

# GOODS AGAIN



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

## HELPING PRISONERS AND HELPING THE PLANET

*Goods Again* is an innovative and imaginative Warwickshire partnership project that tackles waste and local poverty issues whilst simultaneously giving prisoners useful work learning new skills. *Goods Again* was formally launched in January 2006 and, as far as we know, it is still unique.

The project takes discarded electrical goods out of the waste stream for reuse. The 'rescued' items are taken to a specialist workshop set up at Onley Prison near Rugby, where they are tested, repaired, refurbished, or dismantled into reusable parts. The work is done by prisoners, supervised and trained by qualified instructors.



David Bellamy launching *Goods Again* in January 2006

**Warwickshire County Council makes this award submission as the lead and administrative authority of the Warwickshire Waste Partnership, set up in 1997 to promote closer working with the county's district and borough councils: North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Warwick District Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council.**

## UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP

What makes *Goods Again* unique is the working partnership between local authorities, local charities and the Prison Service. The project focuses solely on electrical goods, white and brown or, as one colleague put it, "anything with a plug on it".

The main partners are: Warwickshire Waste Partnership, Warwickshire Environmental Trust, Her Majesty's Prison Service and Coventry City Mission - working jointly with charities who run furniture reuse projects across the county. These are: Second Chance (Christian Alliance Housing Association), Roundabout, Bareboards, The Loft and Action 21.

The charities operate across different parts of Warwickshire, giving *Goods Again* countywide coverage.

## A GOOD IDEA

*Goods Again* came about through existing joint working channels, notably the Warwickshire Furniture Reuse Forum.

The need for refurbished and reusable electrical appliances was flagged up by local charities and further explored by a feasibility study commissioned by the Warwickshire Waste Partnership.

Thus the difficulty in obtaining low-cost household electrical items was identified. The solution took longer to find - more than three years of joint working, with a lot of imaginative thinking and problem solving along the way.

*Goods Again* was launched by environmental campaigner and TV personality David Bellamy.

## LOCAL NEED

Warwickshire has some high levels of deprivation. Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough in the north of the county, for example, has one ward in the top 10% of the most deprived wards in the country - and six in the top 20%.

Just under 20% of Warwickshire households have an annual income below £10,000. For them, buying new electrical goods and paying full price is rarely, if ever, an option.

## FUNDING

One of the major hurdles was securing funding for *Goods Again*. The 'pitch' was for enough cash to get the project up and running, and sustain it in the short term. Funding was secured through:

- BIFFAWARD
- Community Recycling & Economic Development (CRED)
- The Prison Service
- Warwickshire County Council

## AIMING HIGH

The long lead-in time is a measure of the partnership's ambition to achieve and 'make a difference' on several levels simultaneously.

**Put simply, the Goods Again aims are:**

- To reduce the amount of electrical goods scrapped and ending up in landfill
- To provide training and employment opportunities in a Warwickshire prison and the local community
- To make low-cost electrical goods and appliances available to low-income residents
- To help promote reuse and recycling in the wider Warwickshire community

## CLEAR STRATEGY

The partners developed a clear strategy to achieve the project aims, producing a *Goods Again* Business Plan and signing a Service Level Agreement at the outset. Both are attached - appendices I and II.

## WIDER COMMITMENT

*Goods Again* is part of Warwickshire's wider commitment to an integrated and 'holistic' approach to environmental management.

The Warwickshire Waste Partnership pursues and promotes positive and incremental change, with a seamless approach that presents each new initiative as part of an integrated environmental whole.

The intention is to make clear to the people of Warwickshire that we really can all do something, however small, towards a more sustainable lifestyle, greener county and healthier planet.

For those well-off enough to discard working electrical items in favour of the latest model or designer look, *Goods Again* offers a way of being part of the 'reduce, reuse and recycle' movement in Warwickshire.

The added dimension of helping the less-well-off and prisoners at the same time is clearly a bonus on the 'doing your bit' front.

For some less-well-off residents the three Rs are a necessity. *Goods Again* gives them access to affordable, fully tested appliances, from cookers and washing machines to lamps and hair dryers.

*An Onley prisoner tests an appliance*

## HOW IT WORKS

Unwanted electrical items come from the county's waste recycling centres or are collected, free of charge, by charities involved in the *Goods Again* project. Some Coventry schools encourage pupils learning about waste to bring in small, unwanted electrical items for collection by *Goods Again*.

Under the tuition and supervision of two qualified instructors, Onley prisoners test, refurbish and/or repair electrical items suitable for reuse. Those beyond repair are stripped down for any reusable parts.

A key element of the *Goods Again* project is the opportunity it offers to prisoners. The workshop takes 24 at any one time. They learn new skills and work towards a City & Guilds qualification at the end of their training course.

Once processed, reusable electrical goods are transported to charitable organisations for redistribution to needy people who can't afford new.

*Goods Again* charges a nominal amount per item, averaging around £35 for white goods such as cookers, fridges and freezers. The charities then decide what charge to pass on to the end user.

