

NEWS RELEASE

Pictured: Ben Truesdale, Accommodation Manager at The Old Bank Hotel with EiE project manager Irene Amoke

High way to cut costs: free waste audits offer to business

Businesses in Oxford's High Street are taking expert advice and finding ways to cut their costs while playing a part in boosting the environment.

A dozen businesses in the iconic Oxford street agreed to have a free waste audit as part of a county-wide initiative by Oxfordshire County Council and the Oxfordshire Town Chambers Network (www.otcn.co.uk). As part of the campaign, businesses across the county are being invited to ask for a free waste audit at their premises on a first-come first served basis.

In Oxford, city centre management company, OX1, was keen to extend the offer of free waste audits to more businesses after a successful pilot project in Little Clarendon Street and North Parade Avenue showed how traders there could cut more than 60 per cent off their commercial waste costs. The Old Bank Hotel and Quod Brasserie are among those on The High Street to look at ways they can cut waste costs in their business and recycle more. Owner Jeremy Mogford says: "We welcomed the opportunity of a free waste audit at The Old Bank Hotel and Quod Brasserie. The audit showed quite clearly how we can make savings and increase the amount of waste that we can recycle. I am sure we will be adopt many of the improvements that have been recommended."

The audits, which look at the commercial waste produced by a business and recommend ways to cuts costs and recycle more, are funded by Oxfordshire County Council and carried out by specialists from the Environmental Information Exchange (EiE) at Oxford Brookes University. OX1's Alison Nicholson says: "The positive environmental initiatives we've suggested have proved popular with businesses in the past. Now, in even more challenging economic times, it's great to be able to encourage businesses to take up an offer which will help them cut costs and contribute to a better environment."

The pilot project showed that, between them, 14 traders in Little Clarendon Street could cut £12,000 a year (69%) from the £17,000 cost of disposing of their commercial waste. In North Parade Avenue, the total annual cost of waste disposal for the 13 traders involved was £16,600 and potential savings topped £10,000 (61%). Cost-saving recommendations for the two shopping streets included businesses working together on joint recycling initiatives, arranging cardboard, paper and plastic recycling, reducing food waste through careful management and composting, arranging to recycle wood and doing more to reduce paper use (such as encouraging double-sided printing).

Oxfordshire County Council Sustainable Business Officer, Dan Dempsey, says: "Waste audits are an easy way for businesses to reduce costs and mitigate their environmental impact. Oxfordshire County Council provides waste audits free to any business with premises in the county and I would encourage anyone wanting to improve their financial and environmental performance to take part."

Oxfordshire businesses who would like a free waste audit should visit www.otcn.co.uk for more details. The Oxfordshire Town Chambers Network is a communications network for (20) town chambers and business groups with 1,400 member businesses between them plus eight events networks.