



verdant

Verdant Spring Bulletin | May 2009

MEET US AT THE LGA CONFERENCE

Verdant and Greenstar return to the LGA Conference and Exhibition in 2009 with a larger stand (Stand 2, Harrogate International Centre, 30th June to 2nd July) from which to promote their services for municipal customers. This enlarged presence will give local authorities more opportunity to find out how the comprehensive and proven end-to-end services offered by Verdant and Greenstar could help them. The team includes representatives from Greenstar WES, the plastics recycling specialist (see story on page 4).

The combined expertise of Verdant, which provides recycling, refuse and cleansing services for 23 councils in the UK, and Greenstar, with its six modern MRFs and high quality processing for many local authorities and recycling-led commercial services, together make for a powerful offer. If you'd like to find out more, please pop along and see the team!

VERDANT'S FIRST JOINT COUNCIL WIN

Verdant's first-ever joint council contract will provide an integrated recycling, refuse and street cleansing service for South Oxfordshire District Council and its neighbour, Vale of White Horse District Council.



Under the 8½ year contract, the new service starts in June for South Oxon's 56,210 households, while Vale of White Horse's 50,782 homes get their new service in October 2010. Verdant has run South Oxon's green waste service since its inception 3 years ago.

The contract is designed to help both councils reduce waste and improve recycling while achieving cost and service

efficiencies. It includes the alternate week collection of recyclables and refuse in separate wheeled bins, weekly food waste collection from kitchen caddies, and a fortnightly subscription-based collection of green waste from wheeled bins.



The cleansing service will manage nearly 2,300 kilometres of highway. Over 150 staff will transfer to Verdant, further recruitment is planned, and new

collection vehicles and cleansing machines have been delivered.

MORE COUNCILS VOTE FOR VERDANT EXTENSIONS

A number of Verdant's local authority customers have agreed extensions or additions to their contracted service. Long-standing customer Melton Borough Council has awarded a seven year extension, starting April 2010, to Verdant's recycling, refuse and cleansing service which has



been in place since 2003. During this time, Verdant has helped Melton become one of England's top recycling authorities.

From April, Verdant will be collecting plastic and metal containers, as well as paper and cardboard, from bring sites in Wycombe District Council's area, with whom it has a three year contract.

North of the border, Verdant has agreed a solution to the challenge of collecting recyclables from rural properties in East Lothian. From mid May, an additional vehicle plus two new staff will operate a rural collection service for local residents. This will enable Verdant and East Lothian Council to offer recycling services to local businesses too.



t. 01732 765222

e. info@verdant-group.co.uk

And on the bustling streets of Waltham Forest, Verdant has just started a three month pilot project for collecting commingled recyclables from around 12,000 properties that represent a cross-section of the borough. Around half will use a wheeled bin, with sacks for the remainder, so that Verdant and the council can decide which works best. Early indications show the wheeled bins increase tonnage by up to 80%.

IIP FOR SOUTH BEDS

Verdant's recycling, refuse and cleansing operation for the former South Beds DC that is now part of Central Beds Council has won Investors In People (IIP) accreditation. This award, the first for any Verdant contract, took around six months to complete.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

IIP is a recognised pan-industry award that maps and monitors investment in staff development and training. Verdant HR manager Lia Clark worked with contract portfolio manager Chris Halfpenny, business manager Shaun Laird, and assessors Quality South East to map performance indicators before designing and rolling out 'toolbox talks' for all staff. These focused on training available as well as a staff suggestion scheme for improving service delivery and quality.

Meanwhile, Verdant is continuing its national skills and competency training programme which enables manual staff to earn a NVQ Level 2 qualification in Waste Management Operations. To date, 715 staff have undertaken the training programme which improves efficiency and productivity and awards a recognised vocational qualification.

SWEEPING ALL BEFORE THEM

Two of Verdant's local authority customers have been recognised for the cleanliness of their streets.

The Isle of Anglesey County Council swept all before it when it topped the chart for the cleanest streets in Wales. In the first-ever all-Wales litter survey, Anglesey's streets scored 70.8 on the Cleanliness Index, comfortably above the average Welsh score of 65.

Verdant has 32 street cleansing staff working on the integrated recycling, refuse and cleansing contract. Managing director Roger Edwards feels that street cleansing is sometimes unfairly regarded as the poor relation of recycling and refuse services. "It shouldn't be,"

he added, "as it is a very visible indicator of both local civic pride and a committed service team."

As a further endorsement, the town of Beaumaris on the island was awarded a five star certificate in the Clean Britain Awards 2009.



FROM WALES TO SWALE...

On the other side of the country, Swale Borough Council has become one of England's top performing councils for its clean streets. In the first survey period between April and July 2008, Swale achieved a five per cent failure rate (comfortably inside the Government's target rate of 25 per cent). This was then dramatically beaten in the August to November period when it achieved a 99 per cent pass rate.