# GOOD NEWS ALL ROUND

## **Goods Again achieves on several levels simultaneously:**

- The project takes unwanted electrical goods out of the waste chain for reuse, which is good news for the environment.
- It helps charities fulfil an identified need, enabling them to offer local people on low incomes affordable electrical goods.
- The end-users benefit from tested, reusable items at a fraction of the cost of new items.
- The prisoners benefit from useful, worthwhile work and a recognised qualification at the end of their training. This could help them find jobs on release and offers a way to 'put something back' into the communities many of them come from. This job satisfaction is a big plus and a positive step towards resettlement.
- The Prison Service benefits by being able to offer an extra workshop activity to prisoners which has real relevance, teaches a variety of skills with a proper qualification attached - and hopefully works towards reducing re-offending.
- The Warwickshire Waste Partnership benefits by removing a significant tonnage from the waste stream, so reducing landfill and associated costs whilst helping reduce the impact of waste on the environment.
- The wider public benefits because there is no other way to reuse or recycle white or brown goods in Warwickshire.
- *Goods Again* has created seven new jobs and expansion of the scheme could mean more.

## **VITAL STATISTICS**

In less than a year *Goods Again* has collected more than 4,700 electrical items and diverted 50 tonnes from landfill. Sales have topped 2,000 with an estimated 3,000 households involved, either by providing unwanted items or benefiting from refurbished goods. With a projected income of around £90,000 a year, *Goods Again* is on target to become self-sustaining by the end of 2007.



*20,000 unwanted appliances are discarded in Warwickshire each year*

## **GOOD MANAGEMENT**

### **A key factor in the project's early success and confident forecasts is good management.**

- Operational management is provided by Coventry City Mission, which holds bimonthly trustees' meetings to review the project and its progress.
- Coventry City Mission also provides annually audited accounts.
- A monthly Steering Committee meeting is chaired by Onley Prison's Finance Director and attended by representatives of partner organisations and the *Goods Again* Project Manager.
- Senior Prison managers meet monthly to consider *Goods Again* matters and progress.
- Onley holds weekly operational meetings for *Goods Again* staff to discuss matters such as output, quality and supply, and to check plans and priorities for the week ahead.
- A *Goods Again* Marketing Group meets bimonthly to review progress in terms of publicity, awareness and sales outlets.

## COMMUNICATION

Another important aspect of good management is clear communication within the Goods Again partnership and beyond:

- Steering Committee and Marketing Group meetings are minuted and the minutes distributed.
- Partner organisations keep colleagues informed via internal newsletters and BIFFA update staff via their in-house magazine.
- The project also features on the Coventry City Mission website ([www.covcitymission.org.uk](http://www.covcitymission.org.uk))
- Effective external communications are vital to ensure local people know about *Goods Again*. A successful publicity campaign has achieved extensive television, radio and print media coverage. For examples see appendix III.

## ADDED VALUE

### Enhancing service provision

- *Goods Again* is helping Warwickshire reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and contributing towards the achievement of household waste recycling targets for the county.
- Charities involved have negotiated the supply of household electrical items with some Housing and Social Services departments - so they can provide a more effective and efficient service to clients.
- *Goods Again* is strengthening and formalising links between the public and third sectors in Warwickshire and paving the way for a wider web of working relationships.
- As *Goods Again* grows, there will be wider opportunities for training and development - of prisoners, volunteers, unemployed trainees and project staff.
- Services to low-income residents are enhanced by the availability of affordable electrical goods which improve their quality of life.

## WHAT THEY SAY

There is no doubt *Goods Again* has 'made a difference' in its first year. Here's what some of those involved say:

"*Goods Again* is an innovative project that gives an opportunity for people to get good quality white goods at affordable prices and brings additionality to our Second Chance project."

*Kath Farmer, Christian Alliance Housing*

"We are pleased to be associated with *Goods Again*. Small electrical items add variety and offer Roundabout an opportunity to broaden its market share."

*Bob Pooler, Roundabout*

"*Goods Again* has made a difference to us. We have received white goods for reuse - mainly cookers but also fridges and freezers. The project has increased our ability to supply our clients. It is a two-way process. We pass donated on to *Goods Again*, too, helping to keep this kind of waste out of landfill."

*Dave Smith, The Loft*

"*Goods Again* brings impressive benefits to prisoners and has supplied us with really good quality small electrical items which have helped us to attract more customers. *Goods Again* is a good way for us to be involved in another project within the wider community."

*Jenny Sansom, Action 21*

"It's the best training scheme I've done at Onley. I know there are jobs in recycling these days so it might help me get a job when I'm released. It's hands-on stuff and I'm studying as well. I also think it's fantastic these goods will end up with people who really need them."

*Onley Prisoner*

"This project is so important because landfill is such an immense problem. Despite us being in the high-tech world there are still people who cannot get access to a washing machine because they can't afford them."

*Dr David Bellamy, Environmental Campaigner*

## LOOKING AHEAD

*Goods Again* continues to develop and extra dimensions will make it even better value for money. New areas of activity, at the end of the project's first year, include the take-up of electrical retail returns and training for volunteers and unemployed people on the warehouse and administration side.

Prisoners, volunteers, trainees and staff will benefit from the imminent arrival of laptops to help with administration and provide IT training. Meanwhile the Prison Service is treating *Goods Again* as a pilot project that could benefit prisons elsewhere.