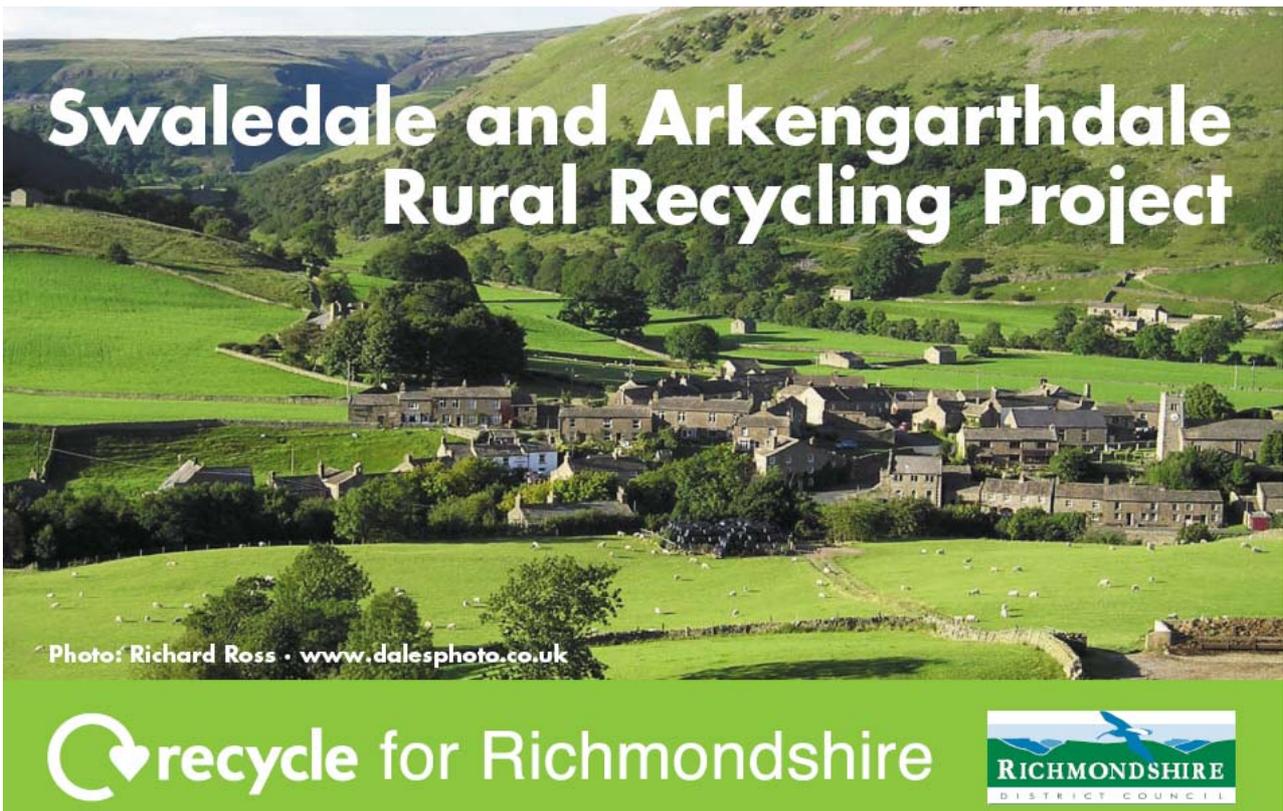


Case Study

Richmondshire covers a very rural area and due to long distances and logistical issues a dry kerbside scheme is not provided. However, the council does provide a network of bring banks for glass, cans and plastics. The door-to-door canvassing exercise aimed to promote the bring sites as well as to remind householders of the details of the service. Richmondshire provides a good example of how canvassing can be carried out in a rural area promoting site specific recycling facilities.



Background

Richmondshire District Council is a waste collection authority located in a very rural area comprising 21,000 households spread over 10 villages, hamlets and sparsely populated areas. The Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Rural Recycling Project is an innovative recycling project that aims to increase recycling in a very rural area. Richmondshire achieved a recycling rate of 11% in 2004/05 by offering residents the options of:

- A recycling bin for green waste
- Bring banks for plastics, glass and cans (the Council provides boxes to residents to store the materials in their home)

The Council was aiming to increase its recycling to 18% in 2005/06.

