

intouch

Issue 27 June 2012



50 years of protecting Wiltshire's wildlife

Hills continues to support Wiltshire Wildlife Trust in its anniversary year, see pages 5-7

New waste sorting equipment at Porte Marsh

- read more on pages 11-13

Isuzu tests new vehicle at Shorncote Quarry

- read more on page 15

Homes shortlisted for two awards

- read more on page 18

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viewpoint

The great British milestone!

If we British are good at anything it is celebrating anniversaries and milestones and, despite the wet, wintery weather the nation has certainly done it in style this year in celebrating our wonderful Queen's great achievement of 60 dignified years on the throne. The rain was the complete contrast to the heatwave conditions enjoyed by the massive public turnout only the week before to welcome the Olympic flame as it passed through the villages and towns of Wiltshire - see page 21.

On a more local scale we are very proud to be involved in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. The work that the Trust has carried out in that time is remarkable and you can read about some of projects that the company has supported over the years on pages 5 - 7.

Going hi-tech...

A further step was recently taken into the new era of hi-tech waste treatment when our new plastic bottle and cardboard recycling facility was opened in Calne. You can read about the new operation and the process on pages 11 - 13.

Creating an idea factory!

It has been encouraging to see the response to the Move to Improve scheme set up last year to capture ideas on business improvements from all sections of the Waste operations - see pages 3 and 20. It makes sense that looking at what we do from different angles will give us a good chance of continuously improving, so now that the scheme is being rolled out across the Group we can no doubt look forward to a veritable blizzard of ideas!



Michael Hill
Chief executive

Publishers Note

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Phil's **good idea** rewarded

Waste Solutions has been running the Move to Improve scheme for a year, and it rewards employees for their good ideas on how business improvements might be made.



Chief executive Mike Hill presents certificate to Phil Haakerson

In April the 67 good entries received throughout the year were reviewed by Waste Solutions' management team.

Driver's mate Phil Haakerson's idea, to use tags on trade waste rounds to advise customers about any issues with their bins, was chosen as the best.

The tags will show that a vehicle visited a site to make a collection even if the waste wasn't picked up due to contamination or access issues, for example. They will also help to prevent wasted journeys because the problem can be fixed; the customer will immediately be made aware of the reason why the bin wasn't collected first time round and will be advised to contact the office to resolve the issue. Phil won £600 of Argos vouchers.

Congratulations Phil!

The scheme has now been rolled out across the Hills Group. For more information see page 20.

**Move to
Improve**

intouch shortlisted

intouch magazine has been shortlisted for an Institute of Internal Communications award. The communications team is waiting to hear if it scoops the title of best news magazine issued up to four times a year.

The competition is stiff. Hills is up against the likes of Tarmac UK, Network Rail, and TNT Express UK and Ireland. But unlike these companies, Hills produces the magazine in-house, without the aid of an external agency.

Fingers crossed for a win at the awards ceremony on 15 June, at the Hilton, Park Lane, London.



intouch home delivery

Hills works with a mailing house called Phoenix Enterprises, which supports people recovering from short and long term mental health problems by giving them a chance to work or volunteer at the mailing house so that they can rebuild their confidence and learn new skills. It acts as a stepping-stone to jobs in competitive employment.

Phoenix Enterprises is a vital help for these people and despite the recent stamp price increase, Hills has made a decision to continue to work with them, and have the magazines delivered to people's home addresses.

Phoenix Enterprises is always looking for new opportunities to increase its customer portfolio. Find out more at www.phoenixenterprises.co.uk.



Phoenix Enterprises

Lower Compton area residents tidy up around the old NAAFI (photo courtesy Barry Miller)



NAAFI update

Members of the NAAFI project group (NPG), which is made up of volunteers from Lower Compton, surrounding communities and representatives from Hills, spent a sunny morning in May tidying the area surrounding the old premises.

The team worked hard to clear leaves and vegetation, and they gave the gates a much needed lick of paint. Hills Group supplied

the team with the paint, paintbrushes, personal protection equipment including gloves, goggles and dust masks, wire brushes, sand paper and dust sheets.

Over 30 people attended and they managed to fill a whole skip full of rubbish.

Hills Group purchased the site in early 2011 and since October last year, has been consulting with local residents on how the building and adjacent woodland could best be used for community benefit.

Mike Hill, chief executive Hills Group, said: "The Lower Compton community is one of our closest neighbours and we are working with them to see if there is a way that we can

provide a facility that suits both Hills and the community's needs. It is good to see that the hard work and dedication of the NPG committee is producing results."

The NPG plans to organise a community event for Lower Compton residents in the grounds of the NAAFI on Saturday 21 July. Full details on the event, together with minutes of NPG meetings and other news can be found on Facebook (Lower Compton NAAFI) or on the Hills Group website.

Good signals

Hills Group is six months into a year's trial of the "Well Driven?" scheme, which is run by the Freight Transport Association. It's giving the public a chance to comment on driver behaviour by calling a number on the back of Hills vehicles.

So far there have been two complaints, one query and two compliments. Recently, one driver received some great feedback on his use of signalling, and the fact that he was keeping to the speed limit. Another driver, Alan Little, was complimented on his considerate driving and how he pulled into laybys to allow other drivers to pass.



Alan Little is congratulated by manager Nathan Carr

Alan's manager, collections manager Nathan Carr, said: "This type of feedback is really important to our drivers and to Hills as a whole. It's equally important though for us to know when someone is unhappy with our drivers' behaviour, as it helps us to put mechanisms in place to maintain a level of excellence."

HR objectives

One of the HR department's objectives is to help managers manage better. The team organised several training days in March, designed to help the company's people managers deal more effectively with difficult conversations and situations that may arise within their teams in the workplace.

"We had some great feedback from the attendees, 57 in all. The trainer used real work-based examples so that our

managers could learn from their own experiences," Anne Crosby, head of human resources, said.

"We had found in the past that when faced with difficult situations, managers had not always asked the right questions, or sometimes asked the right questions but not taken any notes or agreed what would happen next. The course dealt with this issue head on, and we have since seen a marked improvement in the content of managers' meetings with their employees and the records made."

