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pr1105.Recycling tin foil scrunchometer.doc

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photo opportunity – see below

ALUMINIUM ADDED TO KERBSIDE RECYCLING COLLECTIONS

WHETHER it's the tray from last night's TV dinner or the milk bottle top from this morning's breakfast pinta, Harrogate's recycling officers want it. As part of plans to increase the volume and variety of kerbside recycling collectables, Harrogate's recycling team will now be adding aluminium foil to their fortnightly collections from the end of January and a pilot of garden waste is being considered for April.

The foil collected from the 55,000 properties with a kerbside collection will be taken along with recycled cans to the depot at Sleaford where it will be baled and sold on to steel manufacturers who will melt it down. This metal is then recycled into a variety of products.

But the foil has to pass the 'scrunch' test. If it can be scrunched up in your hand and the material stays compressed, it is foil. If it springs back then it isn't foil and can't be recycled. Many people confuse the shiny material used for instance on keep fresh crisp packets as foil, it isn't. The scrunch is the test.

The government has just announced that, as a country, we are recycling more household waste than ever before and we are on target to meet the national recycling and composting target of 17 per cent for 2003/2004. But much more needs to be done to reach the government's 21% target set for the Harrogate district in 2005/2006.

Councillor Les Ellington, Cabinet Member for Environment Health, said: "We are going to have to work very hard to change the way our residents deal with their rubbish. Over this festive season we collected 274 tonnes more rubbish than last Christmas. But recycling only increased by just under two tonnes despite there being very good recycling opportunities for such things as trees, paper, cans and bottles."

Last year, the council agreed to pilot a garden waste recycling scheme for 10,000 properties from the south side of Harrogate to start in the spring.

"The areas being considered for the pilot either have large gardens or residents who have to travel across town to get to the household waste recycling centre", added Councillor Ellington. "This is a huge financial commitment for a council this size but we are having to add garden waste to our kerbside recycling scheme as a way of reaching our government set target. Garden waste is mostly biodegradable and it will be used again as compost. Although we are striving to meet the government's target, we are also keen to provide a better direct recycling service. If the pilot is successful, we will be looking to roll it out to other areas of the district in the future. In the meantime, we will still operate the green bag service."

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: 3.30 pm on Wednesday, 2 February 2005 Western County Primary School, Cold Bath Road, Harrogate. Pupils have devised a 'scrunchometer' made up from recyclable tin foil. They will be challenging fellow pupils and the council's recycling team to pick out recyclable tin foil. Western County Primary School was one of the district's first-ever eco schools and environmental awareness and action is an intrinsic part of life and the ethos of the school for both pupils and staff.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Councillor Les Ellington is available for comment on 01423 712461. Further technical information is available from Mr Simon Johnson, Head of Environment on 01423 556845.