

## **Guide to waste disposal in churches: reduce, reuse and recycle**

The UK is increasing the amount of waste it produces year on year. Camden Council estimates that the Borough of Camden alone produces about 100,000 tonnes of waste annually. The majority of this waste is either incinerated or ends up on landfill sites. Both of these processes are harmful to the environment. In addition, the UK's landfill sites are rapidly filling up, especially in London.

Much of our waste could be cut without having any impact on our quality of life. This can be done by following the three Rs, which, in order of preference, are: **reduce**; **reuse**; and **recycle**. Below are some simple, practical ways in which churches can play their part.

### **Reduce**

- Only buy what is needed.
- Buy recycled and more durable items. Even if these are initially more expensive, in the long term their purchase will prove more economical. For example, reduce the use of disposable cutlery or crockery for church events.
- Avoid buying products with large amounts of packaging.
- Avoid using disposable cleaning products. For example, use cotton cloths, not disposable kitchen roll and install roller towels rather than using disposable paper towels.
- Use email appropriately to reduce paper wastage. Remember to print on both sides of the paper.

### **Reuse**

- Repair, restore or adapt what you already have, especially electrical equipment. You may need professional help to do this but it will still probably be cheaper than buying something new.
- Donate unwanted items to second hand outlets rather than throwing them into the rubbish bin. In particular, always try to find a new home for unwanted computers.
- Reuse products such as containers.

### **Recycle**

- It is essential that your church recycles. Recycling is a really simple way of helping the environment every day. If you don't already, make sure that your church participates in a local authority recycling scheme for items such as paper, tins and glass. Most of these schemes are free of charge.
- Mark recycling points with all the items that are recyclable. Assign responsibility to someone for sorting through the recycling thoroughly and transporting to the recycling point or putting the waste out for collection.
- Compost your flower, garden and kitchen waste. Composting is a simple, natural process that turns kitchen and garden waste into a nutrient rich,

cost free product to enhance the appearance and health of your church grounds.

- Recycle printer cartridges through [Oxfam](#), [Action Aid](#) or [Rainforest Concern](#).
- Recycle water. See our guide on reducing water consumption.

### **Sources**

*For Creed and Creation: A simple guidebook for running a greener church*, Gillian Straine & Nathan Oxley, Aldgate Press, 2007

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/recycling-and-waste/>  
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