L to R: Mike Webster and Mike Hill present cheque to Gary Mantle



50th anniversary **£500,000**

The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is celebrating its 50th anniversary on 23 July. It's come a long way since 1962 - today the Trust is the largest organisation focused solely on protecting the environment in Wiltshire.

For the last 22 years, Hills Group has been working closely with the Trust on various projects across the county.

Mike Hill, chief executive Hills Group, said: "It's always great to see how the areas we previously worked in are transformed by the Trust into habitats for wildlife in Wiltshire."

To celebrate the Trust's landmark and to show its continuing support, Mike Hill and Mike Webster, group director Waste Solutions, recently handed a cheque for half a million pounds to Gary Mantle, the Trust's director.

"We have set ourselves a target of raising £1m in our 50th anniversary year so we can keep protecting Wiltshire's precious wildlife and help communities enjoy their local reserves. We have challenged our members and supporters to raise £500,000 and we are absolutely thrilled that Hills have agreed to match this with their £500,000," Gary said.

As part of its celebrations the Trust has a number of activities planned. At one event, Country Comes to Town, on Saturday 21 July, the Trust is bringing wild Wiltshire into the heart of Devizes and taking over the Corn Exchange and Market Square from 10am to 4pm. There will be tours to local reserves, children's activities and wildlife experiences, food and cooking, among other things.

Another of the Trust's aims in its 50th anniversary year is to increase its membership to 31,500, or 5% of the Wiltshire population. Why not become a member today? All you need to do is fill in the form in this magazine and send it back to the Trust.



Educational roundhouse and viewing platform at Lower Moor Farm. Hills continues to help fund reclamation of the land for wildlife

The otter story

Otter photos courtesy Darin Smith

The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, and to mark it, Hills looks back at the very first project it funded through the Landfill Communities Fund.

In 1997, Hills gave its first landfill tax communities fund grant to the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, for a project to encourage otters back to Wiltshire's rivers. It was the country's very first grant of this kind, and fifteen years later, on the 50th anniversary of the Trust, the team can see the success of their hard work...

The Landfill Communities Fund is a government scheme which was set up in 1996 to fund community or environmental projects in the vicinity of landfill sites. Through the scheme Hills is able to give a percentage of the tax it owes to government for the tonnage of waste it disposes of in landfill, to organisations who deliver environmental objectives.

When the scheme was launched, otters were extinct in Wiltshire, and they had been for decades. The Trust identified the crucial need to embark on a project to encourage otters back to Wiltshire from other parts of the country where a tiny population had managed to survive the effects of organophosphate pesticides. Hills was able to support the project through the Landfill Communities Fund.

"By 1997 we already had a fantastic working relationship and we had faith that we could help the Trust with their project to encourage otters back to Wiltshire," Mike Hill, chief executive Hills Group, said.

It was going to be a challenge, but with partnership working between the Trust and Hills, everyone was sure the project could be a success. It was launched at Castle Combe Golf Course, next to the By Brook.



Photo: Paul McRae



Photo: Christine Townend



Photo: Chris Tracey



Photo: Steve Day



Timeline

intouch takes a look at some of the projects Hills has worked with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust on over the last two decades, to find out how far it's come...

1989

Relationship launches with Hills' sponsorship of **Braydon Forest Countryside project**, working with landowners and communities to promote wildlife-friendly management.

1992 - 1993

The Trust receives keys to the new **Firs Nature Trail** still owned by Hills and leased to the Trust.

1997

Hills grants **country's first Landfill Communities Fund** to the Trust for the otter project.

Work begins in **Braydon Forest** to improve habitats for barn owls, including installing nest boxes.

Schools Recycling Scheme launched as partnership project between Trust and Hills, with Waste Warrior, a cartoon Viking.

Trust acquires **Clattinger Farm**, which is supported for many years by **LCF funding**.

2001 - 2003

Trust acquires **Langford Lakes nature reserve** in Wylde Valley, following restoration work by Hills.

The **otter taskforce** records **return of otters** to outskirts of Chippenham.

Trust acquires **Blakehill Farm**, with **LCF funding** playing a key role.



"On the day of the launch Robert Hill, chairman at the time, and Alan Pardoe, then Group chief executive, helped with the construction of an otter holt under the expert guidance of Trust staff and volunteers," said Gary Mantle, the Trust's director.

"It was great to see them getting so involved in what was to become a really big project across the county."

The Trust constructed 44 artificial holts in special places along the river where they knew otters would want to rest and find sanctuary. The holts are made of large sections of tree trunk to form a series of living chambers which are then covered with smaller branches and hidden away under brush.

The Trust also worked with 400 riverbank landowners and land managers to make sure habitats created the right conditions for otters, surveyed 450km of river, and trained hundreds of volunteers to spot signs of otters and water voles. They also advised water companies and others on the strategic management of water for wildlife, and contributed to local Environment Agency plans.

In the years following, the number of otters on Wiltshire's riverbanks was monitored.

"For some time, there have been signs of otters travelling along the south coast from Devon and Cornwall, and up the Avon

towards Salisbury," said Gary. "There have also been signs of otters coming from Wales through the Cotswolds, towards the Upper Thames, and reaching into the heart of Swindon."

But only now have otters finally returned to the whole of the county.

"Over the years Robert Hill has asked me whether otters have returned to the Kennet. Kennet is the last piece of the jigsaw, and it's taken a while, but we can finally say 'yes,'" said Gary.

So, it looks as though otters are finally taking their rightful place in the county, as part of our natural wildlife, but sadly the story isn't over for them...

We have experienced two dry winters with below average rainfall, which has resulted in low river flows and groundwater levels. The south west is officially in a drought, which is expected to last until Christmas. This has been followed by exceptional rainfall putting the rivers in flood and this means that, once again, otters and other wildlife are under pressure.

"We all have a role in using water responsibly and it's up to all of us to play our part in conserving our limited water supplies. After working so hard to get the otters back, making sure there is enough water in our rivers is crucial to keeping otters in Wiltshire," said Gary.



