

Greencroft Bottling

Reducing waste management costs
through investment and innovation

Introduction

Greencroft Bottling was established in 2003 and is one of the UK's leading contract wine packers, providing bottling, canning and bag-in-box services through its County Durham facility.

Operating from a large site predominantly powered by wind turbines and solar panels, Greencroft Bottling has the capability to fill up to 115,000 bottles, cans and boxes of wine per hour, which is equal to over 200 million litres per year; and the business is continuing to expand.

Greencroft Bottling believes sustainability is of key importance and considers every business has a 'duty of care' to minimise its impact on the environment. The company is part of the Lanchester Group, which regularly invests in technological solutions to reduce its environmental footprint, including over £13 million in renewable heat and energy generation.

Problem

Greencroft Bottling has been recycling for many years for most material streams. Following, the Government's new Workplace Recycling Law, they had to introduce a new separate food waste collection from their facility by 31 March 2025.

The company identified inefficiencies in existing waste management and recycling practices, tackling this could reduce waste disposal costs, maximise recycling performance and income generation.

Solution

Working closely with its existing waste and recycling service provider, Greencroft Bottling implemented separate food waste collections across its facility.

Capital investments in baling and compaction equipment have enabled a reduction in waste management costs by reducing skip emptying frequencies. This has supported the company's wider sustainability goals and has reduced transport journeys.

Impact

Greencroft Bottling achieved full compliance with Simpler Recycling requirements ahead of the legislative deadline.

92% of waste was recycled in 2024, alongside successes to reduce waste management costs. This rate is set to be surpassed in 2025 following the introduction of food waste recycling.

The company's commitment to sustainability means waste management systems are continually reviewed and invested in.

Problem

Greencroft Bottling identified several key challenges with its existing waste management operations:

Inefficient waste systems: Waste management operations at Greencroft Bottling relied heavily on skips to segregate recyclables such as glass, aluminium and wood from general waste. Emptying costs of around £200 per skip were incurred, whether they were full or not.

Rising waste disposal costs: The company produced just over 1,300 tonnes of waste per annum in 2024. Due to company expansion plans this was set to further increase and the business faced rising waste disposal costs amounting to £33,000 annually.

Legislative compliance: The company was required to introduce separate food waste collections across its business to ensure compliance with Simpler Recycling requirements in early 2025 alongside adhering to food safety requirements.

Staff awareness and engagement: With over 300 employees operating on shift-based systems over seven days per week, raising awareness with employees of waste and recycling systems was challenging, as was encouraging and monitoring participation.

Contamination: Instances of contamination had been flagged by the company's waste service provider.



