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Stop Wasting.

The priority for a new Parliament

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Resource use campaign
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Where are we?

We live in a time of constrained budgets...
..and increasing environmental challenges.
Increasing competitive economic pressures...
..and increasing unemployment and social
challenges.

So why are we **wasting** so much?



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1. **Wasting resources** by dumping them

- UK dumps around 24 million tonnes of key recyclables every year in landfills and incinerators [1]
 - Worth > £650 million; if recycled would save the emissions equivalent to taking 6 million cars off the road
- Flanders recycles around 74% of its waste
 - we recycle around 38% (better than it was...)
- Recycling helps UK Plc
 - E.g. the great work WRAP has done helping the development of recycled PET food packaging
 - Waste PET bottle prices now >£230 per tonne, highest ever [2]
- We need a target to recycle 75% by 2020, and
 - Higher packaging recycling targets (just consulted on)
 - Landfill – and incineration – bans (just consulted on)



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2. **Wasting recyclables** by contaminating them

- The tale of two green boxes....
- Why do some companies want to:
 - mix things up
 - crush them together
 - then try to separate them??
 - When this reduces their value & makes them more likely to be exported?
- Separation at kerbside makes environmental and economic sense [3]
 - DEFRA is proposing to increase pressure for separation in regulations on Waste Framework Directive
 - But they could go further – and a number of waste companies are complaining...





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3. Wasting reusable items by dumping them

- Large numbers of perfectly usable household goods are currently dumped
 - Furniture makes up a significant proportion of residual waste [4]
- Re-use has huge advantages
 - Diversion from landfill & incineration
 - Provision of furniture, electrical goods etc at low cost
 - Creation of employment
- e.g. in Flanders [4]
 - Network of re-use shops
 - Some also re-condition goods, e.g. reupholstering furniture
 - Discounts available for people in need
- Win-win, particularly in a recession



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4) Wasting jobs

- Realising the value of materials and goods creates jobs
 - Waste moves from being something with cost to being something with value
- Landfill and incineration create few jobs
 - Reuse and recycling create many, including new supply chains.



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5) **Wasting money** on the wrong infrastructure

- Councils - and the government - are wasting £billions building expensive, inflexible & climate-damaging incinerators
 - And they've been signing away significant slices of their budgets for 25 years or more.
- PFI should be abandoned, contracts should be restricted to 5-10 years
 - The right infrastructure can be built with short contracts
 - e.g. anaerobic digestion plants, residual waste composting & separation



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6) **Wasting time** in tackling the environmental challenges

- We know:
 - That CO₂ emissions must be brought down rapidly
 - That pressure on natural resources is getting higher and higher
- We also know:
 - That increasing reuse, recycling, composting and anaerobic digestion will help solve both these problems
 - That composting & separation of residual waste – rather than burning it – will also help solve these problems
 - It increases recycling levels (particularly for plastics), and removes most methane-generating activity, even if landfilled
 - This approach is much better for the climate than incineration, even if the residue is landfilled [5]
- Why aren't we doing this everywhere?



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Conclusions – **why waste?**

- The UK is throwing money away
 - Resources are being dumped
 - Money is being wasted on unsuitable technologies
 - Recyclables are having their value destroyed through contamination
 - People are being paid benefits who could be in employment
- The solutions are well known – we should take them.
 - The climate – and resources – challenges mean that we must take them.



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References

- [1] "Gone to waste: the valuable resources that European countries bury and burn", Friends of the Earth, October 2009:
http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/gone_to_waste.pdf
- [2] "PET plastic prices reach unprecedented levels", Lets Recycle, 9th July 2010
http://www.letsrecycle.com/do/ecco.py/view_item?listid=37&listcatid=217&listitemid=55798§ion=plastics
- [3] "Choosing the right recycling collection system", WRAP, June 2009:
http://www.wrap.org.uk/downloads/Choosing_the_right_recycling_collection_system.f04f58c3.7179.pdf
- [4] See presentations and write up from the Friends of the Earth Residual Waste conference in May 2009:
http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/biodiversity/news/taking_rubbish_20031.html
and also our "Sorting residual waste" briefing
http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/residual_waste.pdf
- [5] "A changing climate for energy from waste?", Eunomia Consulting, May 2006.
http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/changing_climate.pdf

Friends of the Earth also has an extensive selection of briefings on waste issues:

http://www.foe.co.uk/community/campaigns/healthy_planet/incineration_index.html

We are also campaigning at EU level for Europe to measure our overall use of the world's resources:

http://www.foeeurope.org/activities/waste_management/index_resources.html