Photo: Darin Smith



Photo: Wiltshire Wildlife Trust



2004 - 2009

- Significant increase in Barn Owl numbers at Braydon Forest, with 30 nest boxes being used.
- Waste warriors recycle 2,000 tonnes of paper, which equals 34,000 trees.

Trust buys Lower Moor Farm from Hills, who continue to help fund the reclamation of the land for wildlife.

2010 - 2012

- Joint project between Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trusts to improve habitats for dragonflies, supported by Hills through LCF funding.

Celebration of 22 years of Hills' involvement in creating living landscapes in the Braydon Forest with funding to continue work on restoring grassland through working with landowners and a new focus on greater community engagement.

Hills donates St Julian's Community Woodland, a newly planted wood in South Marston, to the Trust for the community to manage and enjoy.

Hills supports the Trust's Corporate Green Awards for the fourth year running.

One year anniversary of the **Trust taking management of Penn Wood**, High Penn, Calne, from Hills.

New plant takes shape



Ed Dodd and Andy James at Northacre

Construction of the Northacre resource recovery centre, home to Wiltshire's first mechanical biological treatment (MBT) plant, began in July 2011. Interserve plc, who were awarded the design and build construction contract, have been working hard on site to keep the project progressing to schedule.

Ed Dodd, waste operations manager Waste Solutions, said: "Things are really taking shape at the site now. This is an exciting project for Hills and a big investment in technology that creates a resource from waste."

The facility, located on the Northacre trading estate in Westbury, is the result of a contract agreed between Hills and Wiltshire Council. MBT specialist, Entsorga Italia, has provided technology for the plant, which is due to be completed in summer 2013.

The plant is a key element in Wiltshire Council's strategy to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. The £20 million facility will increase the proportion of Wiltshire's municipal waste diverted away from landfill to more than 80 per cent, from a current performance of about 63 per cent and a total of less than 20 per cent in 2000.

Every year 60,000 tonnes of household waste will be treated, with some being recycled or reduced by drying and much of the remainder used to produce fuel.



Webcam image from Northacre - Tuesday 6 June

Webcam action

A webcam has been set up on site to take photos, and every two hours the new photo is added to the website, replacing the previous one. The website also gives regular updates on the various phases of construction via a blog, and explains the technology that will be used.

"The website is an easy way for those interested to be kept up to date. It's great to be able to watch the construction via the webcam photos," Mike Webster, group director Waste Solutions, said.

Andy James, Interserve site manager, on progress:

"Since the January issue of **intouch** the MBT scheme has come on leaps and bounds, despite some horrible weather conditions. Progress can be seen on the webcam photos on Hills' Northacre website.

"Around 95 per cent of the structural steel to the building is now complete and roof cladding has commenced to the storage and mechanical handling areas. The substructure is continuing with bio treatment floor cast, leachate and air pipework being installed between bio treatment and bio filter areas.

"The Italian process company Entsorga has installed most of its heaviest and largest pieces of equipment, which required sections of the building to remain incomplete so that the long conveyors could be threaded into place.

"Our aim now is to complete the structural steel and cladding in order to make areas of the building watertight, so that mechanical and electrical installations can progress. We also hope to install two high speed cranes by the end of June."



A winning team



Waste Solutions scooped a Wiltshire Life award for environmental excellence in March. The team submitted the entry with Swindon

Town FC for work at the County Ground to help the club increase recycling and reduce waste sent to landfill.

Mike Hill, chief executive Hills Group said: "Supporting companies with their environmental strategies is an important part of what we do. The award recognised our work with Swindon Town FC, and we were really pleased to receive it."

Hills offers the club a bespoke solution which looks at waste management for workers at the stadium as well as fans visiting on match days. Many general waste bins have been replaced by containers for glass and mixed recycling, and a combination of these have been introduced into the Don Rogers stand so that fans can recycle plastic, paper, cardboard, tins and aluminium foil on match days.



L to R: Tim and Amy Reynolds, of Allington Farm Shop, with Mark Isaacs and Mike Hill
(Courtesy of www.dominicparkesphotography.co.uk)

Mark Isaacs, stadium and operations manager Swindon Town Football Club, said: "As a football club, to receive this award is a fantastic achievement. I would like to thank all at Hills for their continued excellent support to make this happen."

Mike attended the awards at Marlborough Town Hall on 22 March, when Hills and Swindon Town FC were announced the joint winners with Eco Print. Tim and Amy Reynolds, of Allington Farm Shop, sponsored the award category and presented Mike and Mark with the certificate.

Parkgate Farm opens for compost business

Just two months after receiving its first load of Wiltshire's green waste, the new purpose-built facility at Parkgate Farm, Purton is already composting 6,946 tonnes.

The facility was up-and-running from 2 April, in time for the completion of Wiltshire Council's harmonisation of their waste collection service across the county. And on 10 May, the new facility was showcased to local councillors and residents at an open day.

"The open day for local councillors and residents was great. We managed to show them around the site, and they could have a look at the windrows of green waste as it was heading through the 12-week composting process," Ed Dodd, waste operations manager Waste Solutions, said.

"The facility opened in time for the council's new collection service, but it's still early days - we're not quite sure how much garden waste will be brought to the new facility. We currently have permission to manage 25,000 tonnes but the facility is capable of handling around double that amount."

The 90m x 150m facility was built to replace the current one at Lower Compton, Calne, and used around

2,700m³ of concrete and 25,000 tonnes of aggregate, all supplied by Quarry Products.

Waste Solutions hopes to gain an additional PAS 100 (2011) accreditation as a result of the move, for further compost products they'll be able to produce.



Ed Dodd (front) talks to visitors at the open day

A MESSAGE FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCIL



Get green fingered and compost your garden waste

As summer approaches and more people think about taking to gardening, Wiltshire Council is urging residents to be green fingered and compost their garden waste.

Over 126,000 households in Wiltshire now receive a non-chargeable collection of garden waste from the kerbside. This free service makes it easy for everyone to compost their garden waste.

