

## Chaddesley cares about Planet Earth

I read an interesting, and somewhat depressing, newspaper article early in July. It was about landfill and the fact that the UK was rapidly running out of sites. We are apparently one of the biggest dumpers into landfill.

We will have used up all the available sites by 2018, and still will not be achieving our targets. These targets are for the amount of paper, food and garden waste that is sent to landfill. There will be financial penalties for failure to achieve the 2020 targets, penalties levied on local authorities, who are certain to pass them on to us.

We have achieved a reduction of a third since 2000, but we need to do a lot better. This is about increasing the amount we recycle. I wonder, however, if we are actually addressing the right question. Is not the question “Why is there so much that needs to be recycled or sent to landfill in the first place?” and “Are we reviewing and possibly changing our habits?”

Surely there is something wrong when we and/or our local authority is “fined” for sending too much to landfill, when the root of the problem may not be in our hands?

What I am talking about is the enormous amount of junk mail we receive – the paper can be recycled, the plastic covers cannot. The cost of producing it is a further burden on the environment. And I did not ask for much of it in the first place!

What I am talking about is all the fruit and veg. packaging to be found in supermarkets. We didn't used to have it; we did not need it. But then we shopped locally, for produce in season, from our local grocer. If we all did that again, we would reduce packaging waste (often not recyclable, at least in UK); we would boost the local economy; and the extra volume might well lead to a reduction in local prices. We all win – except, of course, the supermarkets!

What I am talking about is accepting things as nature intended – muddy carrots and potatoes, apples of different sizes, slight blemishes on orange peel, fresh meat cut and placed into greaseproof paper, all thus avoiding the plastic or polystyrene trays that we get in supermarkets. I could go on, but I am sure you can all think of similar cases.

Sometimes old can be better. Sometimes old habits may be preferable to new. Are you ready to change?

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For the Working Group set up by the Parish Council