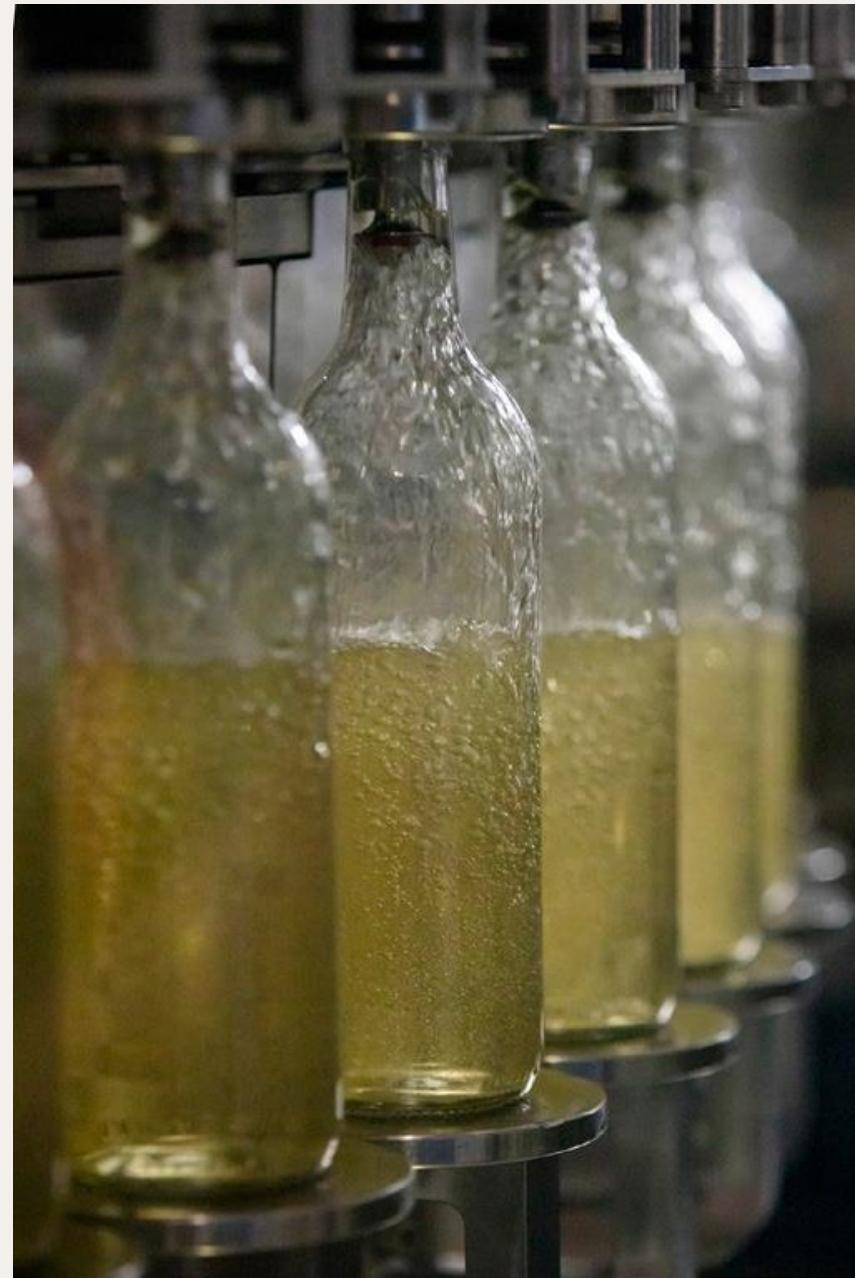
Solution

Greencroft Bottling overhauled its recycling operations to improve waste management practices and ensure compliance with Simpler Recycling.

Key actions included:

- **Expanding recycling segregation:** Separate collection schemes for more recycling streams including food waste, cardboard and plastics were introduced.
- **New recycling points and signage:** 33 new food waste recycling points were introduced. New signage provided by its waste service provider was installed at every recycling point.

- **Investment:** Using balers for cardboard and plastic, and a compactor for general waste reduced skip usage and overall waste management costs.
- **Staff engagement:** Toolbox talks and gamification educated the 300-strong workforce on new recycling service changes and continue to be used to reinforce the importance of getting recycling right.
- **Supplier Collaboration:** Greencroft worked closely with its waste service provider and other companies who specialised in material collection and resale to maximise recycling and reuse efforts.



Impact

Greencroft Bottling transformed its waste and recycling services delivering measurable environmental and financial benefits including:



- **Waste Reduction:** Skip usage has significantly decreased. The introduction of compactors is expected to save £18,000 on waste management costs annually.
- **Recycling and reuse:** From January to November 2025 the company has recycled 1,103 tonnes of recyclables. Collaboration with a local pallet refurbishment company has enabled the reuse of damaged and broken pallets. Diverting wood waste from recycling to a reuse scheme.
- **Staff Participation:** 90% of staff now correctly follow recycling systems correctly, despite challenges with shift-based roles.
- **Financial Returns:** Rebates for recyclables are now maximised, with £40,000 received for 119 tonnes of plastic waste in 2024. These rebates have been used to offset costs of purchasing new equipment and reinvested back into the business
- **Knowledge sharing:** Lessons learnt at Greencroft Bottling have been shared and adopted across the wider Lanchester Group, including Lanchester Wines, Bon Bon's Wholesale Ltd, Spicers of Hythe and Full Circle Brew Co.

Impact

In **2024** the company recycled **92.15%** of it's generated waste.

The company's recycling rate for **2025** to date stands at **90.66%** and is set to increase further and will be reported in 2026. This figure excludes collected food waste tonnages which are unavailable due to the way this material is collected.



“Sustainability isn't just compliance - it's our standard. By investing in recycling systems and engaging our team, we've turned waste into opportunity and achieved over 90% recycling.”

Darren Little,
Assistant Warehouse Manager, Greencroft Bottling

“Greencroft Bottling is committed to reducing our footprint. Through innovation and collaboration, we've transformed waste management into measurable environmental and financial gains.”

Peter Swinburn
Warehouse and Excise Manager, Greencroft Bottling

Impact

Greencroft Bottling's proactive approach to recycling has not only ensured compliance with environmental legislation but also fostered a culture of sustainability and innovation across the wider Lanchester Group.

Through strategic investment, staff engagement, and cross-company collaboration, the business has turned waste management from a cost centre into a source of value - setting a benchmark for others in the industry.

The sustainability culture at Greencroft and across the wider Lanchester Group empowers staff members to continually identify ways to reduce the company's waste and increase recycling. This has been undertaken via the use of easily accessible and cost-effective solutions such as compactors and balers.

Future Plans

Separate collections of office paper are being explored to further increase revenue.

A business case to purchase a baler for aluminium cans is also being developed. It is hoped this will reduce skip usage alongside the associated waste management costs.



THE BUSINESS
OF RECYCLING

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