

Environmental tip of the Month. September 2021 Chris Bray

WHY RECYCLE? **Earth Overshoot Day** marks the date when humanity's demand for natural resources in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that same year. By 29th July, humans had already consumed all the natural resources that Earth could sustainably supply for the whole year. So, for the remaining five months of 2021, we are operating in "ecological deficit", we actually need 1.75 earths to continue the way we are. But we only have one earth, there is no Planet B.

So how can we help? One simple step is to: **reduce, re-use and repair** instead of buying new stuff all the time. For example, this year new EU rules have been introduced that require manufacturers of electrical goods to make their products repairable for at least 10 years after first coming to market - a good start that indicates positive change is slowly beginning to happen.



South Hams District Council has recently introduced a new curb-side recycling regime, which has had a somewhat shaky start but the idea behind the scheme is to encourage us all to 'sort at source' which means separating the various recyclables into separate containers and then lasers further separate the different forms of plastic; and magnets separate ferrous and non-ferrous metals. Previously everything was sorted at a 'MURF' or Materials Recovery Facility. A messy and very expensive business with people hand picking things off a conveyor belt. In Holbeton, SHDC are currently tipping all our recyclables (apart from organic waste) into a single truck to be separated as before. Importantly this is only a temporary fix and they are not going to landfill. **So where does our recyclable waste end up?** Most goes to specialist recyclers across the UK, while food and garden waste is recycled at two centres in Devon. Non recyclables (grey bin) go to MVV's Energy from Waste facility in Plymouth for incineration to generate electricity. **Everyone needs to do their bit** for the ecological and climate emergency: politicians, industrialists, farmers and financiers and, of course, you and me. The message is clear: buy only what you really need, choose unpackaged products or products made from recycled materials, or repair if you can and recycle carefully. If we all **reduce, re-use, repair and recycle** maybe – just maybe – one day Earth's Overshoot Day will be 31st December, and stay that way.

Tip: don't send it to the tip if you're getting rid of something someone else might need. www.freecycle.org (S Brent, Ivybridge & Totnes group) has people looking for everything from rugs to garden sheds.