

Happy Bin Project Report

Autumn 2007

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Happy Bin Project website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://happybin.org.uk/>. The website's header features the logo "the happy bin" in yellow and red text. A navigation menu on the left includes links for Home, About, School Pages, Weekly Progress, and Forum. Below this, there are sections for Project Administration (Ecodwfi, 01654 703965), Project Management (Ian Mitchell, Green Egg Company), and Web Management (Cyberium, 01654 761590). The main content area is titled "Welcome to the Happy Bin Project" and contains several paragraphs of text. A photograph of three puppets is displayed on the right side of the page. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button and several open applications, including an Outlook inbox, a Green Egg Co. I... document, a 294 GLASU Ha... document, and an Energy and Wa... folder. The system tray shows the time as 10:45.

Welcome to the Happy Bin Project | The Happy Bin Project - Internet Explorer provided by Powys County Council

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Refresh Print Mail Stop

Address <http://happybin.org.uk/> Go Links >>

the happy bin

[Home](#)
[About](#)
[School Pages](#)
[Weekly Progress](#)
[Forum](#)

Project Administration
[Ecodwfi](#)
01654 703965

Project Management
[Ian Mitchell](#)
Green Egg Company

Web Management
[Cyberium](#)
01654 761590



Welcome to the Happy Bin Project

The current version of this unusual waste minimisation scheme is taking place in fourteen primary schools in Powys.

As well as reducing waste, the Happy Bin helps pupils develop their understanding of both the nature and effects of their carbon footprint.

The current project will run from the beginning of September until December 2007. During this period, schools will monitor and weigh their waste and the results will be displayed graphically on this site.

Please read [About](#) the project to find out how it works!

The current project is based on three previous schemes. A [pilot scheme](#), the [North Powys project](#) and the [South Powys project](#) which in total involved 36 schools.

As the project has evolved most schools have significantly reduced the waste destined for landfill. In the most recent project, involving nearly 2000 pupils, an average reduction of more than 62% was achieved. Evidence from the early projects, that were completed a year or more ago, suggests that these reductions in waste are being both sustained and exceeded. We believe this project works!

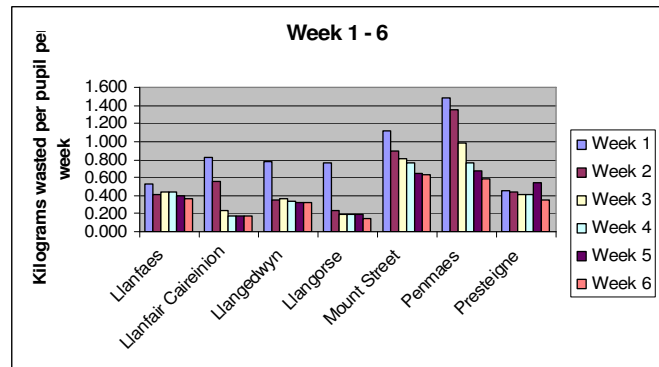
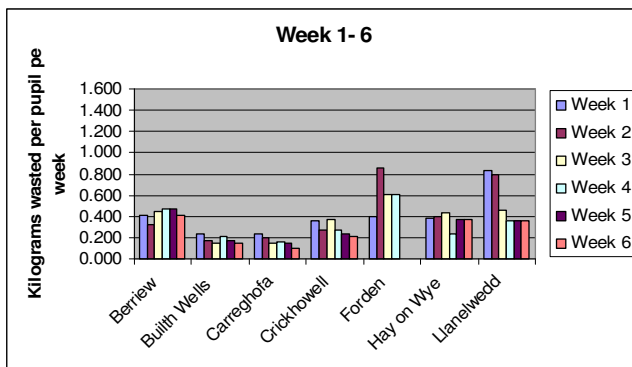
[Login](#) | [Cymraeg](#)



The current, fourth phase of the Happy Bin Project is almost complete. One school, Forden, started two weeks after the other schools because of an Estyn inspection.



In total 14 schools took part in the project. 1996 pupils were affected in the participating schools. The results achieved by the schools are represented on the following graphs.



A downward trend was sustained through out the project by eleven of the participating schools.

Each of the three schools that were unable to reduce waste independently highlighted a single common issue that prevented them from achieving a reducing trend i.e. School Meal Waste.

