

Recycling in Oxford and Carbon emission reduction.

My first conversation about recycling with Councillor John Tanner was over 20 years ago when I asked why we didn't have recycling here in Oxford. His reply was "It would have to come from central government, Oxford's Labour council could not do it on their own". I went home and started a recycling in my area of Headington setting up my home as a collection point for newspapers and aluminium once a month which was then collected by Friends of the Earth. It worked well for a number of years and eventually the council put their own collection bins at shopping areas.

The city council now requires everyone to recycle (which is great although not always understood or acted on by some residents who simply put out all waste in blue one week and all waste in green the next overflowing into the street!) but do not insist on recycling on their own premises such as at the swimming pools and leisure centres.

When I found out about this over eight years ago I took blue recycling boxes to my local centre and would empty them two or three times a week and recycle the contents. After some years they told me that they now did the recycling themselves and I stopped.

However, they did not offer separate bins which customers prefer as we are all used to separating our waste, but told me that their own, at that time council-employed, staff separated the materials themselves into the large recycling bins outside.

I did continue to leave a small blue box in the women's changing rooms so that we could leave our empty shampoo bottles etc. This has been popular and I assume, saves staff time and the less pleasant task of separating items. Last month I found that the blue box in the women's changing area had been removed. When I asked the acting manager, Stuart, why this was, he told me that they did NOT do recycling there. When I asked why and when this had stopped he told me that they have NEVER recycled at that centre. This is totally unacceptable behaviour by the City Council.

All that posturing about caring about carbon emissions by John Tanner yet the City Council won't even act on their requirements.

Temple Cowley Pools and Fitness Centre also has the only pools in the city which are not fully covered with rigid covers when not in use which would save all of us, up to 80% of heat loss (and loss of evaporated pool chemicals). Pool covers would save maintenance costs on air conditioning recoup through energy savings the financial cost of covers within one year of purchase!!! I first pointed this out when the TCP facility opened in 1987 and again three years ago but the short-sightedness of the city council has meant that our money continues to be wasted.

What a waste! I call on Oxford City Council to do the right thing and insist that recycling is properly carried out on all their premises.

Jane Alexander

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