

Happy birthday MK Recycling Factory!



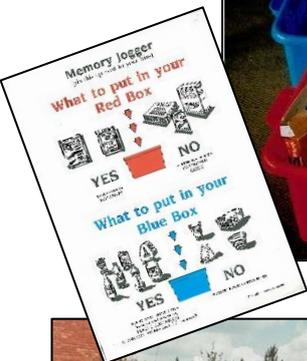
Every week the MK Materials Recovery Facility, better known as the Recycling Factory, processes thousands of clear sacks full of recycling. In November the factory will be celebrating 27 years of service, sorting our plastic bottles from our newspapers, tubs and cans.

The early days

Back in the 1980's local charity group, Community Recycling Opportunities Programme (CROP) was responsible for the earliest collections from recycling banks in Milton Keynes back.

Run by the Christian Foundation in Old Wolverton, CROP helped to retrain and assist the long-term unemployed back into work.

MK Borough Council (MKBC) donated 2 old caged lorries and CROP collected the office wastepaper from Civic offices and other large MK businesses to be recycled.



How it all began...

The idea of kerbside collection of recycling came from Keith Ely, Chief Engineer of MKBC Waste Department in 1989. Whilst on holiday with his family in Florida, USA Keith saw local bin crews emptying red and blue boxes into the back of the dustcarts. Intrigued, Keith then spent the next day of his holiday with the local Public Sanitation Department to see how the recycling scheme worked - much to the disgust of his family!

On his return to work Keith put forward the idea to colleagues. By June 1990 homes in the Linford area were given red recycling boxes for paper with a white lid (to stop the paper from blowing away) and a blue box for glass, plastic bottles, metal food and drinks cans. The recycling was hand-sorted by the crew at the kerbside into the separate compartments of the collection vehicle. The crew would often be seen hanging off the back of the truck like they were riding dodgems! The recycling was taken to and sorted at an industrial unit in Kiln Farm.

In 1991 plans began for the building of the UK's first council-owned purpose-built Recycling Factory, in Old Wolverton. In 1992 mayor Fred Smith made the first dig at the site and by November 1993 the MK Recycling Factory was built, operational and had its first open day.

After a major fire in 2005 the factory was rebuilt and continues to sort MK residents recycling to this day. Find out more about what happens at the factory and watch the video at:

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/mrf