

# New bin collections still causing some problems




Recently a new regime of refuse collections has begun in Edinburgh, but it seems that in the words of the council leader, Andrew Burns, at last week's council meeting, there have been some "teething problems." We have photos at the bottom of this article which prove that there are some areas at least where rubbish is still awaiting collection.

At last week's Council meeting the Transport and Environment Convener, Lesley Hinds, was asked about the delays residents had encountered with bin collections in recent weeks. Councillor Hinds confirmed there had been some issues in getting all rubbish collected with the new shift patterns and working methods, and went on to say that 90% of the refuse had been collected, although there was no real clarification on how that figure was exactly calculated.

The changes to the ways that refuse would be collected were agreed in 2010. The main issue which had to be addressed was the cost of landfill, so recycling is being used to make the whole process a cheaper exercise for the council. Of course, there have also been some historic disputes with the council's refuse staff, which was a challenge under the last administration.

Councillor Hinds acknowledged there were some problems in implementing the new ways of collecting all the different types of refuse in the city. She had produced a briefing to the councillors on Thursday morning (unfortunately The Reporter did not get a copy of that) and assured the meeting that all the backlog would be sorted out by last Sunday, but admitted that there should be a good collection service anyway, without any problems having to be addressed by individual councillors. She also confirmed that any backlog brought to her attention would be dealt with swiftly.

 Conservative Group Leader, Jeremy Balfour, asked at the meeting for information on what he called "a fairly major issue" and also questioned how the 90% figure was calculated. The Conservative group had produced an emergency motion to the

meeting. He said that at the local community council meeting which he had attended the evening before, there was some anecdotal evidence that the refuse service would not collect bins which were not closed.

The City of Edinburgh Council have a stated policy to recycle more waste. The council say on their website:-“We want to help meet national targets for reducing waste to landfill sites by achieving a 50 per cent recycling rate in the next two years.” This is admirable, and necessary for financial and environmental reasons but it is not being achieved without some difficulties.

To assist our readers, and also the Environment Convener, we asked on Twitter for anyone who still had rubbish awaiting collection to send us photos and a description of what was happening in their backyard. Here is what we heard from a couple of readers:-

Craig McInally from Birchwood View explained his problems to The Reporter yesterday:-

*I live in a brand new estate on the grounds of the old Queen Margaret College in Clerwood. Our bin day used to be a Wednesday, then we received a leaflet from the council stating the new uplift days. Our bins were last emptied on Wednesday 5th September. Our new scheduled date was Friday 14th of September, and unfortunately our bins have still not been collected. There are 4 houses in our street, Birchwood view, the rest are flats. The houses all have green wheelie bins, the flats have 3 outside bin areas and 2 inside areas with large black communal bins. These have been full for over a week now and are now surrounded by hundreds of bin bags most of which have been burst open by foxes, seagulls and other vermin causing litter to be now strewn everywhere.*

*I have contacted the council, and my councillor yet to no avail. I have been fobbed off with the usual ‘teething problem’ excuses, our brand new scheme now looks like a rubbish tip.*

*None of the houses have their own recycling facilities. We have contacted the council on this issue too, only to be told we are not yet in a recycling area, goodness knows what that means!*

*If the council want to change collections to fortnightly then surely EVERY house in Edinburgh should have recycling*

*facilities (Green, blue and food recycling boxes)."*

We also heard yesterday from Lisa Jones who lives in the Pargrove area of the city, whose experience was a rather better one:-

*"If I'm being totally honest, I can't complain too much about the bins. The days have changed about so that the normal waste, the blue box, the plastics and the food waste all go out on the same day. Everything got emptied apart from the food waste – not sure why, but it was the same with neighbours' bins too, so we think that the bin folk might have forgot about our street.*

*There had been a couple of phone calls (not from me) for a couple of days before I got fed up waiting because we had no room for more food waste. I decided to email the waste department and got an email back yesterday saying that there have been problems with new routes, but the street would be added to a priority collection. I then heard the lorry collecting at the back of seven this morning. The Recycling Advisory Officer who emailed couldn't have been nicer and explained that there were teething problems. So, the food waste bin was collected a fair few days late but the officer offered an apology and an explanation. If it happens again, I won't be so pleased but it's hopefully a one off."*

The council website [shows a news update](#) posted on Monday about the known difficulties they were still experiencing with the new collections. We did email Councillor Hinds late last night for comment and when we hear from her then we will add that in to this article.

We have put together a collection of the photos and reports sent to us via Twitter [here](#). If you have any more information to add to this story then do send it in either by email [theedinburghreporter@gmail.com](mailto:theedinburghreporter@gmail.com) or by Twitter

[[View the story "The rubbish story in Edinburgh" on Storify](#)]