Frequently Asked Questions: Garden Waste Collection

Why do we now have to pay for a service which was previously provided free of charge?
In 2012 we introduced a separate kerbside collection service for garden waste to reduce the amount of waste being taken to landfill. At that time, we asked for a one-off payment to cover the cost of purchasing a brown bin. The scheme was very successful with over 15,500 households taking part. Unlike household waste, local authorities are not required to collect garden waste. Due to pressures placed on our budgets as a result of austerity measures, it simply became unaffordable to continue to provide the service without a charge. We consulted with existing users of the service and 87.5% of respondents said that they would rather pay for the service than lose it. We have worked hard to ensure that the costs of the service are as low as possible so that we can provide you with an alternative, efficient and effective way of disposing of your garden waste.

How much does the service cost?
You can use your existing brown bin or there is a £25 charge for the purchase of a new bin. The charge to receive the garden waste service is £30 per annum for the first bin and £15 per annum for a second and any subsequent bins. That works out at just £1.50 per single bin collection – or, spread over a year just .58 pence a week. If you sign up part way through the season, you will still be charged the same fee.

When do I have to pay by?
You need to pay by 1st April 2016 to receive the garden waste collection service for 2016/17.

How many collections will I receive?
We will collect your brown bin(s) 20 times a year between March and November. For 2016, we will collect your garden waste on alternate weeks, either on your green bin week or blue bin week, between week commencing 29 February 2016 and week commencing 28 November 2016. We will not collect garden waste during December, January or February.

Where do I find out when my collections are?
Please visit bins.boston.gov.uk and type in your postcode or street address and you will be presented with information showing your next collection day. You can also give us a call on 01205 311112.

How do I join the garden waste collection service?
We will send out a leaflet to every household in the Borough in February 2016 which will give details on how to join the service. Once the online payment system has been opened, you will be able to order a brown bin for delivery and pay for the collection service. If you do not have access to the internet, you can also us a call on 01205 311112 or by visiting our reception at Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston. You can find out the latest information by visiting www.boston.gov.uk/gardenwaste.

What time do I need to put my bin out by?
Please present your bins at the kerbside with the handles facing outwards on the night before your collection, or by the latest 5.30am on the morning of your collection. Unfortunately we are unable to return to collect bins which are not presented at the time of collection.

I am on an assisted collection, will my brown bin be collected in the same way as my green and blue bins?
Yes, if you are registered on our system as an Assisted Collection customer, our crews will know to collect your brown bin(s) at the agreed collection point.

What happens if you miss my bin?
If you have presented your bin for collection by 5.30am on the morning of your collection and we genuinely miss this, we will return to collect your bin as soon as we practically can. This will usually be within a week. Please leave your bin at the kerbside so that we can collect it. If your bin(s) is not presented by 5.30am, then our crews will record this on their in-cab terminals as ‘not out’. We will not return to collect bins which have not been presented on time. Our collection vehicles are also fitted with CCTV cameras and we may carry out checks on bins which have been reported as missed, we
do this to make sure our resources are being used effectively and that we can respond to enquiries more effectively.

_**I currently share my brown bin with a neighbour, can I still do this?**_
We understand it makes sense for people to share a bin especially if both parties do not generate much garden waste. It will be a matter for you to discuss this with your neighbour. One of you will need to make a payment to receive the service, it will be your decision as to whether you want to share the costs of this with your neighbour. These are private arrangements and we are unable to be involved in this.

_**What do I do if my brown bin is stolen?**_
You should contact us at rubbish@boston.gov.uk or by phoning us at 01205 311112 and you can purchase a new bin at £25. The charge is needed to cover the purchase of a bin and the delivery. We would also recommend you to report the theft to the Police on 101.

_**My brown bin is damaged, can I get it repaired or replaced?**_
If your bin becomes damaged via the collection process we will repair or replace it free of charge, as soon as is reasonably practical. If the bin is damaged through neglect or misuse, e.g. too heavy, or due to age, the cost of repair or replacement will be chargeable to you. If your bin is damaged, email us to report it at rubbish@boston.gov.uk.

