It costs £28 per tonne to landfill waste, and considering that 45,000 tonnes of South Ayrshire’s domestic waste was landfilled last year, it’s best to recycle as much as possible. All properties in South Ayrshire have some kind of recycling measure in place, but most have three bins and a black box. But what exactly happens to South Ayrshire’s domestic waste?

**Green Bin contents**
No sorting takes place - contents are dumped and covered in soil. Since 2004, less and less green bin waste has been landfilled, falling from 60,000 to just under 45,000 tonnes.

**Blue Bin contents**
Your paper, cans, plastic bottles and cardboard are sorted at Lowmac Recycling in Irvine, then are sent for reprocessing to enable them to be re-used. Since 2004 household collections have risen massively from over 3,000 to nearly 20,000 tonnes. Plastic bottles are squashed into a bale, sent for reprocessing, shredded, melted and turned into anything from garden furniture, bin liners, and compost bins, to fleece materials. Paper and cardboard as you would imagine are made into more paper and cardboard (for example, your local newspaper is made up of 80% recycled paper).

Aluminium cans are separated from steel cans using an industrial sized magnet, then are squashed, baled, sent to the reprocessing plant, melted down and reforged into new cans and tins. Aluminium is the most valuable, fetching approximately £600 per tonne – steel fetches £30 - £50 per tonne.

**Brown Bin contents**
If you can’t compost your own grass cuttings, twigs and prunings, weeds etc, then your brown bin contents are transported to Nobel Enterprises in Ardeer, where they are shredded into small pieces, and rotted down in large windrows. The resulting compost is used at present for landscaping and derelict land reinstatement but there is also a pilot scheme at Troon Community Recycling Centre where the municipal compost is sold at £2 for 70 litres. Since 2004, brown bin collection figures have risen from over 1000 tonnes, to over 5,000 tonnes. It’s easy enough to compost your own garden waste though, and there are plenty of sources for information (see the end of this article).

**Black Box contents**
Glass is transported to United Glass in Alloa, before being sorted, broken, melted down and remoulded into new glass. In the past 2 years, collections have risen from 700 tonnes, to over 2,000 tonnes. United Glass supply new bottles to many of the leading drinks companies, so at some point, the glass you’ve put in your black box is likely to come full circle and end up back to your table.
Building for the Future

Constructing and renovating houses, schools and public buildings uses a great deal of building materials and creates tonnes of waste. There is growing recognition of this, and some building professionals are beginning to pay attention to:

- energy saving measures such as high insulation levels
- water saving methods such as low flush toilets
- use of natural materials, and materials that have a recycled content reducing and recycling waste
- making sure there is easy access to public transport
- ensuring that the flora and fauna of the area being built upon is not destroyed or threatened

All of the above is termed Sustainable Design & Construction, which was the focus of the Sustainability Forum’s second annual conference in Ayr, which aimed to raise awareness and stimulate interest in a wide range of these issues with architects, consultants, planners from Local Authorities, Housing Associations, developers and builders.

The next step is to use these practices within South Ayrshire Council. The following actions are underway:

- An action plan is being developed so that Sustainability is incorporated into Public Private Partnership (PPP) for schools.
- Links have been made with Local Housing Associations to help integrate Sustainable Design & Construction in their developments.
- The Council’s Sustainable Development Team is working with the Planning Section of South Ayrshire Council, looking at how this subject can be included in the promotion and management of new developments.

WASTE: from start to finish
(cont’d from first page)

Why bother? It’s the law!

The Landfill (Scotland) Regulations 2003 require a reduction of the amount of waste that is being disposed of by landfill to less than 35% of 1995 levels by 2020. The only way to achieve this is to radically up the recycling rates. Also, it’s more environmentally-friendly, using less land for dumping waste, conserving the Earth’s natural resources, and saving energy.

For more information on composting, contact 0845 077 0756 or www.wasteawarescotland.org.uk who can give you details on how to get a compost bin for £4.

You can contact the Recycling Helpline on 0845 601 2020

For advice on how to reduce your fuel bills contact: 0800 512 012, log onto: www.energyagency.org.uk or e-mail: energyagency@energyagency.org.uk

Green Post

An occasional look at someone’s job that has an environmental aspect. Here, Andrew Marnie, Energy and Resources Group Leader within South Ayrshire Council talks about his work.

What we do

To help minimise the Council’s buildings’ carbon emissions (and energy costs), in any one day our team of four might be:

- arranging cavity wall insulation for Council tenants’ houses
- dealing with contractors installing energy saving equipment in Council buildings
- keeping up with the latest energy market prices
- analysing data from our energy and water suppliers
- applying for funding for new projects
- arranging energy surveys
- trouble-shooting high consumption at any one of our 300 or more sites
- developing council energy policies

Facts and Figures

In the 9 years since I started here:

- Council houses have become 33% more energy efficient, saving tenants an average of £250 a year on fuel bills
- £3 million has been saved in energy and water costs for the Council
- An Energy Agency has been set up (independent from the Council), giving energy efficiency advice and grants to private householders

The Future

Fuel prices are increasing dramatically both at home and at work so it’s all the more important to be aware of the little things that can be done to stop wasting energy, not only to save the Council money but to reduce our adverse impact on the planet’s climate.

