

Green Living

The fifth leaflet in a series produced in September-November 2021 by the Green Living groups of Avenue St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Southampton, and its ecumenical partners, from material in *The Dorset Green Living Guide* and current versions of related websites
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Waste

Why do we have so many things?

"*The Story of Stuff* is a 20-minute, fast paced, fact-filled look at the underside of our production and consumption patterns," says *The Dorset Green Living Guide*.

The Story of Stuff reckons that after the Second World War the United States government decided to revive its economy by getting people to consume more and more. Britain and other recovering nations took a similar line.

Industrialists would:

- produce goods as cheaply as possible
- plan quick obsolescence of the goods
- persuade people to buy more by advertising frequent new versions and new products
- extract resources regardless of costs borne by local cultures, environment and workers.



"*The Story of Stuff* exposes the connections between a huge number of environmental and social issues, and calls us together to create a more sustainable and just world."

Since that first video in 2007, the team has produced a range of videos, e.g. on electronics, water, cosmetics, plastics, microfibres, to prompt conversations and chart a path to a more just and sustainable future. You can access the videos through their home page <https://www.storyofstuff.org/>.

Options for dealing with waste

In order of preference (as in *The Dorset Green Living Guide*):

1. **Avoid** getting so much – do you really need it?
2. **Reduce** – do you need as much of it?
3. **Reuse** – can it be fixed, or used by others?
4. **Recycle** – can it be broken down and used again?
5. **Landfill and incineration** – the last resort.

Reuse instead of throw away –

Some suggestions to consider, and perhaps discuss with others

Which of these do you already do to reuse items?

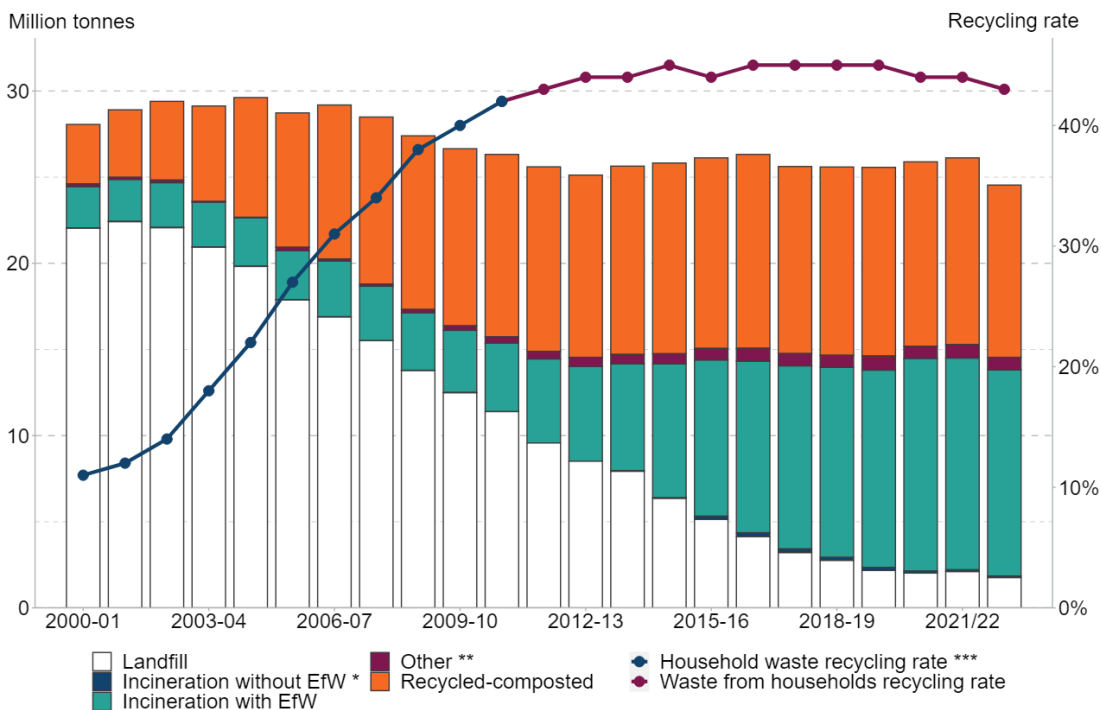
What more could you try, and suggest to other people?

What other ways have you found and would recommend?

- a) Alter or repair your clothes, or swap with friends
- b) Set up a sewing group to share skills
- c) Use a rechargeable batteries for camera, torch etc.
- d) Instead of single-use plastic, equip yourself with reusable coffee cup and flask, beeswaxed cloth wraps, cloth shopping bags, bamboo cutlery
- e) Get a regular milk delivery in returnable glass bottles <https://www.findmeamilkman.net/>
- f) Fix broken items at a Repair Café, e.g. at Freemantle Baptist Church or St Denys Community Centre <https://transitionsouthampton.org/projects-repair-cafe/>

Recycling, landfill and incineration

These graphs show the change from landfill to recycling and incineration over the past 22 years, in disposing of the total waste collected by local authorities in England, and their % recycling rate of household waste.



From [DEFRA's annual report on waste management, Aug 2023](#) (figure 7 in section 4)

Waste and recycling facilities

See the information sheets or websites of local authorities for their different facilities:

- <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/bins-recycling/>
- <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/waste-bins-and-recycling>
- <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/waste-recycling>
- <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/recyclingandrubbish>
- <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling>
- <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/recycling-and-rubbish/>
- <https://www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling>



Success with recycling depends on each household carefully and accurately using the **local authority** facilities, or collection points set up by **churches or other enthusiasts**, or you might devise your own ways to use unwanted items.

To consider on your own, or perhaps discuss with others

How much of this bin's contents do you think could have been disposed of separately from the general household waste bin?

