

Monmouthshire County Council
Seasonal Garden Waste Collection 2018 FAQ

What has changed?

The garden waste collection service is now seasonal and covers 1st April to 30th November 2018. Going forward the seasonal service will cover March to November.

Waste services have undergone a major review to ensure we are delivering a cost effective service that is compliant with Welsh Government legislation.

One of the outcomes of this review is the separation of food and garden waste collections, with garden waste being collected separately and only from addresses which have a permit.

Why has it changed?

During the winter months there is a substantial reduction in service usage, meaning the service is underutilised and inefficient.

As a direct response to the increasing pressure on Council budgets we were faced with the difficult decision to either increase the charges significantly to cover a full year service, or deliver a seasonal service and maintain current charging levels. The options were assessed by councillors at both Cabinet and Strong Community Select committees and the preferred option was for a seasonal garden waste service.

Will my food waste still be collected on the same day?

Yes, your food waste collections will be on the same day. Later in the year the food waste will be collected separately but there will be no change to collection days now.

Can I put food waste in my garden waste bag?

All food waste including peelings must be put in your food waste box and not in the garden waste bag. This is particularly important as food will be collected separately to garden waste later in the year. Food waste will be going to a separate anaerobic digestion facility. Garden waste will be composted locally and cannot contain food waste under new waste regulations.

Alternatively food waste can be composted at home.

What happens to the material?

Welsh Government legislation requires us to collect food and garden waste separately later this year. The food waste will be going to anaerobic digestion in Bridgend which creates electricity and soil fertiliser. Garden will be sent to be composted locally at a facility in Abergavenny.

Will the service run in 2019?

Yes the collection service will start again for week commencing 1st March 2019, customers will be sent reminder letters in due course.

What is the cost of the new seasonal service?

Permits will cost £18 for seasonal service running from 1st April to 30th November 2018.

Why do I have to pay for garden waste collections?

There is no legislative duty to collect garden waste and under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 councils can make a charge to recover collection costs.

Why isn't it included in my Council Tax?

Not all residents need garden waste collected so it would be unfair to charge for it through Council Tax. Many compost at home and use the soil improver in their gardens.

Why does the cost rise above inflation?

The Council has been reducing the subsidy it pays towards the garden waste collection every year. This is due to budget pressures across the Council and reductions in Waste Grant funding from Welsh Government.

The letter stated the “price held at £18” but it’s still an increase in cost?

We know that holding the price at £18 but reducing the service length still equates to a price rise. This was deemed preferable to increasing service costs to £22.35 for a 12 month service. We accept that the wording on the flyer was not as clear as it could have been but was not meant to mislead. The flyer and registration letter clearly states that this is a seasonal service and will run until November 30th.

Is the Council making money from selling the compost?

No – the council is only allowed to recover costs for garden waste collection. We have to manage the disposal costs without passing on these charges to residents. Disposal costs are currently in excess of £210,000 per year.

Will the price increase next year?

The recommendation from Strong Communities Select Committee was that the price should remain the same for next year’s seasonal garden waste service.

Why does the online system refer to 9 months?

The system fields need to be consistent for both existing and new customers and for future years. To create a collection contract for next year covering March to November the system needs to be set at 9 months now.

Will my collection day change?

Your collection day for 2018 will not change, however it is likely that for the following year 2019 collection days will change. You will be contacted by the Council separately in due course in relation to any day changes.

What else can I do with my garden waste if I don’t want a permit or during the winter months?

The best way to deal with garden waste is to use a home compost bin, these can be purchased from a local garden centre.

Household Waste Recycling Centres are open year round for free disposal of garden waste.

Alternatively you could store the waste to place out for collection in March (upon purchase of a new permit).

What do I do with my compostable pet waste in winter?

If you have a vegetarian pet you can dispose of that material in the same ways as noted above or store the waste until the March collection (upon purchase of a permit for the next year).

What happens to the garden waste after it’s collected?

It goes for composting and the resulting product gets used on agricultural land to improve the soil. Some of the garden waste produced in Monmouthshire is treated on a farm in Abergavenny and re-used locally.

What about winter pruning and leaf fall?

We have tried to capture the main gardening season including leaf fall and winter pruning. You can take additional material to the Household Waste Recycling Centres or store it for collections in March (upon purchase of a permit for the next year).

Will my Christmas tree be collected?

As the service is now seasonal and will not be operation during the winter months, Christmas trees will not be collected. Household Waste Recycling Centres will accept trees as will some garden centres.

Will seasonal collections result in more fly tipping?

Neighbouring authorities who provide a seasonal garden waste collection have not seen an increase in fly tipping.

Why wasn’t I consulted with?

This decision wasn’t taken lightly but was a result of substantial pressure on budgets coming into 2018. The decision was agreed through Council and all the reports and proceedings were open to the public and publicly available.