

# Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

## New Garden Waste Collection Service

### FAQs

Here are some of the questions about the new garden waste service you might be asking. We will provide more questions and answers as and when more details have been finalised.

#### **1. What is the Garden Waste Collection Service?**

It is an opt-in, chargeable service to have domestic garden waste collected fortnightly from your home using a 240 litre wheeled bin, which will be delivered to you when you subscribe to the service.

#### **2. When will the new service start?**

When the new contract starts on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019, services will initially remain the same as they are now, while preparation is made to launch the new recycling collection service. The new service is expected to be available to all residents by November 2019, and we will keep you informed before any changes take place.

#### **3. Why will you be charging for garden waste collections?**

Unlike household waste and recycling, there's no legal requirement to collect garden waste and Councils can charge for collections. The income from charging for garden waste collections will help us to afford to increase the amount of materials collected from your home, such as glass & plastics. Over half of all Councils in England charge for this service and have done so for many years.

Not all properties require a garden waste collection service because they do not have a garden. Introducing a charge is fair because the service will only be paid for by those households that choose to use it. This is similar to bulky waste collections where only households requesting the service have to pay.

#### **4. How much will the service cost?**

The charge for the fortnightly collection of one 240 litre wheeled garden waste bin is £40 for the whole year. You will be able to order additional bins if you wish to. There will be an introductory offer for residents who sign up early of only £35 per year (this price will be held for the first two years). The cost of ordering extra bins is currently under discussion and we will update this answer once a decision has been made

#### **5. Is it legal to charge for the collection of garden waste?**

Yes. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Councils can charge for the collection of garden waste. This will bring TMBC in line with most of our neighbouring councils in Kent who charge for garden waste collections. You can still take your garden waste to any of the County Council's household waste recycling centres, or you can compost your garden waste at home – why not take advantage of the Council's offer of a discounted compost bin, please see [www.getcomposting.com](http://www.getcomposting.com)

## **6. Why can't the charge be added to Council Tax?**

Council tax itself is a mandatory payment which covers a variety of services such as fire, police, adult social care and children's services including education. You may not use all these services but you still have to pay your Council Tax. However, Tonbridge & Malling Councillors agreed that it was important to continue to offer a garden waste collection service for residents who wish to use it.

This change brings the garden waste collection in-line with other not legally required, pay-for services, such as bulky waste collections, which is a service only paid for by people who use it. This is a charge for the collection of the waste, not the purchase of the new wheeled bin. The bin remains the property of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

## **7. How will I subscribe to the new garden waste collection service?**

More information will be published in the coming months, although we do advise taking up the 'early bird' offer to guarantee your discounted price when the subscription opens next year.

## **8. Are concessions available?**

No. The charge of £40 per year applies to all households regardless of personal circumstances. Other options are available for disposal of garden waste, such as home composting or taking it to a household waste recycling site.

## **9. I don't have any wheeled bins and I am on a sack collection for my waste collections, can I still subscribe to the service?**

If your property is unsuitable for wheeled bins, you can subscribe to the service for a re-usable hessian sack collection. This will be the same annual charge as a 240 litre wheeled bin and you will receive 3 x 90 litre re-usable hessian sacks. Garden waste will not be collected in other sacks/ bags apart from those issued by the Borough Council.

## **10. How do I dispose of my garden waste if I choose not to sign up to the Garden Waste Collection Service?**

Garden waste can still be taken to your nearest household waste recycling centre. Alternatively, you could compost your garden waste at home. Information about home composting and how to purchase a reduced price home compost bin is on the following website: [www.getcomposting.com](http://www.getcomposting.com)

## **11. Can I take my garden waste to the Saturday Freighter Service?**

Once the new service starts, garden waste will no longer be accepted on the Saturday service. All of the contents of the freighter goes to landfill. It cannot be accepted at the energy from waste plant due to the bulky nature of much of the waste.

It is better to take your waste items including garden waste – if you choose not to subscribe to the opt-in service - to the nearest Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) where the materials are separated for recycling.

### **12. What do I do if I don't want a garden waste collection?**

If you decide not to sign up to the garden waste service, you do not need to contact us to tell us. The garden waste service is 'opt-in' which means you only need to contact us if you do wish to sign up, next year.