Wiltshire residents now compost on average 3,000 tonnes of garden waste each month, a rise of over 10% from the previous year.

Garden waste collected in Wiltshire is taken to two local large scale composting facilities based in Purton and Grately. Over 12 weeks the garden waste is turned into top quality compost, accredited by both the Soil Association and Association for Organics Recycling. This compost can be purchased for a reduced rate at any of Wiltshire's household recycling centres.

In order to ensure that the compost created is top quality it is important that residents do not bag their garden waste before putting it in their garden waste bin. Plastic bags, even those marked biodegradable, will contaminate the garden waste and prevent it from being used to produce compost.

Anyone without a garden waste bin can still sign up to receive this non-chargeable service. People can sign up to receive a green lidded bin by either going online at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/waste or by calling 0300 456 0102 to be part of the next round of deliveries of green lidded bins this Autumn.

As well as the non-chargeable garden waste collection service, Wiltshire Council encourages residents to compost at home. Home composting is a fun and low cost way of people producing compost to use in their own garden. A Green Johanna can be used to compost garden and all food waste in gardens is available through the council at a subsidised rate of £25.00 including delivery.

For more information about home composting or to sign up for a non-chargeable garden waste bin people should visit:



www.wiltshire.gov.uk

or call 0300 456 0102.



Colin Rouse, site foreman (front) with students from Reading University

Studying waste management

20 first year Reading University students, studying for a degree in Countryside and Environmental Management, recently visited Chapel Farm to help them with their module on waste management.

They were shown around the site by foreman Colin Rouse who gave a talk on the mechanical skip sorting area.

At the end of the visit lecturer Martin Wagner said that it had been very worthwhile for the students.

Sponsored kits give under 9s team boost to excel

Ferndale Rodbourne Football Club's under 9s team have excelled over the last few months. They reached the final to play against Greenmeadow at the County Ground, Swindon on 7 May, and just missed out on winning the Cup, losing on penalties. The team breezed through the semi-final on 11 February against Shrivenham & Watchfield.

In April they played their last league game, finishing runners up and two points from the top and in May they won the Swindon Town 6-a-side tournament at the County Ground.

Hills' Swindon skip hire company, Chapel Skips, sponsored the home and away kits for the 2011/12 season and will be sponsoring them again for the 2012/13 season.

Colin Rouse, foreman at Chapel Farm, where Chapel Skips operates from, and supporter of the team, said: "Even though the boys unfortunately lost in the final, this has been a great season for them. They've played really well and should be pleased with themselves."



Ferndale Rodbourne Football Club's under 9s team

Porte Marsh



L to R: Brian Thornton, Steve Burns and Henry Newbery

Waste Solutions' new recycling facility sits in the industrial estate at Porte Marsh, in Calne. Each week it handles around 175 tonnes of Wiltshire's plastic bottles and cardboard collected from the kerbside, sorting it, baling it, and transporting it on to reprocessing companies for recycling.

The site uses the latest technology to separate the materials, including a series of conveyor belts fitted with specialist sorting systems to remove cardboard, and optical separators which group plastic bottles into their various polymer types.

Steve Burns, divisional director Waste Solutions, was instrumental in acquiring the line, which was manufactured by Ireland-based engineering company Turmec. It has been up-and-running for a few months and the team can really see the benefits of the investment.

In numbers

8: people working at the plant

12,500: the tonnage of waste the plant is designed to process per year

15,000: the average number of plastic bottles in a bale

"The new equipment is impressive," said Henry Newbery, recycling area manager Waste Solutions.

"The machinery produces a level of separation, quickly, which wouldn't be possible by hand. We anticipate achieving a

95 per cent recycling rate and have already been able to significantly reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfill."

Mike Webster, group director Waste Solutions, said: "Along with Northacre resource recovery centre, Porte Marsh is an important facility for Hills. They both mark a change in the way Hills runs its business, moving the focus from disposal, to treatment and recycling."

Brian Thornton, sales manager Turmec Engineering, said: "We were delighted to work with Hills on this project. The plant has been optimised to have a very high recovery rate and we are happy with the results being achieved."

The permission for the facility is for a period of three years until proposed new facilities at Lower Compton become fully operational, subject to a separate planning application.

Challenges

What can the public do to help make sure Wiltshire's waste is recycled as efficiently as possible?

- 1 Only put plastic bottles and cardboard in their recycling bins
- 2 Make sure bottles are emptied and the lids are put back on before sending them for recycling, otherwise the sensors are unable to recognise the material
- 3 Make sure bottles are crushed before sending them for recycling, otherwise this can cause an issue as they move along the conveyors

Quality management system

Hills has a quality management system which helps to make sure its waste operations are a success. This means that:

- raw materials are only accepted if they meet the specification
- the process is carefully controlled
- non-conforming product is not released to the customer.

What can be put into the plastic bottle and cardboard bins?

Plastic bottles

Please wash, squash and put the lids back on

Yes please

- Washing up bottles
- Milk bottles, fizzy drinks bottles, fresh juice bottles
- Shampoo bottles, handwash bottles
- Cleaning product bottles, bleach bottles
- Probiotic yogurt drink bottles

No thank you

- Ice cream tubs
- Yogurt pots
- Margarine tubs
- Plastic packaging
- Crisp packets
- Meat trays

Cardboard

Clean and flatten cardboard

Yes please

- Cereal boxes, egg boxes (cardboard only)
- Food boxes, ready meal sleeves
- Corrugated cardboard
- Cardboard tubes
- Shoe boxes
- Greeting cards
- Shredded paper
- Brown paper

No thank you

- Waxed cartons (tetra pak)
- Paper (please recycle this in your black box)
- Books

The **Porte Marsh** process



1 Wiltshire's plastic bottles and cardboard kerbside collections are delivered to Porte Marsh.



2 Manitou telehandler loads material onto a conveyor.



3 A metering drum kicks material back to ensure there is an even flow.



7 The undersize material from the OCC screen passes through a second picking line where waste material, for example coat hangers and CDs, and low quality plastic, such as trays and film, is removed.



