

Grassington Festival Recycling Report 2017

As the premier Arts Festival in the North of England Grassington Festival has a responsibility to its supporters, sponsors and the local community to be sustainable. Over the three Festival sites of the village, Festival Hall and Field 15800 litres of rubbish was produced in 2017 of which 11400 litres (73%) was recycled (Glastonbury Festival has a target of 60%). This comprised:

General non recyclable waste: 4400 litres (28%)
 Cardboard: 2200 litres (14%)
 Mixed glass, plastic, cans & Tetra Paks: 9680 litres (59%)

This year's statistics are broadly consistent with previous year's figures where available. Compared with previous years percentage recycling is slightly down in 2016 and 2017. See below.

Grassington Festival Recycling Statistics

Year	Plastic	Glass and Cans	Cardboard	General Waste	Total	Recycled %
2013	11000L 55%	3500L 17.50%	2200L 11%	3300L 16.50%	20000L	83.5%
2014	13200L 53%	3980L 16%	3300L 13%	4400L 18%	24880L	82%
2016	8380L 52%		3300L 21%	4400L 27%	16080L	73%
2017	9680L 59%		2200L 14%	4400L 27%	16280L	73%

Recycling bin stations encourage the public to separate their waste. Our non recyclable waste mostly comprised food waste, Type 6 polystyrene (PS) champagne glasses, marquee debris and waxed paper coffee cups and PS lids. It is not possible to reduce the first three items. Food and marquee waste is inevitable and champagne requires tall rigid plastic glasses which are unavailable as recyclable polyethylene terephthalate (PET) or Type 1 plastic. However they form hazardous fragments when broken and scatter all over the site.

Recommendation: Many festivals require recyclable materials to be used by concessions as a condition of participation. Discussion regarding recyclable alternatives should take place with the coffee concession as their general waste significantly increases our non recycled total and compromises our sustainability.

Recommendation: It is recognised that the problem of the easily shattered champagne flutes is a difficult one at present but a watching brief should be kept on the issue for future years,

A large number of batteries were found on the ground in the back stage area. Some of these were trampled into the grass and inevitably many will not have been recovered. When batteries are not properly disposed of the casing can disintegrate and the toxic chemicals within can leach into the surrounding environment.

Recommendation: A battery recycling box is used back stage in the future. Staff and artists alike must be made aware of the problem.

Logistically this year there were some avoidable issues which hindered the recycling effort.

Since 2016 volunteers have been able to collect PET Type 1 plastic glasses together with glass, cans and tetra paks which reduced effort considerably. However when stocks of last year's PET pint glasses were due to run out on the last night it was discovered that replacement stock was Polypropylene (PP) Type 5 plastic glasses. This type was used in previous years but requires

separation from other recyclables and is expensive to recycle. Facing the prospect of contamination of the entire subsequent recycling effort the team decided to change collection tactics and separated all plastic pint glasses from other recyclables once they knew that the Type 5 pints were in circulation. These were stored separately and subsequently re-sorted the following morning. This involved increased effort on the busiest night of the Festival and during the clean up operation afterwards. The team were willing to do this to preserve the integrity of the recycling effort but it created unnecessary work and occasional communication difficulties with volunteers who, not unreasonably, did not understand the need for additional separation of plastics at this stage.

Recommendation: A greater understanding of our own recycling strategy when ordering plastic stock.

The recycling area was moved to a site below the bar this year without consultation. This created access difficulties as it was necessary to negotiate two large and complex sets of beer lines to exit the area. This was not easy with a full recycling bin and the wheels frequently got caught, which might also have damaged the beer lines. The beer lines were a significant trip hazard, particularly later in the evening when it became necessary to run the lines directly to the barrels in the cold store when there was not enough time to move them.

The exit area was also very congested as it was shared with the back of the bar. The wide outer flaps of the bar tent in the exit corridor quickly became slippery making access hazardous.

An alternative exit to access the champagne tent was made by moving the fencing but this still traversed the beer lines. The service area for the champagne tent inevitably now lay front of house whereas in previous years it was back stage and protected by a fence. Bar staff placed empty champagne bottles and cardboard outside the tent for removal by recycling volunteers as they could not access the tent when it was full of customers, plus the bottles are heavy to carry any distance. Having piles of empty bottles in a public area where they can be trodden on is dangerous. It was necessary to store a wheely bin behind the champagne tent to store these bottles, again in an area accessed by the public.

Additionally it was necessary to dismantle an internal fence in order to bring forward a skip for general waste collection on the clean up day.

Recommendation: Please involve the recycling volunteer in discussions involving the marquee recycling site position. There are wider issues to consider.

Finally, this year there was a larger recycling team than in previous years which made the volunteer experience more manageable and enjoyable. There is generally a cultural shift in opinion and behaviour amongst our patrons and volunteers. Recycling is now largely expected and supported. This is to be welcomed and encouraged. Recycling is far more complex than simply removing rubbish however. Effort and imagination have created systems that enable efficient separation of general waste and recyclables and ensure that service areas are kept clear and running smoothly. Volunteers are not expected to participate in recycling if they are not interested but lack of understanding can easily undermine the recycling efforts of those of us who are.

Recommendation: Recycling is a core value of Grassington Festival. This must be committee led and supported. Education and information regarding our recycling policy should be included in briefings, especially for volunteers such as bar staff who regularly handle recyclables.