

Inspiring Reuse



CIWM President, **Professor David Wilson**, writes about being a judge for this year's CIWM's Sustainability & Resource Awards in his first update as President of the Institution.

My first duty as CIWM President was to judge the *Best Reuse or Waste Prevention Project* for the CIWM Sustainability and Resource Awards 2017. I was inspired by the quality and sheer variety of the five shortlisted entries and decided to showcase them here.

I start with a classic “third sector” reuse project, combining social with waste objectives. Newground ReUse is part of Together Housing Group, a large social housing provider in northern England. Many tenants abandon furniture and white goods when they move, and house clearance traditionally sent everything to landfill. The project now diverts these to reuse, creating opportunities for people seeking a way (back) into employment. Over three years, they diverted 936 tonnes from landfill and trained more than 120 people. Raising awareness of the quality and value for money of reused items also encourages vulnerable families not to make their own purchases from weekly payment stores charging exorbitant interest.

CRN Scotland were frustrated that only one of their members was working with a local authority under the Scottish Welfare Fund Community Care Grant scheme, to provide furniture and white goods for families moving into a new home. Most authorities work through a framework contract, and that had so far catered only for providers of new furniture. CRNS worked with the procurement body to create a Reuse lot, and then put together a consortium which bid successfully for that lot. The consortium comprises 17 quality assured reuse organisations across Scotland, including three Approved Authorised Treatment Facilities who repair and refurbish used white goods. They joined the framework at the end of 2016 and early results were very positive, including significant cash savings to local authorities.

Give it Don't Bin it is a partnership of all the Manchester universities, Manchester Student Homes and Manchester City Council. Before the project, students generally dumped their surplus belongings and food at the end of term or the end of their course, causing local nuisance as well as increasing landfill. Growing from a pilot scheme in 2008, the partnership now reaches all 70,000 students, and in 2016 moved 124 tonnes of used items from landfill to reuse, most of which were sold via the British Heart Foundation who raised more than £230,000. Also, 2,750 kg of food was donated to Manchester Central Foodbank.

Barts Health NHS Trusts Waste Management Team put forward an interesting project focusing on reuse of “bulky wastes” from the hospitals. Through two collaborations, they diverted 3,215 items weighing 87 tonnes from landfill to reuse in a calendar year. One partner is Globechain, who



“Don't Bin It” won the Best Reuse and Waste Prevention Project Award.

place surplus or used items via an internet platform – so much hospital equipment has been redeployed to health clinics in, for example, post-conflict Libya or post-Ebola Sierra Leone and Guinea. The other is Premier Sustain's Renew centre, which remanufactures damaged and what previously would have been end-of-life furniture and wheelchairs for reuse within the hospitals.

The fifth project, BAM Nuttall's Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project, is something completely different. This is an innovative, internationally important project to reuse 3m tonnes of excavation spoil from Crossrail tunnelling in London to raise the level of Wallasea island, which is being returned to the wild as a saltmarsh after 400 years as below-sea-level and no longer sustainable farmland. The RSPB managed nature reserve required the level to be raised, to allow controlled, long-term flooding while preventing catastrophic periodic flooding which would destroy the new wildlife habitats.

So, who won? I had to select one, but am pleased to report two winners! Give it, Don't Bin it won the reuse and prevention award, while CRN Scotland beat off 21 others to lift the Award for Demonstrating Project Innovation.

Prevention and reuse sit at the top of the waste hierarchy, but have not received the same priority attention as recycling. That needs to change, and I hope this CIWM Award can play its part. This year's shortlist provides inspiration on reuse. Please develop and enter your project next year or the year after – particularly if the focus is on waste prevention. ■