8 The optical separator, the final stage of the process, relies on Near Infra Red (NIR) technology. This super-fast, computerised technology can scan plastic material and determine its molecular structure.



9 Within a millisecond a sensor identifies the specific type of plastic, and sends a signal to tiny air jets which 'shoot' the material off the conveyor into separate collection bays. The recycling material is separated into three bays; PET plastic, HDPE plastic, and the remaining cardboard material.



The material drops onto the first picking station, where operatives remove oversize and material such as plastic film, bags, buckets and non-plastic bottle/cardboard items.



Remaining recycling material passes across the old corrugated cardboard (OCC) screen, which separates everything of A3 size or above. The remaining smaller material such as plastic bottles and small card falls through onto the undersize conveyor.



The large cardboard falls from the OCC screen onto a short quality control conveyor, and into a storage bay prior to being baled.



Inevitably, a small amount of material other than plastic bottles and cardboard is missed on the picking lines. The computer recognises many materials, including PVC, tetra pak, and polystyrene and makes a record of the number of objects of each material. This information can be used to improve sorting via the picking line or as a guide to adjust the optical separator to clean the residual material if required.



The recycling material is stored in collection bays ready to be baled.



The material is baled, loaded onto a truck, and transported on for recycling.

Melksham top recycling scoreboard at start of 2012



Melksham HRC from L to R: Supervisor Robin Pearse, and recycling operatives Elaine Newton and Richard Newton

Melksham household recycling centre had the highest recycling tonnage at the start of this year. In January, February and March, the team managed to recycle 76.51 per cent of the tonnage it received. Well done to Robin Pearse, site supervisor and his team of operatives.

Purton came a close second, recycling 75.93 per cent, Amesbury scooped third place with 75.84 per cent and Trowbridge came a close fourth with 75.62 per cent.

Bob Tapp, recycling area manager Waste Solutions, said: "Since the introduction of fortnightly waste and recycling collections throughout the county by Wiltshire Council, the



Purton HRC from L to R: Sue Willis, supervisor Jessie Bunce, Barry Surridge, David Tarrant and Trevor Reeves

HRCs have a more even chance of topping the league. Congratulations to Purton and Melksham – a great effort."

...and Purton took the lead at the end of 2011

Purton household recycling centre topped the recycling scoreboards between August and December last year. Jessie Bunce, site supervisor, and her team managed to recycle a total of 79.88 per cent of the tonnage they received at the site during that period.

It was a close call though, with just 1.41 per cent between four of the centres. Stanton St Quintin came a close second, recycling 79.78 per cent, Amesbury scooped third place with 78.75 per cent and Melksham came a close fourth with 78.47 per cent.

Supporting International Compost Awareness Week

Waste Solutions supported International Compost Awareness Week (CAW) between 6 and 12 May in a number of ways.

Compost was donated to the Stonebridge, Elcot Lane and St John's Close allotments in Marlborough, for holders to add to flower beds and vegetables patches to help their gardens cope better with both the excessive rainfall and restricted watering during the hosepipe ban.

A skip full of Warrior Compost was given to Cricklade residents at Cricklade Leisure Centre, in a 'bring a bag' day. Residents were

also encouraged to bring along their green waste for disposal, which was collected by Hills to make more compost.

Finally, after hearing that the compost bins at Bradford on Avon railway station had been stolen, Waste Solutions decided to donate compost to the station's volunteers.



L to R: Friends of Bradford on Avon Station, Viv Harper, Pat Burrows, Dave Walden, Roger Gaisford and Tony Green



Cricklade residents drop off green waste and collect compost. Photo Bob Jones



L to R: Michelle Luck, Derek Wolfe, Bruce Thomson, site operative and Kevin Archer, site supervisor Waste Solutions, and Councillor Richard Pitts

Isuzu launches new pick-up at **Shorncote Quarry**

Shorncote Quarry became the location for the UK launch event of the brand new Isuzu D-Max at the end of May.

Media, dealers, and fleet customers from across the country attended the event to test the new vehicle on the rocky terrain, along with a number of Hills customers.

Alan Mackenzie, group director Quarry Products, said: "The quarry was an ideal location for the vehicle launch – customers could see the pick-up at its full potential. We were pleased to be able to provide that space to Isuzu."

Paul Tunnicliffe, managing director of Isuzu UK, said: "It can be a struggle to find suitable locations to prove a vehicle's off-road capabilities, but the space and setting at Shorncote Quarry was superb and it was the highlight of the day for many guests. I'd like to thank all involved from Hills for accommodating us and helping us make a success of the launch."

The vehicle was also put through its paces on the Kemble airfield and road routes around the Cotswolds.

Processing sand

In October last year, Quarry Products acquired the sand processing plant in Calne from Aggregate Industries, also taking with it the four employees who work at the site.

Ian Southgate manages the quarry, and works with quarry operatives Wayne Clifford, Mark Padfield, and weighbridge clerk Kellie McCarthy.

The plant processes around 85,000 tonnes of sand each year, and Ian explained how it works over the course of a week: "Due to the fine nature of the silica sand produced the plant operates between Tuesday and Friday, each week we process the sand through a screening and washing plant. It is left to dry over the weekend and on Monday it is sufficiently dry to be moved by the loading shovel into stockpiles for sale before the fresh wet sand is produced again."

Since acquiring the plant, Quarry Products has invested in an impressive 92 metre long elevated belt conveyor made of galvanised steel for rust protection. This conveyor provides the vital connection between the plant and the system of three field conveyors.

The four combined conveyors span 750 metres over and underground, and they currently transport sand from Waste Solutions' Low Lane site to the processing plant at Calne.

How does the plant work?

Loading

At the Low Lane end of the site, quarry operative Mark loads material into the receiving hopper of a mobile screening unit. The screen acts as a sieve to separate lumps of clay and other materials larger than 8mm in size. This oversize material is stored to one side and used by Waste Solutions as a landfill cover.

