

Fatbergs tackled ‘head on’ in West Oxfordshire

With the problem of recurring major blockages in Witney’s sewers caused by fatbergs, people living in West Oxfordshire are reminded that cooking oil can be collected as part of their household recycling service.

Fatbergs are putrid fatty masses that occur in the sewers when cooking oils, fats and unflushable items such as sanitary products mix together and solidify.

Whilst cooking oil is regularly collected from restaurants and chip shops across the UK, kerbside recycling collections are uncommon.



Cllr Carol Reynolds, West Oxfordshire District Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment, said: “We are one of only a few local authorities in the country that accepts used cooking oil as part of our household recycling collection. I strongly urge residents to make use of this fantastic service and help tackle fatbergs head on. All the oil collected is recycled and put to good use as it is turned into green energy.”

She added: “Recycling leftover oil is easy. Simply leave it to cool, pour it into a clear plastic bottle and put it out next to your kerbside recycling boxes or food waste caddy on collection days. Similarly, leftover fat can be left to cool and once hardened can then be scraped into your food waste recycling bin.”

Last month Thames Water launched a campaign in Witney to raise awareness of the problems caused by disposing of cooking oil and wet wipes in drains and sewers.

Alex Saunders, Waste Networks Manager for Thames Water, said: “All too often people do not realise the problems caused by pouring oil down the sink. West Oxfordshire residents are fortunate that they have a free oil recycling collection service and using this goes a long way to avoiding the costly and horrible experience of sewage backing up into homes, gardens and the wider environment.

“We also ask that people don’t flush wipes, cotton buds, nappies and sanitary products down toilets even if they are labelled as flushable. Our message is clear: bin it – don’t block it.”

In Witney Engineers from Thames Water clear at least three major blockages from the town’s sewers every fortnight while in the same period, 17 properties in Witney have been flooded with sewage as a result of fat and wipe blockages.

Photograph shows Cllr Carol Reynolds, Cabinet Member for Environment, with cooking oil that can be recycled after use

Further information:

Communications: t: 01993 861615, m: 07771965360, e: communications@westoxon.gov.uk

Andrew Smith

Communications Officer (Working days Wed, Thurs, Fri)

West Oxfordshire District Council, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB

t: 01993 861616 / 01993 861000

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