**Hands up all those who know what each of these signs means!**

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The simple fact is that, mercifully, you do not need to know!

Do you get confused about what can and can’t be recycled? We all want to do the right thing and to recycle but most of us aren’t sure about what can and can’t be recycled and so there is a temptation to pop it in the green bin.

This is the first of a series of articles where I will try to answer questions you may have. I will try to cover various topics from routine recycling of plastic, glass, paper and food through to more complex things like clothing and electricals. I will also talk about the issue of food waste and what we can each do to reduce the appalling amount of food that is wasted every day, save a small fortune and reduce climate change all at the same time! Yes really!!

**A few Do’s and Don’t’s**

In Cherwell we have our recycling collected every other week. It is good to be kind to the environment so we should all be aiming to reduce the amount we put out in our green bins for disposal and increase the amount we put out for recycling in our blue or brown bins. Here are a few tips:

**Plastics** – Make sure you recycle all rigid plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays. Don’t forget to recycle plastic bottles that didn’t come from the kitchen e.g. shampoo bottles, bleach containers etc. You can leave the caps on the bottles. Try to rinse before you put in the recycling: it helps reduce contamination.

Sadly, black plastic can’t be recycled because the sorting equipment can’t see it properly and it ends up contaminating other material streams. Also, it’s not possible to recycle plastic bags, crisp bags etc. at the kerbside but you may be able to recycle plastic bags at your supermarket.

**Paper** – Try to recycle all paper and cardboard. If it’s heavily contaminated with plastic e.g. laminated, then that won’t be possible to recycle. Christmas paper that you cannot scrunch up should not be put out for recycling and glitter is also not good so please don’t put glitter laden cards and paper in the recycling.

**Tins and cans** **–** These are some of the most valuable things to recycle. You can recycle metal repeatedly without degrading it so it competes with virgin material. It’s also very good for the environment to recycle metal as it avoids repeating all the environmental impacts of starting with new metal each time (impacts of mining, metal refining etc.).

**Glass** – Must not be put in the blue bin as there is too much risk of breakage which would then contaminate the rest of the recycling, so take bottles and jars to one of the recycling points near you.

**Food** – Please try to separate your food waste. It can be put in your brown bin for collection with your garden waste. If you can compost some of it, that’s great, but please try to keep it out of the green bin.

**Batteries** – Put household batteries in a clear plastic bag on top of any of the bins and they will be collected for recycling.

**Waste Electrical & Electronic equipment (WEEE)** – If you put old toasters, kettles, electronic devices etc and other small electrical/electronic equipment in a carrier bag and place them on top of the bins, they will be taken for recycling. The item must fit in a carrier bag (they won’t take 52 inch flat screen televisions!)

This is just a brief look at some of the frequently asked questions. You probably have many more – so please send them to me and I will try to answer as many as I can. You can email on **liz\_goodwin@ymail.com** and I will try to cover them in one of the future pieces.

And finally - remember: keep the green bins as empty as you can. Happy recycling.

**Liz Goodwin**

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