Moving across the conveyors / producing dry screened sand

The finer material passes along the four conveyor belts until it reaches the sand processing plant, where it discharges into a 100 tonne receiving hopper. This material, which still contains small particles of clay and silt, can be put straight onto a lorry for dry screened sand sales.

Producing finer cleaner sand

For production of finer cleaner sand, the material is fed onto a slow moving conveyor and then onto a vibrating screen where it is washed with high pressure water sprays. Anything over 1mm is separated and put into a rejects sump.

The material smaller than 1mm falls through the screen sieves into a rubber lined Linatex sump, and is fed by two six inch pumps into two Linatex cyclones. In the cyclones the centrifugal force separates the water and fine silt up a vortex so it can be piped back into the Linatex sump to maintain a constant water level. The heavier sand drops to the bottom of the cyclone which is sealed with a special rubber flap. At a certain weight, the flange opens and the sand falls through and out onto the wet stockpiles.

Weir system and silt lagoons

The Linatex sump has a weir system to maintain a constant water level which also allows the fine clays and silts to overflow into the rejects sump. From here the water is pumped to three large linked settlement lagoons where the silt and clay is allowed to settle out. The clean water is then recirculated back to the plant for reuse in the process. The only mains water used on the site is a small supply for the works canteen.

Loading the sand

Quarry operative Wayne controls the operation of the plant from the Calne end of the site and also loads sand onto road vehicles with a loading shovel. The two loading shovels and weighbridge office have built-in radios to make sure there is adequate communication between the team.

Main picture L to R:
Mark Padfield,
Wayne Clifford,
Ian Southgate
and Kellie McCarthy

Telesales team

reaps benefits of expansion



Steve Mead



Nathan Smith

Last year Nathan Smith and Matthew Pope joined Quarry Products to form the new direct sales team headed up by direct sales supervisor Steve Mead. This expansion of the team was part of Quarry Products sales strategy to expand the range of products and services they sell and provide, increase the geographical area they cover, promote concrete sales, especially cash sales, and increase trading capability in the marketplace.

The team's hard work in selling, and spreading the Hills word, is paying off. Not only does Quarry Products provide aggregates to Wiltshire and nearby counties including Dorset and Somerset, but it is now broadening its geographical area to the rest of the country including Caithness in northern Scotland, Anglesey in Wales, Ipswich in Norfolk, London and the south east, and Devon.

The team sells every conceivable aggregate from Welsh plum slate to Yorkshire black pebbles, as well as topsoil, rock salt, chalk, rootzone, and a range of landscaping products.

The telesales team is aware of its carbon footprint and, where possible, uses hired transport which has its own backloads set up to make sure that materials are transported each leg of the journey.

"These changes follow 16 years of hard work by Steve to generate sales of Hills products over the phone, as well as other products bought in from third party quarries," said Peter Andrew, divisional director Quarry Products.

"Our aim is to carry on expanding the range of products and services we can give to customers as well as enhance our reciprocal trading arrangements with other quarry operators. With Matthew and Nathan on board, and Steve leading the way, we have a strong team in place to do just that."

Over the years telesales of bought in products have increased from 30,000 tonnes in 1998 to 130,000 tonnes in 2011, and it now forms a fundamental part of the business.



Matthew Pope

Quarry Products employees wed. Turn to page 23 to find out more.



Sustainable apartments in Stratton St Margaret



Site manager Allan Ramsay

Homes is working in partnership with Cottsway Housing Association, for the first time, to design and build 26 new apartments in Stratton St Margaret and construction is well underway.

The contemporary timber frame design complies with the Code for Sustainable Homes. They are set to create sustainable living for their occupants, and deliver environmental benefits throughout the whole build process.

The roof trusses and floor joists are designed and manufactured as part of the frame which minimises timber off-cuts usually produced from more traditional build techniques. The factory chosen to produce the timber frame recycles 100 per cent of all timber waste and 85 per cent of any additional waste generated during the production process.

A wall and floor cassette system has been chosen and designed to speed erection and to reduce plasterboard and block work cutting, which in turn further reduces on site waste.

Nick King, group director Homes, said: "This is the first development we've worked with Cottsway Housing Association on and we're really pleased that it's such a sustainable project.

"Thermal performance of the new Cottsway Housing Association apartments will be high, through increased air tightness, sound insulation and thermal efficiency. And what's more, for every cubic metre of wood used instead of other building materials, 0.8tonnes of CO₂ is saved from the atmosphere."

The Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service has shown an interest in the timber frame. Site manager Allan Ramsay recently gave firefighters from nearby Stratton fire station a tour. They had access to parts of a building they wouldn't normally see. The knowledge and insight from the tour could prove vital in an emergency situation in the future.

The development is Cottsway's first project since becoming a Preferred Development and Management Partner of Swindon Borough Council.

Homes on awards shortlists



Homes has been nominated for not just one, but two West of England Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Building Excellence 2012 awards.

Stonesfield Close, Southrop has been shortlisted in the best social/affordable housing category, and The Light, Malmesbury has been shortlisted in the best housing (small) category.

Nick King, group director Homes, said: "We're really proud of each of these developments and it's brilliant that they've been recognised in the shortlist for the LABC awards."

The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony on Thursday 21 June at the Marriott Royal Hotel, Bristol.

Development **round-up**

Besides the build of 26 apartments for Cottsway Housing Association, Homes has been continuing and completing work on a number of other sites... here's a round-up.



Stonesfield Close development

Complete: Stonesfield Close, Southrop

This flagship development of five detached homes alongside three cottages, developed for Cirencester Housing Society for local families, is complete and has proved to be very popular with just one home remaining for sale.

The houses place an emphasis on the environment and particular attention is paid to the surface water drainage. Special techniques were used throughout the site to return rain water to the ground and the waste water treatment plant utilises micro-organisms to process waste with the final cleansed output returning to the ground to replenish ground water stocks. Homes ensured that as many materials, products and trades as possible were sourced locally to minimise the carbon footprint and to support local enterprises. The beautiful mellow Cotswold stone, so much a feature of Stonesfield Close, came from a local quarry and the roof tiles were manufactured and supplied from within five miles of the site. Traditional rural crafts were utilised to create the dry stone walls. These homes fit seamlessly into the landscape.