Specific Statistics

At the start of the project all schools were consigning 1.20 tonnes of waste to landfill per week. This had been reduced 0.66 tonnes by the end of the project, a 45% reduction.

The school by school reduction was as follows.

School	%	School	%	School	%
Berriew	0.00	Hay on Wye	2.40	Llangorse	81.25
Builth Wells	33.75	Llanelwedd	56.26	Mount Street	42.86
Carreghofa	55.83	Llanfaes	29.92	Penmaes	60.25
Crickhowell	40.13	Llanfair Caereinion	79.33	Presteigne	21.03
Forden	54.69	Llangedwyn	59.38		

Some of the school performances are exceptional. E.g. Llanfair Caereinion and Langorse Ysgol Penmaes was the first special school to attempt Happy Bin and managed to achieve a 60% reduction in waste.

At the end of the project there are still anomalies in performance which are hard to explain.

There are large variations in the amount of waste schools produced per pupil per week i.e. from 102 grams to 635 grams. Some schools clearly have scope for developing waste minimisation strategies still further.

School	Kg/w	School	Kg/w	School	Kg/w
Berriew	0.407	Hay on Wye	0.370	Llangorse	0.143
Builth Wells	0.153	Llanelwedd	0.362	Mount Street	0.635
Carreghofa	0.102	Llanfaes	0.368	Penmaes	0.591
Crickhowell	0.215	Llanfair Caereinion	0.169	Presteigne	0.356
Forden	0.611	Llangedwyn	0.317		

The average waste per pupil was 325 grams per pupil at the end of the project compared to 591 grams at the beginning.

The main problem highlighted by schools in this project: School Meal Waste

Some of the schools became very frustrated as this project developed. It was clear that the waste produced by pupils in the classroom was being substantially reduced. However, factors outside the classroom, beyond the control of pupils affected the performance of some schools.

One teacher wrote:

Our waste from classrooms has been between 2.140 kg and 5.4kg per week (Sic. The weekly total was about 50kg).

We struggle with a cook who over produces and wastes food.

It is totally out of our control and a matter we have raised umpteen times with Powys catering. The amount of waste from the children each meal is probably no more than 2-3kgs on any given day, probably less, but our results show that excess food is being made. Are there any suggestions on how to get Powys catering to take action?

Other schools have made similar though less strident comments. Four examples include:

Hi, school meal waste makes up the majority of our weight going to landfill. We're throwing out about 6 - 8 kg per day, about 35kg per week! While the project is

going on, we're able to compost most of it but we can't do it forever, there's just too much.

Our school dinner waste has been between 25 and 30kg each week - a significant percentage of our overall total - in the region of 70%.

The waste from school activities excluding kitchen waste equates to grams rather than kilograms and we are interested in the response from Powys when you take this information to them. Reducing the waste to zero would be possible without the kitchen waste!

Total waste 69.25 kg

As you will see this is much higher than last week. It is almost completely down to food waste from the canteen and there seems to be little we can do about it. If the children have smaller portions the surplus gets thrown away anyway by the catering staff. I'm not sure how to get on to the blog to see what other schools have done about this—could you let me know. Without this waste we threw away only 171g of rubbish per child last week.

Five schools were able to break down the proportion of kitchen waste in their school total during the last week of the project. Of their total waste of 191kg about 160 kg was school meal waste i.e more than 80% of the remaining waste.

In the Stockholm Institutes “Reducing Wales’ Footprint project 2005” food acquisition was identified as the largest single item in the principality’s ecological footprint... accounting for about a quarter. In addition organic waste in landfill produces the potent greenhouse gas methane.

Throwing away large amounts of cooked food from Powys schools makes no sense.

Conclusions

This has been the fourth Happy Bin project where schools look carefully at both the amount and the implications of the waste they produce.

The puppet show and the new website have both been well received and, as in previous projects, many schools comment that the project has increased general awareness of waste related issues.

In addition there have been some more tangible positive outcomes too

In previous projects the lack of recycling facilities for Tetrapak cartons was highlighted as an issue by Happy Bin Schools. The schools lobbied widely and these facilities now exist.

Hopefully this project and the problem identified by schools will eventually help promote another small environmental improvement.

Ian Mitchell
November 2007