_**Why do I need a sticker and what do I do with it?**_
The sticker we send you needs to be fixed firmly to the back of the bin(s) just below the handles. You should clean this area thoroughly with hot soapy water and allow this to dry before you apply your sticker. Your sticker contains the first line of your address and postcode, this is needed to make it easier for our crews to return your bin to the right property. A sticker is required to show our crews that you have purchased the service, our crews will not collect any brown bins which do not display a valid sticker. We also recommend you write your house number / name on the front of the bin, this also makes it easier for our crews to return your bin, but also allows our CCTV to see your bin being emptied. This helps us deal with any enquiries over missed bins or damage. If you pay for more than one bin to be emptied, you will need to apply a sticker to each bin. The sticker we send you will be incorporated into the back of the welcome letter. The company we are using to produce the stickers will send you more than one welcome letter. As the sticker process is entirely automated, this is the most cost effective way of producing multiple stickers for those customers who have more than one bin.

_**My sticker is lost and you have not collected my brown bin, what do I do?**_
Our collection crews are instructed to only collect brown bins which display a valid garden waste sticker. If your sticker is not visible on your bin, unfortunately we will be unable to collect it. You should report your missing sticker to us by emailing rubbish@boston.gov.uk or by phoning us on 01205 311112 and we will arrange to send you out a new sticker.

_**I have moved address but would like you to collect my brown bin, what do I do?**_
If you move you should take your brown bin with you. You should notify us as soon as you have moved so that we can update our records and arrange to collect your bin(s) at your new address. We will issue you a new sticker which you will need to apply to your bin(s), replacing your old sticker. If you do not notify us of your change of address, we will not be able to collect your bin. You should notify us at rubbish@boston.gov.uk or by phoning us on 01205 311112.

_**I no longer want to receive the garden waste service, can I get a refund?**_
Unfortunately we are unable to give a refund should you decide part way through a service you no longer need it.

_**What happens to my garden waste once it is collected?**_
We collect your garden waste and take it to a waste transfer station, it is then loaded into trailers and transported to an end processor for composting. The compost produced from your garden waste is sold by the end processor and is used in a variety of horticultural and agricultural uses. We do not receive any income from the sale of compost, we only collect it as the Waste Collection Authority. Lincolnshire County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority is responsible for the disposal of garden
waste. Lincolnshire County Council is charged by the end processor for each tonne of garden waste tipped, this is referred to as a gate fee.

I do not want a wheeled bin at my property but I want to take part in the garden waste collection service, can I do this?
Unfortunately not, all garden waste needs to be put loose in the brown bin.

Can I put garden waste in my green bin?
No, there is a strict ban on garden waste in the green bin. Our crews will check bins which they suspect may have garden waste, they will do this by observing bags or loose garden waste, particularly at the bottom or middle of the bin. If a green bin is found to contain garden waste, it will be rejected and will not be emptied. We will ask the householder to remove the garden waste and dispose of it properly and then represent the bin for collection on the next scheduled collection.

We need to ensure collected residual waste (green bin) has not been contaminated. It no longer goes to environmentally-unfriendly landfill but to the Energy from Waste plant near Lincoln to generate electricity.

Can I put extra garden waste out for collection in bags?
No, garden waste must be contained in the brown bins with the lid firmly closed. If the bin lid is ajar or open, this could damage our collection equipment and injure our crews. We ask that if you regularly generate more garden waste than your bin(s) can cope with, then you might want to consider purchasing another bin. You can do this online by visiting www.boston.gov.uk/gardenwaste or by calling us on 01205 311112.

I do not want to take part in the service but I have a brown bin, will you buy this back from me?
We are looking into this at the moment. There are some practical and financial considerations involved in providing refunds to people who have purchased a brown bin this financial year. We will provide more information on this as soon as possible. In the meantime, you might want to consider selling your bin on sites such as Facebook buy it sell it swap it, streetlife, or eBay or other similar websites designed for private selling. There is likely to be a local market for this as it might be you can sell your bin for less money than it would cost for us to provide a new bin.

Will there be more flytipping?
It is a common concern that flytipping will increase as a result of the introduction of charges for garden waste collections. Other local authorities have not seen a direct increase in the number of flytipping incidents. We monitor the number of flytipping incidents and take action where necessary. Flytipping is a criminal offence with a maximum fine of £50,000, offenders can also receive a custodial sentence.

If I do not want to have a brown bin how can I dispose of my garden waste?
You can compost your garden waste in your own property, for more information on how to do this visit http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/recycle-for-lincolnshire/garden-waste/home-composting. You can also take your garden waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Slippery Gowt, Wyberton for free.

What do I do now?
Do nothing at this time. Please look out for the leaflet we will be sending to every household in the Borough, this will be sent out in February 2016. This leaflet will give details on how to join the garden waste service. You can also visit www.boston.gov.uk/gardenwaste for the latest information.