Eastington House has a guide price of £725,000 and is available through Perry, Bishop and Chambers in Cirencester.



Eastington House



Homes in Saltford almost complete

Almost complete: The Spinney, Saltford

Site manager Danny Hammond is overseeing the final stages of the build of four homes at The Spinney in Saltford, between Bath and Bristol.

The detached homes have generous kitchen/dining rooms with French doors opening onto the gardens, providing a great space for entertaining.

One of the houses has been sold, and the owners are waiting to move in as soon as their new home is ready. The remaining three houses are expected to sell quickly.

More information is available from the selling agents, Davies & Way, in Saltford.



Computer-generated image of Malmesbury homes

Underway: The Light, Malmesbury

The construction of eight townhouses and two apartments in Malmesbury is progressing and the owners will be able to enjoy the end of the summer in their new gardens.

Early marketing started with the launch of three plots and three reservations have already been taken. A show home is planned for early summer.

Site manager Jan Pearce said: "I'm really pleased with how the build is progressing. The homes are really taking shape and I am not surprised that they are proving popular."

For an invitation to the launch of the show home contact Strakers in Malmesbury.

Improving business

**Move to
Improve**



Chief executive Mike Hill (third from left), and group director Waste Solutions Mike Webster (fourth from left), with winner Phil Haakerson (holding certificate) and six of the finalists

The Move to Improve scheme was set up by Daryl Taylor, environment manager Waste Solutions, in March 2011 to capture customers' and employees' thoughts on how business improvements might be made. The first year was a success, and the initiative has now been rolled out to become a joint scheme across all of Hills Group.

The scheme assesses suggestions against simple entry checks to see if they are a 'good idea'. If they are, they're investigated further to find out whether they can be implemented. Every three months a winner is picked at random from the good ideas submitted, winning £100 of Argos vouchers.

In April the 67 good entries received throughout the year were reviewed by Waste Solutions' management team. Nine ideas were shortlisted for the best idea of the year, and they came from LGV drivers Colin Stocking, Andrew Ledbury, Steve Williams and Alan Little, mobile plant operative Shane Self, accounts manager Simon Collins, environment manager Daryl Taylor, Trowbridge HRC site supervisor Robin Pearse, and driver's mate Phil Haakerson. Phil's idea was chosen as the best.

"The scheme is progressive and forward thinking. We are engaging with our employees and giving them the opportunity

to improve the business by making suggestions to management, who then have to provide feedback on what action is taken," said Daryl Taylor, environment manager.

"The ideas generated are helping us to save money, improve business efficiency, working practices and the service we give to customers."

Wiltshire Council set up a similar group over a year ago, to capture ideas from its staff and partners which would help improve customer experience and allow staff to work more effectively with better systems and processes. They discuss Hills' ideas at their efficiencies and innovations group.

"I'm really pleased that one of the Council's major partners is similarly committed to delivering improved services to Wiltshire's residents and achieving better value-for-money in the way those services are delivered," John Geary, head of waste management transformation at Wiltshire Council, said.

"I hope this scheme continues to deliver real value over the longer term."

Move to Improve suggestion cards are displayed at Hills' offices and sites, along with a red letterbox where they can be posted. Each idea is passed on to employees' line managers, and then to the Waste Solutions team who is administering the scheme. An e-entry form is also available on etouch.

The first draw for the joint scheme will happen in July.

Essential criteria

The scheme looks at people's ideas on how Hills can:

- save money
- reduce accidents and incidents
- improve productivity and quality of products
- reduce energy consumption / conserve resources
- improve customer service, and
- reduce waste.

Vital waste statistics:

March 2011 - 2012

154: ideas submitted by employees

67: ideas fitting the entry criteria

22: suggestions to Wiltshire Council on how we can improve our service to them

Carrying the Olympic flame

Employees across Hills Group showed their support as the Olympic torch lit up the streets of Wiltshire and Swindon on Wednesday 23 May.

Swindon's County Park employees got into the spirit of the day by creating their own flags to welcome the flame. And Marlborough employees showed their support as international pentathlete Freya Prentice, from Scotland, ran through the high street. Freya is hoping to be among the medal winners in July.

In Chippenham, mobile plant operative Andrew Hyde, who operates a tracked loading shovel in Calne, dressed as Chippy the Chippenham Football Club mascot, and took part in the torch relay. Andrew has done this job for a number of years.



Swindon employees ready for arrival of Olympic torch



Andrew Hyde as Chippy

A look back in the **Queen's diamond jubilee year**



The silver jubilee in 1977 marked the first major milestone in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II as monarch, and was celebrated across the nation with street parties and parades. It was also an eventful year for Hills, and **intouch** takes a brief look back to the key events of that year:

April: Hills kicks off the trend in the 'do it yourself' home improvement market, and launches the Hills Homes Improvement Centre in Kingshill, Swindon, opened by top TV celebrity of the time, comedian Eric Morecambe.

May: Grahame Hill, chairman (78) and last surviving son of the founder Edward Hill dies. Robert Hill becomes chairman and joint managing director.

Summer: development of the exhausted sand and gravel pits at Hambridge Road, Newbury commences.

September: Hills continues its expansion of the gas bottling business to Llandown, Cowbridge and sets up Handygas (South Wales) Ltd.

November/December: decommissioning of the kiln is completed and sees the closure of the company's historic brickworks at Purton.

In 1977 the company was known as Hills of Swindon Limited. It had a turnover of £7.1m, profits of £205,000 and it employed 479 people.

How did you celebrate the Queen's diamond jubilee? Send a photo to the communications team at Marlborough so that we can do a round-up of employees' activities across the county.



Alex Henderson with his family at the London marathon

Congratulations **Alex Henderson**

In April, company secretary Alex Henderson took on the London Marathon, raising money for the Institute of Cancer Research.

