fabrics from recycled plastic
- Woodworks: garden furniture made from wood that would otherwise be discarded in landfill

### **Gathering Information**

One of the aims of the Community Events was to gather the views of the public about waste and strategies to deal with it. The following methods were used to cater for different attitudes, levels of confidence, etc.

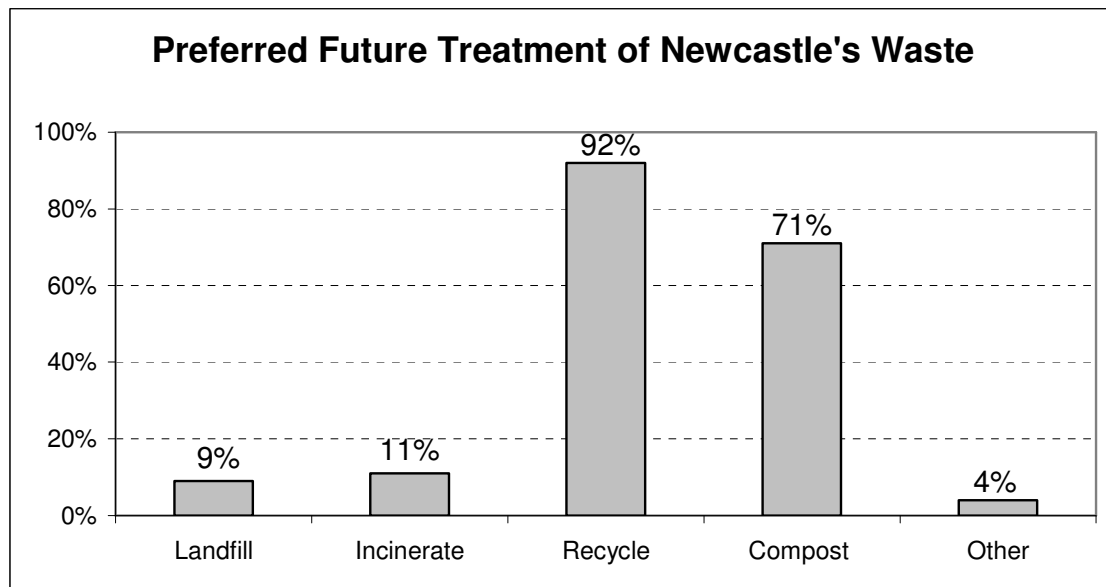
- Questionnaire
- Ballot
- Bean Voting
- Graffiti Wall
- H-Form

## Findings

BAN Waste, Newcastle Council and all those who are interested in the environment, sustainability and making Newcastle a better city should be inspired by the findings and have increased confidence about the future.

- **The vast majority of people want to dramatically increase the levels of recycling and composting and are willing to do their share, especially if good comprehensive and easy to use systems are in place.**
- **There is a wide understanding of the need to improve public awareness and information about waste, resources and methods of handling.**
- **Most people are concerned about the levels of waste and how today's throwaway society produces litter and untidy streets.**
- **There is a strong desire for more action nationally and locally to reduce waste and make recycling easier.**
- **There is strong opposition to incineration, while landfill is not considered appropriate to deal with the bulk of the city's waste.**

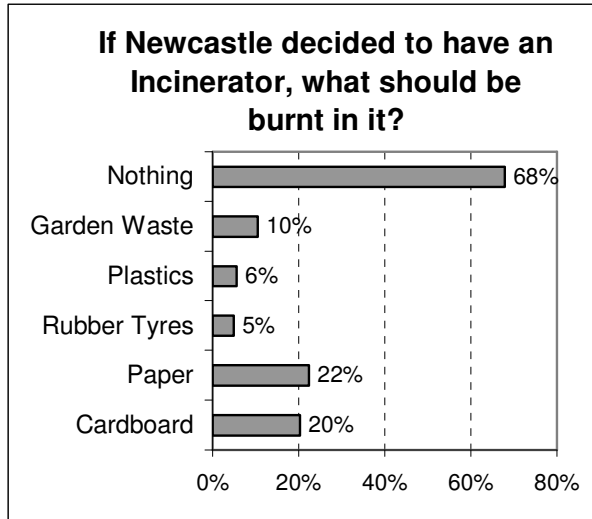
**Most people want waste to be treated as a resource rather than to simply discard it.**



	Yes
Do you ever think about the waste you throw away?	88%
Do you think that as society we produce too much waste?	96%
Do you ever try to reduce your waste?	81%
When shopping do you ever refuse extra plastic bags?	69%
Do you choose items with less packaging?	62%
Should the Council and Government do more to reduce waste and packaging?	97%
Would you put your garden/kitchen waste in a separate container for collection?	90%
Would you sort your waste into glass, paper, plastics, etc. so that it could be recycled?	95%

## Incineration

	Yes
If Newcastle decided to have an incinerator, should it be near people's homes?	4%
Do you think Newcastle's waste should be burnt to produce some electricity?	50%
Do you have any health worries about incineration?	84%



### Comments

"Scary! what are we breathing?"  
 "lived many years in the 'cancer zone' around Byker."  
 "its a waste of waste"  
 "Don't destroy our environment."  
 "WAIT - DON'T INCINERATE! It's money going up in smoke and when its gone its gone!"  
 "Spend a lot of money to destroy resources and create pollution."  
 "Should be looking at why we think we need them and how to reduce bulk waste first."

