

FOI REF:	14119
RESPONSE SENT:	16/04/2024

Request:

You say you have looked for alternative locations in Alresford so could you provide details of those locations please; which did you deem unsuitable for your trucks to visit and which were considered as too close to residents?

It should not be left to residents to suggest alternative locations but Arlebury Park is just one of the locations I have identified. As you specifically mention Arlebury Park in your reply, let me tell you factually and categorically that it is a more suitable location for bottle bins than the current site. I have evidence.

You say that your public health team has been out to investigate and decided the noise does not warrant further action. Strange then that Environmental Health at WCC has heard the noise first hand while they was in my apartment and they told me there is a problem. I know this is only my word against theirs, but still worth noting.

Again I state the measures you have taken to date are completely inadequate. I repeat that the "temporary" sign you installed months ago has made no difference whatsoever. Polite signs are ignored and do not work. I repeat, commercial bottle depositors are just a tiny fraction of the noise problem; wasn't the reason you locked the bins to stop commercial depositors? So why now bother with signs asking commercial people not to use the bins?

You say you monitor tonnage of glass. Please provide monthly average total tonnage of glass deposited at the station car park before the Covid outbreak, before removal of glass recycling bins at Prospect Road recycling centre and before glass recycling bins were moved from Arlebury Park. Also please provide monthly average total tonnage of glass deposited at the station car park since those times.

As for the current site being a long-standing location, perhaps years ago when there were just two or three bins dotted around the car park (no fixed location), residents tolerated any noise caused. Times change; the frequency of using the facility (10 bins) at the station car park and the noise caused has increased exponentially and there certainly is an unacceptable noise problem now.

Along with the other information I have requested in this communication, I also request photocopies of any documents with dates, detailing your assessment of the station car park as a possible location prior to the 10 bottle bins being sited there. Was there any consultation process? If so, please provide photocopies of any documents with dates.

Response:

The city council introduced a kerbside glass collection in October 2019. This had the effect of capturing a significant amount of the glass across Winchester which was previously collected through bottle banks. For those people who produce more glass than the 40l box, or who don't have access to a glass box, we kept a smaller network of glass banks across the city council area, where any surplus can be collected. The ones at Alresford are in a central, safe accessible location, and are well used. In common with other locations, they are audible from a distance, and we do our best to minimise the impact of these facilities on the local population. I attach the tonnage of glass collected across Winchester over the past 4 years, and aside from the growth in the early period of covid, and reduction after it, shows a consistent seasonal cycle.

The bottle banks in Alresford are emptied every 4 weeks on the same day that the residents 40l glass boxes in Alresford are emptied, by the same vehicle. They are also emptied whenever they become full, which is usually around every 2 weeks, and usually on a Saturday morning, so effectively they currently get emptied 3 weeks out of 4. I attach a recent record sheet detailing the pick-up from this location, which is typical of other collections from this site over time. We don't measure each collection from each bottle bank, so are unable to give any more detailed figures, but the frequency of collection has not changed since the kerbside glass box collection as introduced.

The bottle banks have been in the car park since at least 2000, as the attached photo shows, located in the same place, although when this photo was taken the bins were a different design - larger and lifted by a specific bottle bank vehicle. This pre-dates the development of the property in which you live, and as it was well over 20 years ago no longer hold any records relating to the original decision to locate glass banks there. We now have 10 much smaller bins which are easier for residents to use and simpler for our contractor to empty.

Since your original complaint, we have done 4 specific actions to reduce the impact on residents in the area;

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- Firstly in response to your original set of photos, we have put locks on the bins so that local commercial users are unable to lift the bin lids and tip dustbins full of glass into the wheeled containers.

- Secondly, and to support this, we have put up stickers on each container stating that they are not for commercial use. These stickers have only gone up recently and are shown in the attached photo.

- Thirdly we have put up a sign requesting users not to access the site outside of specific hours.

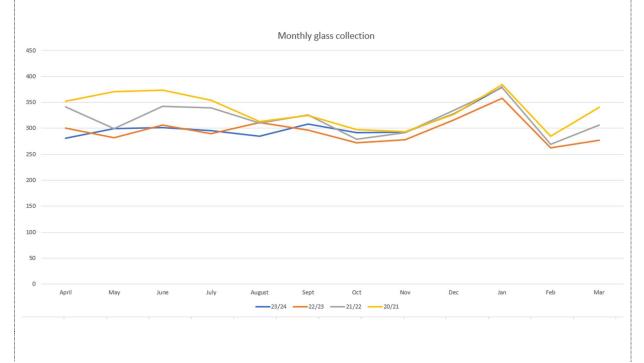
- And fourthly we have told our contractor (BIFFA) not to collect the bins before 8am on Saturday

I have re-checked with our public health team, and they consider that the actions which we have undertaken are sufficient to remove any statutory noise nuisance. We will of course continue to monitor the site to see if other activities are needed to reduce any noise issues for residents, or additional signs or actions by our contractor are needed.

We are not aware of any other location in Alresford which are a better location to move the bins to. If you are aware of locations that are further away from residential properties, have safe access and are central to Alresford we would be happy to review the moving of the banks to this location, but our local staff who know the area well are unaware of any suitable locations. Alrebury park for example is significantly further from the town centre, has difficult access issues for the waste collection lorry, and is close to existing residential properties.

The City Council is currently in discussion with Hampshire County Council and the other waste management authorities in Hampshire about the future of waste and recycling in Hampshire, and this includes discussions about how glass is collected, and whether this is integrated into the regular recycling bins. This is our current preference, and could remove the need for bottle banks at all. We are likely to reach a conclusion on this discussion in the next couple of months, and this may remove your issue.

I'm not sure if you are aware but, the flats in which you live, when they received planning permission had a required condition that the developers should plant a number of silver birch trees between your window and the location of the bottle banks. These trees were either never planted or have been removed. The effect of this has been to remove any noise and visual sheltering that the trees would have offered, which would have been significant during the summer when you raise the issue of open windows. After the changes we recently introduced as a result of your initial concerns, if the noise continues to be a concern it would be worth discussing this with other residents and any management company of the property, and reinstating them. The required planting plan is attached showing the silver birch trees which are now missing and which would provide you with a significant sound and visual buffer.



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