### **13. I currently have some green hessian sacks that I put out in addition to my garden bin, will I still be able to do this when the new service starts?**

This is currently under discussion and this answer will be updated when a decision has been made.

### **14. Can I put garden waste in my black rubbish bin?**

No. Your rubbish bin is only for non-recyclable waste. If your black rubbish bin contains garden waste such as grass, leaves, prunings etc. it will not be emptied.

### **15. Can I share a garden bin with my neighbour as I have a small garden?**

You can share a garden waste bin with your neighbour as an informal arrangement, but payment must be made by one householder and the bin will be assigned to one address only.

### **16. Can I have garden waste collections if I live in a flat?**

If you live in a flat but you have your own garden and wheeled bins you can still opt into the service. If you have communal gardens/bins you should contact your managing agent or housing association as they will be responsible for the removal of garden waste.

### **17. Can I have an assisted collection for the Garden Waste Collection Service?**

If you sign up to the new service and you already have an assisted collection this will continue. If you don't currently have an assisted collection and you have difficulties presenting your bins please contact Waste Services (details below)

### **18. What can I put in my garden waste bin?**

Compostable garden waste including:

- ✓ Grass cuttings
- ✓ Hedge clippings
- ✓ Small tree prunings, branches, bark and twigs
- ✓ Tree branches (up to 3cm in diameter),
- ✓ Moss, weeds (but not controlled weeds such as Japanese Knotweed and Ragwort)
- ✓ Flowers
- ✓ Plants with excess soil removed
- ✓ Fallen fruit (please do not put too much in the bin because it may be too heavy and the bin may snap off the bin lift, so we would not be able to collect it).
- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Real Christmas trees (**without** decorations or pot)

**19. What happens to the garden waste collected?**

The garden waste collected will be composted and used as a soil improver on farmland, to help grow new crops.

**20. Why will I no longer be able to put food waste into the garden waste bin?**

Your new wheeled bin is for garden waste only. Your food waste will be collected separately **every week** which means the two material streams can be processed in different ways.

Food waste will be processed by In Vessel composting at Blaise Farm in West Malling, and garden waste may be composted at various locations -; which will not allow food waste. It is better to collect food waste every week as it helps to minimise smells and flies, also the 23L food bin has a lockable lid keeping the contents secure until collection.

**21. Why can I no longer put cardboard in the garden waste bin?**

The garden bin is for garden waste only, card/cardboard is now collected for recycling in your existing green box with the paper. The pure garden waste can be composted at various locations locally, which can't accept cardboard.

**22. Can I put pet faeces or cat litter into the garden bin?**

No it is not garden waste so should be bagged and placed into your black rubbish bin.

**23. Can I use a plastic liner in my garden bin?**

No. Please do not use any kind of liner in the bin, when it is emptied it could fall out of the bin into the vehicle and contaminate the garden waste.

**24. How can I stop other people putting their waste into the garden waste bin(s) that I am paying for?**

You should store your bin within your property boundary until collection day in the same way that you would with your other containers. Numbering your bin will also help avoid mistakes by other residents.

**25. What will happen if someone puts their garden waste out for collection but they have not signed up to the service?**

We will not collect any garden waste from households that have not subscribed to the service.

**26. I have an extra green lidded wheeled bin that I currently use for garden waste. When the new service starts they will become the recycling bins. I will only need to keep one, will you collect the spare one?**

Yes, contact us with your details nearer to the start of the new service and we will arrange to collect it.

## **27. Will you collect the leaves I sweep up that are blown into my garden from nearby trees?**

The Council will sweep leaves from roads and pavements in the borough regardless of the ownership of land from where they came. The Council is not responsible for the collection/disposal of leaves from residents' properties which may have fallen from highway land or other landowners' trees, apart from through the proposed garden waste subscription service

If you live in area enhanced by the natural beauty of trees and woodland, and have leaf fall in the autumn, a good way of dealing with this is to 'mulch' the leaves, which provides an excellent soil improver for your garden. Alternatively you may wish to take them to your nearest Household Waste Recycling Site where they will be composted.

If you still have a question please contact us at:

[www.tmbc.gov.uk/waste](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk/waste)

[Waste.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:Waste.services@tmbc.gov.uk)

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