SNOW JOKE

February's Arctic blast disrupted many municipal services across the country, Verdant's included. After assessing the significant risks posed by the icy storms, Verdant's business managers decided to suspend services in some areas, with the agreement of their clients.



Overall, the severe weather caused the loss of 28 days across 11 of Verdant's contracts. Central Beds, Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils were the worst hit.

The dedication and hard work of Verdant's workforce meant that all missed collections were caught up by the following week, minimising disruption to residents.

RECYCLING WITH BLUE PETER



A Verdant recycling collection crew found they had an extra pair of hands recently when Blue Peter presenter Andy Akinwolere joined their round for Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

The popular BBC children's programme worked with Verdant and Greenstar to show what happens with recycling in the usual 'hands on' Blue Peter style. After a health and safety induction, Andy worked for a few hours collecting recycling from wheeled bins before accompanying the collection vehicle to Greenstar's super MRF at Aldridge near Birmingham.

Here, he joined the quality control team overseeing the highly automated daily processing of many hundreds of

tonnes of dry recyclables sourced from local council collections. The story ended back in the studio with presenters looking at food grade plastic flakes provided by specialist plastics processor Greenstar WES for making new milk bottles and food containers - a European first.



HEALTH & SAFETY FOCUS

Working closely with Greenstar UK's health and safety unit, Verdant is developing new campaigns to improve operational safety and reduce risk. Following analysis of accidents in 2008, it was found that 80% resulted in or were caused by cuts and abrasions, slips, trip and falls, or by manual handling.



Under the attentive eye of Verdant operations director David Maidman, three working groups comprising Verdant business managers have been set up, one for each area of risk, to develop campaigns directed at Verdant's operational staff. The overall aim

of the programme is to raise awareness of the principal causes of these accidents, to explain what staff can do to avoid them, and to lower the overall incident rate.

The first three month campaign, designed to reduce cuts and abrasions, was launched in late April with A3 posters and A5 leaflets, plus in-cab leaflets that change each week, to raise awareness of the most frequent causes of these injuries and the best work practices and PPE to avoid them. There will also be more detailed tracking of future accidents to get better data, as well as a card system to remind staff about the importance of wearing and using PPE.

The second three month campaign, to reduce slips, trips and falls, will start in July, while the third, addressing manual handling, takes place in the autumn.

AUDIT THUMBS UP FOR VERDANT

In its first-ever customer-wide audit, Verdant received a near-unanimous thumbs-up for delivering on service specification and value-for-money to its local authorities.

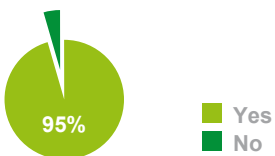
Each local authority client was interviewed personally by an independent external consultant on topics ranging from contact channels and quality, staff performance and problem resolution to invoicing and the all-important delivery of services, be they recycling, refuse, cleansing, HWRCs or grounds maintenance. Respondents were encouraged to be as frank as possible, giving them the opportunity to recognise achievement, as well as to raise issues and niggles.

Thanking all participants for their time and input, Verdant managing director Roger Edwards said the service quality audit revealed 'fascinating insights' into the common perceptions that local councils have about service delivery – and the unique differences of each.

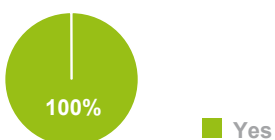
He added: "Verdant was given a very positive thumbs-up by its entire customer base, which shows that our core service philosophy and practice is right. But we must never rest on our laurels which is why an equally important part of the audit was the opportunity for councils to get things off their chest, and onto our action plan."

A summary of the collated results is being produced and will shortly be available from Verdant's web site, as well as being circulated to respondents.

Constantly met specification



Consistently deliver value for money



ROYAL ACCOLADE FOR RECYCLING PIONEER

HOT on the heels of plastics recycling specialist Greenstar WES being accredited to supply food grade plastic flake for remanufacture into M&S plastic milk bottles came further good news – the Redcar-based company received a Queen's Award for Enterprise for its history of innovation (pic below shows MD and founder James Donaldson).



Greenstar WES embodies the commitment of parent Greenstar UK to adding value to recyclates processed in the UK. Greenstar WES, whose 'raw' material includes tonnes of plastic containers collected from several of Verdant's local authority customers, was first in the world to commercially produce food-grade recycled HDPE plastic. This is used to manufacture new plastic milk bottles as well as a variety of food trays for food products such as chicken and mushrooms.

Verdant development director Pete Dickson said: "These specialist plastic recyclates command higher market prices, which in turn enables Greenstar to pay top rates for recyclables such as plastic bottles. In fact, Greenstar wants to buy much more recyclables from our local authorities, and we will soon be contacting our clients to see if their income streams can be enhanced by selling materials to Greenstar."

Greenstar WES's record in finding ways to reprocess a range of plastics led to it joining a WRAP study into the recyclability and reuse of polypropylene plastic in food packaging.