**Incineration is unpopular with the vast majority of people.**

Composting	Recycling
<p><b>Composting had virtually unanimous support, with many requests for kerbside collection of compostable materials.</b></p> <p>"Feeding the soil <u>for free</u>, produces healthier soil"</p> <p>"Compost is a brilliant use of waste to reduce it."</p> <p>"It's only way to go!"</p> <p>"Should collect from houses without gardens, shops, etc."</p> <p>"Great, need to look at community schemes."</p> <p>"We need more supplies of easily available <u>peat free</u> compost."</p> <p>"saves on landfill."</p> <p>"Great. Wish the council would collect the stuff to compost."</p>	<p><b>Recycling had virtually unanimous support. Many people pointed to the present lack of facilities and urged the council to provide a good recycling system</b></p> <p>"Hooray! recycling is empowering!"</p> <p>"Make people <b>THINK</b> about what they throw away"</p> <p>"Recycling is a fabulous way to reduce waste and safe for the environment."</p> <p>"We should be doing it - if we did it properly it would create work"</p> <p>"Essential - <b>MAKE IT EASY</b>. Every home should have boxes to enable efficient recycling. Not just visits to recycling depots. this is difficult without a car. Try it on the bus with 2 kids!"</p> <p>"Recycling stops litter and environmental pollution."</p> <p>"There is more money in recycling and re-using than in burning it."</p> <p>"Newcastle Council - stop paying lip service to recycling! Put in proper kerbside recycling system."</p> <p>"Must be large scale, local and integrated."</p>

## **Public Involvement**

**Ban Waste is strongly committed to helping people to take part in decision-making. The Community Events were an important part of encouraging public involvement.**

**We aimed to make the events informative, interesting and enjoyable, as well as serving a serious purpose.** To that end all the events had a wide range of activities, free refreshments and activities for children, all of which helped to encourage people to relax and discuss. The Rag Rug also helped create a suitable atmosphere for discussion. People stopped and watched and then joined in. People were creating something beautiful from waste materials, which depicted five household items that are easily recycled, and this generated much discussion. Many people remembered rag-rugging from their past and children found it new and interesting.

**The attendance was an excellent achievement for the modest resources, especially when contrasted with the attendance at many official consultations.** BAN Waste found a great willingness from the public to give their time and express their views about the future handling of waste in the city. This is in contrast to those who claim that the public are apathetic or are uninterested. BAN Waste made every effort to ensure that people were welcomed and that their views were respected – this is the key to ensuring genuine public involvement in decision-making. The approach and character of the events that were organised can be an example to others, both community organisations and official bodies, as to how to involve the public in decision-making. BAN Waste would suggest that were our approach adopted by Councils and other bodies (and linked to action, which is beyond BAN Waste's powers), then people would be much more willing to give up their valuable time to become involved in shaping policy.

**Members of the public who attended not only had an enjoyable time, but were also keen to take part in the discussions,** and this was true of the people passing by such as at Byker and Elswick pools. There was great enthusiasm from the children, who were very keen to take part in the activities. These younger participants were often the most vocal about waste issues; it is obviously something that matters.

**This combination of a committed section of the population alongside a largely sympathetic one** is an ideal opportunity for a well-designed recycling and composting system, as long as the public and community groups are involved from the start. Those that are committed will put in time to ensure the system is well-designed and will convince friends and neighbours to support such a scheme.

**The events required a lot of hard work and commitment from BAN Waste members as the vast majority of the work was unpaid and done in people's spare time. With limited resources of time and money the events were a great success.**

## **Thanks**

BAN Waste thanks the five wards in Newcastle who contributed money towards these events and the New Opportunities Fund who provided a grant of £4,950 towards the cost of Community Events.

Byker	£750
Elswick	£250
Grange	£250
Heaton	£250
Sandyford	£250

BAN Waste is grateful to all those who helped to make the events a success: the artists, the staff of the venues, the community groups who supported the events and those BAN Waste members who gave of their time and effort. BAN waste is especially grateful to the members of the public who so willingly gave time to discuss the issues around waste and how to deal with it. The Community Events were a great success and achieved all the aims that were set.

## **The Future**

The findings from the Community Events will be considered in Phase II of the BAN Waste Select Committee and will help to inform the Final Report that BAN Waste will produce. This report will recommend to the city of Newcastle, both Council and citizens, a Waste Strategy for Newcastle that is suitable for the city and best for the environment, health and employment.

The real and final test of the success of the Community Events is whether the views so strongly expressed at them are acted upon and Newcastle Council adopts a strategy that treats waste as a resource, with recycling and composting as the main elements of such a strategy.

### **"Waste - Tell Us Your Views"**

*"No recycling in Elswick Pool - council should set an example!"*

*"We need to catch up with mainland Europe and recycle more! Doorstep recycling please!"*

*"Come on Newcastle council, pull your finger out."*

*"Make it easy to recycle, doorstep collect for main items."*

*"Nearest point too far away - I don't have a car."*

*"Waste is Valuable! Don't waste it."*

*"I am fed up with plastic bags 'growing' on trees!"*

For

- More information about BAN Waste
- A copy of the Full Report of the Community Events
- Either the Summary or Full Interim Report of the Select Committee

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