For advice on how to reduce your fuel bills contact: 0800 512 012, log onto: www.energyagency.org.uk or e-mail: energyagency@energyagency.org.uk

We would like to hear your views on these or any other environmental issues relating to South Ayrshire.
Wild in the Country

South Ayrshire has some spectacular walks, breathtaking views, and a wealth of wildlife to spot and enjoy. Local libraries are well stocked with leaflets detailing countryside walks and trails such as:

- Barr and Dailly Trails
- Girvan and Straiton Walks
- Cycle Routes
- Maybole Path Network
- River Ayr Walkway

The majority of those appreciative of our countryside know it’s important to leave gates as they are found, avoid damaging crops and keep dogs on leads around livestock, etc* - especially now that the Land Reform (Scotland) Act is in place (ie the public has a legal right to access just about anywhere in the Scottish Countryside).

Access issues do crop up though, and these are addressed by the South Ayrshire Local Access Forum, which meets regularly to advise the Council and other parties about these issues, offer assistance in disputes, and get involved in planning new paths. There is a Local Access Officer to facilitate the above, and ensure that everyone knows about the South Ayrshire walks.

If you have difficulty in locating information on walks, or would like to get (or share) some further advice, you can visit: [http://www.southayrshire.gov.uk/frames/ayrshirepaths.htm](http://www.southayrshire.gov.uk/frames/ayrshirepaths.htm) or contact the Access Officer on 01292 616649.

*The Scottish Outdoor Access code: [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com) explains your rights and responsibilities when rambling in the country. More details about the Access Forum can be obtained from here: [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/outdooraccess](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/outdooraccess)

Community Windfall

Imagine what improvements could be made to a group of small communities with a windfall of £300,000? Technology could be installed to allow households to generate their own electricity and be more energy efficient.

This may sound like the stuff of Tomorrow’s World, but it’s here today in the form of a Community Energy Project investment by Scottish & Southern Energy, for the communities of Barr, Dailly, Pinmore and Pinwherry (in short, all households nesting within the vicinity of Hadyard Hill Windfarm).

Locals have set up a steering group with decision-making powers. Options to spend the money are wide, but could be:

- A wind turbine, solar panels, or wood fuel boiler installed in each of the three local primary schools
- Every household topped up with the right level of insulation
- Mini wind turbines installed on house roofs, potentially generating enough electricity to run all the lights for a house (provided they’re low energy…)

Lots of work remains to be done though: before starting, all 500 or so households need to undergo a baseline technical audit, just to see what can feasibly be done. There is plenty of scope to identify projects, and it’s certain that the next two years will see some interesting changes for the communities.

For more information about renewable energy e-mail: energyagency@energyagency.org.uk

Green Cuttings

Making the most of paper

Most offices print large quantities of paper for meetings, guidance documents, training manuals, etc, but how often are these printed on both sides of the paper? It’s an easy policy to set up: the photoprinter service within the County Buildings operates a policy of double-sided printing for all documents, in preference to single-sided printing which wastes paper, ink and energy. All that was required was a quick approval process, thereafter all photocopying requests received were automatically printed double sided. Also, non-sensitive documents which are printed on one side only are cut and shaped into message notepads.

Recycling textiles

From the start of the new school term, a textile recycling company called Nathan’s Wastesavers will be educating pupils on the benefits of recycling their old clothes, shoes and textiles. Millions of these garments, clothes, shoes, handbags and household textiles are discarded and destined for landfill every year. Nathan’s will be taking the items brought in by schoolchildren and, together with collections from charity shops (over 11,000 tonnes were collected from charity shops in 2004), turn them into useful fabrics which can be worn and reused by people throughout the developing world, Asia and Eastern Europe.

For more information about renewable energy e-mail: energyagency@energyagency.org.uk

www.nathanswastesavers.co.uk/
Within the old brick and sandstone walls of Corsehill Park and Gardens lies a wealth of trees, shrubs, birds and animals, all congregating to form a peaceful recreation area, right off the main road, nestled closely to Belleisle Park.

The following fine tree specimens can be seen:

- **Fossil pine** - may have been one of the earliest plants raised after its introduction to this country
- **Handkerchief tree** - introduced into Britain (and other parts of the world) from China just over a century ago
- **Maidenhair tree** - the only conifer with leaves (not needles) and is the world’s oldest living tree species (but not this tree!)
- **Dawn redwood** - thought to have been extinct for millions of years, small populations were recently discovered in remote parts of China
- **Yew** - an atmospheric tree with a strong presence, it was at one time much more widespread in Europe, but it is becoming rarer and is now protected in many countries
- **Ash** - native to Britain, this is usually one of the last trees to burst into leaf
- **Tulip tree** - an ornamental tree, native to N.E. America where the timber (called the white wood) is used in house interiors.

A potted history

Originally the site and grounds for Corsehill House, the area became the base for the local authority Parks Department in the latter half of last century and the basic layout of the gardens has progressed into the place we know today.

The walled garden

In deference to its Georgian beginnings, the walled rose garden is categorised as a listed building, and was originally the fruit and vegetable garden. There is now a pond, knot-worked box hedging, a mini forest of trees, bamboo and interesting shrubs and flowers, all within a tranquil setting.

The planting

The original plant seed collection had been collected from many of the temperate parts of the world. There are plenty of shrubs on view such as: hydrangea, cotoneaster, jasmine, honeysuckle, escallonia, viburnum, ficus, osmanthus, pyracantha, clematis, magnolia, rhododendron. Love-in-a-mist seeds from Tutankhamun’s tomb were donated to Corsehill walled garden after the boy King was discovered, but there is no trace of it in the garden now.

Animals and birds

The area is living quarters for mice, voles, and squirrels (both grey and some red squirrels). The usual suspects of common birds thrive. More occasional visitors are: tawny owl, redwing (autumn to winter), spotted flycatcher and siskin. More rarely still are the merlin, peregrine and goshawk, which tend to stray over the gardens from Belleisle parkland.