Alex trained hard for months, running the streets of Bath to get ready for the big day. He passed the finishing line in just under five hours - a great achievement.

Alex said: "Running the marathon was an incredible experience - the atmosphere and support around the course was immense. It was really exhausting though. I expected to have sore muscles, but the biggest problem was actually the blisters! It was all for a good cause, and knowing the money I raised will be put to good use makes it all worth it."

Alex has so far raised £1,635 for his chosen charity but he's still collecting sponsorship. If you would like to donate please visit Alex's Virgin money giving page at www.virginmoneygiving.com/AlexHenderson.

Passing with flying colours

Julie James, PA to Mike Webster, group director Waste Solutions, and Lynn Daniels, PA to Alan Mackenzie, group director Quarry Products, recently completed the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) health and safety at work award. They passed with flying colours.

Julie and Lynn completed the three day course, which gives a basic understanding of health and safety principles and practice, with a multiple choice exam and a risk assessment of a workplace exercise, where they had to identify a minimum of eight hazards.

Congratulations!



Lynn Daniels and Julie James with their certificates

Peter Pike swims off



Peter Pike

Peter Pike left Hills at the end of April, after working as an LGV driver for an amazing 28 years. Peter joined Hills in January 1984, and on 26 April he was taken for lunch at The Bear, Hungerford, as a 'thank you' for his hard work over the years.

"Pete has been a really loyal employee and has built close working relationships with his colleagues over the years," said Mike Hill, chief executive Hills Group.

"At the lunch Pete told us that he had enjoyed his time at Hills, but it was nice to find out that he was also looking forward to his retirement. After all his hard work, he really deserves it!"

Now that he has retired, Peter plans to do a small bit of part time gardening work, spend time working on his car and time away in his caravan, as well as looking after his grandchildren. It sounds like Peter will soon wonder how he ever had the time to go to work!

Good luck Peter, from all of your colleagues.

Ding dong, the bells are gonna chime!



Congratulations to Wayne Clifford, Calne quarry operative, who married Faye on Saturday 17 March, on her 30th birthday, at Bremhill Church. The couple celebrated with a reception at the Lysley Arms, Chippenham.

Congratulations to Andrew Liddle, Quarry Products production manager, who tied the knot on Friday 4 May, marrying Charley at Malcesine Castle on Lake Garda, Italy.



New arrival

Congratulations to HR assistant Kerry Evans and her husband Simon, on the birth of their son Rhys who was born on 28 February, weighing 8lb 15 oz.



Rhys Iestyn Evans

Welcome A warm "Hills" welcome to the following employees who joined the company between January 1 and May 31.

Joan Davies
PA/executive assistant
Linda Cahill
Office administrator
Nicola Cox
HR assistant
Robert Watton
HRC recycling operative

Luke Knox
Recycling operative
Gemma Gray Accounts
team administrator
Martyn Street
Recycling operative
Christopher Wheatley
Recycling operative

Jonathan Fells
LGV driver
Bruce Robert-Thompson
HRC recycling operative
Tom Bentley
Environmental technician
John Thornton
HRC recycling operative

Have I got news for you?

Competition:

To win £25 Tesco vouchers all you have to do is guess the missing words from a recent story about the amount of energy Wiltshire residents have generated from their recycled cooking oil, and what this energy could be used for. £25 will also be given to the person with the funniest answer.

Guess the correct headline or make a funny guess, and send it by email to competition@hills-group.co.uk or by internal mail to the communications department.

Entries to be received by Friday 13 July.

One entry per employee. The winners will be drawn at random from all the correct entries received, and will be announced on Monday 16 July.

Old oil is ideal for _____

Previous competition winners

In **intouch** 26 we showed readers a photo of Calne Town FC in action, and asked them which square of a grid they thought the ball was in. The correct answer was C1.

Unfortunately there were no correct entries, but 10 people came close. The £50 cash prize was split between the runners up - congratulations to everyone!

What's on?

National events, and regional events of interest, some of which Hills will be sponsoring or participating in.

JUNE

18-24 June **National Recycling Week**

Recycle Now's theme for this year is 'Recycling - at home and away', with a focus on plastic bottles.

23 June **Green Calne Day**

Hosted by Calne Environmental Network, the all day event includes an Eco Fair in the Town Hall, family cycle run, street entertainers and an art display by local schools.

www.calne-environmental-network.org.uk

25 June - 8 July **Wimbledon Championships**

www.wimbledon.com

28 June - 1 July **Barbury International Horse Trials & Wiltshire County Show**

Hills is one of the sponsors for this year's event. £12 per person free for under 12s. www.barburyhorsetrials.co.uk



JULY

3 July **Hills' Wiltshire Professional Golf Championship**

The tournament will take place at Marlborough Golf Club. For more information email info@hills-group.co.uk

3-8 July **Hampton Court Palace Flower Show**

www.rhs.org.uk

7 July **Avebury Rocks**

Hills is supporting this event, which starts with a 20 mile walk and ends with a rock concert close to the Avebury stone circles.

www.aveburyrocks.org

7-8 July **Royal International Air Tattoo**

This event is happening at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire.

www.airtattoo.com

13-15 July **Marlborough Jazz Festival**

Hills will once again be supporting this local event, sponsoring the fire station venue and the Adam Winslet band on the main stage on Saturday 14 July.

www.marlboroughjazz.com

23 July **Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's 50th Anniversary**

The Trust will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary with a number of events.

www.wiltshirewildlife.org

27 July-2 August **London Olympic Games 2012**

www.london2012.com

Olympic Torch

The Olympic torch has already passed through many parts of Wiltshire, but is yet to pass through the following:

Wednesday 11 July

Ludgershall - Tidworth - Amesbury - The Winterbournes - Salisbury (including an evening event at Hudson's Field)

Thursday 12 July

Salisbury - Wilton - Barford St Martin - Fovant - Ludwell

AUGUST

29 August - 9 September

London Paralympic Games 2012

www.london2012.com/paralympics



Keep up to date and keep in touch via [twitter](#) @HillsGroup and [Facebook](#) Hills Group