About the campaign

- Number of households targeted: 901
- Number households spoken to: 385
- Hit rate: 43%
- Time period: 20th July–26th August 2005

Campaign's aims:

- Promote the new recycling centres
- Remind all householders about the schemes in place
- Check whether residents were participating
- Address any barriers to participation

Identifying target audience

The campaign focused on households in the villages that were accessible and easy to locate.

Facts! Householders appreciate knowing where their materials go for recycling and how much energy is saved by recycling.

Logistics

Recruitment

The council decided to recruit two staff to undertake the canvassing. It was crucial that these staff were

local to the area. At the same time a new Recycling Officer was hired on a permanent basis. The canvassers were recruited as follows:

1. One student was recruited through the council's placement programme
2. An operational staff member was seconded to the taskforce on a temporary basis

The canvassers were employed by the council for 6 weeks.

Health and Safety/Training

SWAP was commissioned to manage the project due to a shortage of staff at Richmondshire.

SWAP provided a training course which covered:

1. National, regional and local context of recycling including common misconceptions about recycling services, why some materials are not currently collected (where appropriate) and brief information on what happens to materials once collected
2. Canvassing techniques: methods for approaching the public including how to introduce yourself; pitching the conversation to meet the resident's needs; body language; overcoming objections to recycling; and how to end over-lengthy conversations in a polite manner
3. Material to be provided to residents (e.g. information leaflets or not-in cards)
4. Operational systems: how to record the necessary information, collecting information to transfer to the council

The team were advised to:

- Work in pairs due to the nature of village layouts
- Agree a check-in time every forty minutes to an hour. As there was poor mobile coverage they were advised to call into the office at the start and end of each shift

Managing the project

- Working hours: 15 hours per week
- Start and finish times: between 2 pm and 7pm
- Other hours: some shifts were undertaken in the mornings due to the high number of retired householders

Richmondshire

As the areas were very remote, the canvassers worked for 3 hours maximum for isolation and motivation reasons.

The canvassers noted the name/address of all the properties they visited so that an accurate record of all visits was maintained.

Tips! Adjust and organise shift patterns to take account of demographics (i.e. morning canvassing can be productive in areas where there high levels of retirees)

Questionnaire

The canvassers used canvassing and tally sheets to ensure they covered basic questions in their conversation with residents.

[Click here to see the questionnaire](#)

Cost/resources

- Rate for canvassers was £5.60 per hour
- Temporary project staff salary and expenses: £2,486
- Materials: £155
- SWAP fees – confidential

Achievements

The canvassing provided very valuable feedback for the council. It showed that:

- Residents were happy to have some kind of recycling scheme
- Residents wanted a kerbside collection
- Older people find the scheme harder to use as they do not have transport to get to the recycling centres

'I don't think the impact of travelling was underestimated in Richmondshire as it was always

known that it was a major issue for the more rural areas. The comments received from the canvassing just confirmed this' (Andy Turner)

The Council is looking into ways to make it easier for people to use the recycling facilities such as arranging for people to use the community transport bus to take materials to the sites.

Learning points

- Don't underestimate the impact of travel within a very rural area – this will result in a lower hourly knock rate
- Anyone budgeting for a rural doorstepping campaign would need to anticipate much lower knock rates
- Be sure that canvassers know where they are going – provide OS maps if necessary
- Coordination between the canvassers is key. Employing too many canvassers is not recommended as the more people involved, the harder it is to keep track of where they have been canvassing
- Return visits in rural areas demand a high degree of record keeping and assessment of information. In Richmondshire, the canvassers did "double knocking" and achieved a hit rate of 42% (based on 901 knocks and 385 people spoken to)
- Consider safety aspects of working in a rural area as there may not be many public facilities and ensure canvassers are dressed appropriately e.g. wellies
- Beware of livestock!
- Be aware of the countryside code e.g. gate closing
- The grapevine can be very effective even if you have not talked to everyone they will probably have heard about the visits from friends and neighbours

More case studies and specific advice is available through WRAP's ROTATE team – contact them on:

01295 819661
rotate@wrap.org.uk

alternatively visit
www.wrap.org.uk/local_authorities/rotate/index.html
for more information

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Questionnaire

Canvasser name:

Village:

Good idea for rural areas

Recycling sites are well
maintained

Good Service - (paper only in
relevant areas)

Collections not often enough
(paper only)

Service not reliable (paper
only)

Mess in the home

No box/bag

Don't know what to recycle

Don't know how to recycle

Recycling not good idea/ not
important

No space

No time

No transport

Recycling centres are too far
away

Other
