

Totnes Climate & Ecological Emergency-Green Project group (TCEE-WG)
Community Composting project
Summary of progress to date: 06.08.24

For the past fifteen months a keen interest has been expressed at the meetings of this working group, to establish a Community Compost site for Totnes. This is a summary of those discussions and investigations.

June '23. SHDC announces that it wishes to promote Community Composting and publicises its offer of up to £7,500 as match funding for local projects supported by their Town or Parish Council. Sustainable South Hams Composting team are engaged to work with the community and groups to help develop these projects. They are also working with SHDC to ensure that full information and support about the steps for groups to follow is available on their website.

<https://www.southhams.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/step-by-step/community-composting>

This development was discussed and met with enthusiasm at TCEE-WG. It was agreed that the first step was to investigate and consider possible suitable sites.

July/Sept '23. The possibility of an area on Totnes Industrial Estate was considered. An approach was made to SHDC regarding any areas of land that are underused on this site, in particular any underused car parking or storage areas adjacent to Commercial units. Regrettably this returned as negative; nothing available at present.

Feb/April '24. A group of interested residents investigated a series of possible small sites at the top of Bridgetown and provided a report that was discussed at the TCEE-WG. The report was illustrated with photographs of the possible sites, most of which were on small areas of farmland adjacent to the new Great Court Housing estate which lies within Berry Pomeroy and included a couple of sites within Bridgetown-Totnes around Camomile Lawn. Most of these sites are on land belonging to the Duke of Somerset, some are within fields still farmed by tenant farmers. A letter was written to the Duke of Somerset Estates enquiring about the possibility of any of these sites being made available for a Community Composting site; despite further enquiries, that correspondence remains unanswered.

April '24. Some members of TCEE-WG attended a weekend Community Composting Masterclass organised by Sustainable South Hams. This provided a full range of information about all aspects of composting, including establishing a Community Composting project. The course included a facilitated visit to the South Brent Community Composting site which is being developed as a demonstration site to support the promotion of composting. A Composting Guide was produced for this course and is available as a pdf of the Sustainable South Hams website:

<https://www.sussh.org/post/community-compost-masterclass>

May/July '24 More focus on other possible sites was considered.

A site visit was made to a site offered on the Plymouth Road just beyond Follaton (in Harberton parish). For various reasons including access, steepness and distance from Totnes, this was considered a non-runner.

The Longmarsh overflow car park at Steamer Quay was suggested and a site meeting was held to consider. Enquiries were made at SHDC who own the car park and although the car is considered fully used, an assurance has been given by the Council Leader that car parks can be considered for conversion to a Community Composting site and where appropriate will be supported by SHDC. A further site visit was held where measurements were taken of part of this car park which indicated that just seven car parking spaces and the access spaces would be required to establish a fair sized Community Composting site with multiple bays. The adjacent road access would provide the additional space and turning which would help keep the space required to a minimum. It was agreed that a group outing to view other established Community Composting sites would be beneficial to

understanding the scale of an site for Totnes and creating a proposal for this car park site to take forward.

July'24. A Compost workshop with Dr Compost (expert) Nicky Scott at the Climate hub. This was very well attended and well received.

August ' 24. A whistlestop group tour of 3 established sites at Ashprington, Marldon and South Brent is scheduled for Tuesday 13th August'24.

September '24. Next steps: TCEE-WG to discuss setting up a dedicated Volunteer Action Group to take the Totnes & Bridgetown Community Composting project forward. This will require:

- Carrying out a public survey to garner interest, views and need for the project and the suitability of this location
- Confirming that site is available from SHDC
- Confirming support of Totnes Town Council
- Designing the site (incl. bays and security fencing) and estimating costings
- Registering the project with SHDC
- Applying for Funding
- Applying for planning permission to Devon County Council
- Etc.

Location map: Steamer Quay car park-possible Community composting site

