



CASE STUDY: WELLS FILM CENTRE CINEMA

GONE WITH THE WINDROW: AN INDEPENDENT CINEMA INSPIRES A CUP COMPOSTING SOLUTION

Wells Film Centre is a three-screen independent cinema in Somerset, the South West of England. Serving refreshments is an enjoyable part of the customer experience, as well as a vital income stream for the cinema. Wells Film Centre has been serving hot and cold drinks using Vegware's compostable cups and lids since May 2018.

Cinema owner Sally Cooper was determined to compost the drinks waste. She was disappointed to hear from Vegware's Environmental team that as yet, there were no regular collections covering her area. But a change was underway that would see Sally and her cinema pioneer a new composting method.

COMPOSTING VEGWARE CUPS WITH GARDEN WASTE

Until now, all UK catering waste had to go to one of two processes: in-vessel composting (IVC) or anaerobic digestion (AD). There are around 50 in-vessel composting (IVC) facilities, over a third of which accept used Vegware.

Happily for Wells Film Centre and many businesses only serving drinks, not food, Vegware was working behind the scenes on a project which would open dialogue with 150+ extra composting sites.

Vegware is an active member of the composters' trade association, the REA's Organics Recycling Group (ORG). On Vegware's behalf, REA ORG sought, and received, government approval for the UK's 150+ garden waste composting facilities, also known as open windrow composting, to process certified compostable hot and cold cups and cup lids.

Now open windrow composting facilities can consider processing Vegware cups, if milk and cream are the only animal by-product residues. Official approvals were granted in July 2018 by the Animal and Plant Health Agency, Environment Agency and Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

A COMPOSTING TRIAL

Keen to create a solution for Wells, Vegware's Environmental team set up a trial with an open windrow composting facility in the Somerset region that was keen to compost Vegware's certified compostable cups.

The facility were pleased with the result, sharing that Vegware's hot and cold cups, cup lids and straws broke down within three weeks.



OPEN WINDROW COMPOSTING – THE PROCESS

Open windrow composting reprocesses garden waste – grass cuttings, leaves, weeds and hedge trimmings.

The material is first checked and sorted. Then it is shredded, mixed and formed into elongated piles called windrows. These are turned regularly to allow oxygen to feed the bacteria and other microorganisms, which over a 12-week cycle, transform the material into a stable, rich dark compost which is sanitised and weed seed free.

The compost is then screened to various grades suited to specific markets such as horticulture, agriculture, sports facilities, landscaping and domestic gardening.

COMING SOON TO A FIELD NEAR WELLS...

Wells Film Centre now receive weekly collections so that their catering cup 'waste' turns into high-grade compost used for British agriculture, horticulture, and landscaping purposes.



We embraced Vegware's plant-based cups as a step to help us reduce our plastic waste. Yet we stayed determined to do more to eliminate our overall waste and looked to Vegware to help us find a solution.

The result for us is a real blockbuster! We are helping to bolster the UK's circular economy with our drinks waste now going to nourish soil for future plants.



**SALLY COOPER,
PROPRIETOR,
WELLS FILM CENTRE**

Due to the success, the waste collector is also rolling out collections in the Somerset area to businesses who wish to compost their Vegware cups. This demonstrates that businesses have the power to create change; Wells Film Centre's determination sparked a new recycling solution for the whole of its region.



WHY JUST DRINKS CUPS FOR GARDEN WASTE?

In the UK, food waste must be composted with high temperatures to kill potential toxins from animal by-products, like meat. Used compostable food packaging may contain these food residues, so the same rules apply.

Hot and cold drinks do not contain these by-products. And any milk and cream residue is allowed. So, they can be processed under the cooler temperatures at garden waste facilities.

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