

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Garden Waste Service 2017

How much will the service cost?

The council's Cabinet has agreed to an annual charge of £30.00 per bin for the current year. There are no concessions or discounts for multiple bins. The charged for period will run from the start of April until the end of March the following year regardless of when in the year you join the scheme.

How do I subscribe to the service?

Payments can be made over the phone by calling 01594 810000 or in person at the Council offices during office hours using a debit or credit card. Unfortunately, we no longer accept payment by cash but we do accept postal orders and cheques.

If you pay by cheque please remember to include your name, your property address on any correspondence, and also a brief explanation as to why you are sending in your payment so that we know what service you require.

Payment can also be made online by visiting www.fdean.gov.uk.

Note: credit card payments will incur a surcharge of 1.6% (the equivalent of 48p per licence). There is no surcharge for debit card payments.

How will the collection crew know whether I have paid my annual subscription charge and thereby know to empty my bin?

Once your payment has been received you will receive a plastic licence (this will be a tag about the size of a credit card) through the post which will need to be affixed to your wheeled bin. This will be used to confirm that the bin is registered to your address. Bins without licences will not be emptied. You will need a licence for each wheeled bin you present for emptying.

How long does it take to get my licence?

You should receive your licence within 14 days of making your payment. To ensure continuity of service, it is advisable to apply for your licence in advance so that you can have it ready to be displayed on your bin by 1 April.

Can I join the scheme after 1 April?

You are free to join the scheme at any time. However, as there is a set charge for the year (April-March) it makes sense to join early and maximise the number of collections you will receive. All licences will expire on 31 March regardless of when in the year you joined the scheme and the cost to you will be the same.

Are there any exemptions?

Generally speaking, there are no exemptions. However, we will continue to pick up Christmas trees, during the first fortnight after New Year, from all properties that present these for collection regardless of whether they have an annual licence or not.

Can I get a refund if I change my mind?

No. The charges are non-refundable. This is because the administration costs would outweigh any benefit.

Also, in order to make the scheme viable and to keep the annual charge as low as possible for each household, we do not want to encourage a system whereby residents only choose to use the service during the growing months.

What happens if I am moving house?

The garden waste licence is only valid for the property for which it was originally purchased and is non-transferable.

There will be no refund if you are moving within or outside of the district or to a property where you no longer require the garden waste service. However, new residents moving in to your old property will still be able to use the licence for the remaining period should you wish to leave it for them.

Why has the council decided to charge for garden waste collections?

The council has been charging for garden waste collections since 2012. The collection of garden waste is not a statutory requirement (i.e. we are not legally required to provide it). By charging for this service we are ensuring that only those residents who use the service pay for it.

If I do not wish to subscribe to the service, what else can I do with my garden waste?

Garden waste can still be taken to the local Household Recycling Centres at Broadwell (near Coleford) and Hempsted (Gloucester) and disposed of for free.

Home composting is also an excellent way to recycle your garden waste. Compost bins, subsidised by Gloucestershire County Council, can be ordered by visiting www.recycleforgloucestershire.com

What can I put in my garden wheeled bin?

Your garden wheeled bin can be used for grass cuttings, leaves, bark, tree and hedge prunings, plants and weeds, and small amounts of windfall fruit. You may also include a small amount of bedding (i.e. straw/wood shavings) from herbivore pets (such as hamsters, guinea pigs).

Please do not use your garden bin for soil or stones or compostable materials such as food waste, cardboard or paper. Please ensure that your bin is free from other garden refuse such as pots, seed trays, plastics, fencing and posts.

Does charging for garden waste encourage more bonfires?

We do monitor this situation and have not seen an increase in bonfire nuisance since charging started. The council will also continue to promote home composting as an environmentally friendly alternative.

If a neighbour is causing a nuisance by having persistent bonfires, and there is sufficient evidence to support this, the council has authority under the Environmental Protection Act to serve an abatement notice. Failure to comply with an abatement notice is a criminal offence and could result in a fixed penalty notice or even prosecution.

Do I need to pay for a garden wheeled bin?

No. If you do not already have a garden wheeled bin and are subscribing to the service for the first time you will receive your bin free of charge. Bins will usually be delivered within 28 days of receiving your request.

To reduce waste and costs to the tax payer, we will collect in redundant wheeled bins and clean them before re-issuing them to residents.

Do I own the wheeled bin?

No. The wheeled bin remains the property of the Forest of Dean District Council. If you move house, please leave your garden wheeled bin at the property for the next owner or tenant.

However, it is the responsibility of the householder to maintain their bin in a serviceable condition.

What do I do if my wheeled bin is broken?

While some bins may have small amounts of damage through use this does not necessarily mean they need to be replaced.

Usually Biffa will sticker wheeled bins which are considered no longer fit for purpose. At that point, please contact the council to request your replacement bin.

Do I still need a licence if I use garden sacks?

Only a small number of households are permitted to put out garden sacks instead of a wheeled bin due to their dwelling type.

In these circumstances, you will not need to display a licence for your garden sacks. Instead, you will need to purchase your sacks in which to present your garden waste. The cost for 50 x 120ltr sacks is £30.00. The sacks bear the Council's logo to make them easily identifiable by the collection crew. No other garden waste sacks will be permitted.

Sacks can be collected from the Reception area at the Council's offices in Coleford or alternatively we will arrange for these to be delivered to you.

What if I my garden waste licence is lost or stolen?

If your licence is lost or stolen please contact our Customer Support Team on 01594 810000. You will then be sent a sticker to affix to your bin which will act as an interim licence until your next renewal period.

It is unlikely that licences will be stolen as they are only valid for the property against which they are issued. However, if you believe your licence has been stolen please report this to us when requesting your replacement.

Why does the Council continue to collect garden waste throughout the winter months?

While it is true that most garden waste is collected between March and November, we still collect many hundreds of tonnes between December and February.

Some local authorities do suspend their garden service over this period but this is only possible when the crews are employed by the local authority. This means that their staff can be redeployed during this period to deliver other council services.

The Forest of Dean District Council employs a contractor to deliver its waste services and therefore it is not possible to stop and start collections in the same way.

However, we do suspend garden waste collections over the Christmas and New Year break and during this fortnight the spare crews and vehicles are used to support the refuse rounds.