

Over a hundred Christmas trees collected from the St. Anne's area.

Fylde LibDems offered a great and much appreciated service to local residents recently by collecting their unwanted Christmas Trees for **FREE** and taking them for recycling.

This green initiative, the brain-child of Cllr. Tony Ford, has been running for three years now but became more popular this year after the local Tip was closed by the Conservative-controlled County Council.

Fylde LibDems collected 108 trees in total as part of their 'green' credentials and their commitment to the local community.

Many residents were have trouble disposing of their tree after Christmas because unless it will fit in their green bin they are stuck with it.

Although Fylde Borough Council has several designated areas where trees can be dropped off for recycling, getting the trees to such sites can be problematic for some householders because the trees are no longer compressed by their wrappings and so won't fit into a car, or they are shedding pine needles at the slightest touch and make a mess everywhere.

This year the LibDems were been inundated with requests for trees to be collected and they have received many complimentary comments from local residents.

"Thank you we really appreciate the tree collection, you took ours and that of our neighbours!" said one resident.

My tree was collected early this morning - many thanks, it is much appreciated. Adele

We have been assured that the trees will be used to help stabilise the sand dunes but failing that, FBC will be reducing them to chippings for use as mulch in the local parks and gardens.

One of the collection vehicles used ran on recycled cooking oil so the 'green' agenda really was very much to the fore on this occasion!

Many of the trees which were collected had fairly substantial wooden basis. Having dried these bases out, the LibDems have now chopped them up to provide logs of a more manageable size which have been distributed FREE to local residents who rely on open fires for their heating.



Cllr. Carol Lanyon from St Anne's Town Council collecting trees from the Parish Church



Cllr. Tony Ford hands over logs to a local resident

From a local campaigning point of view we were able to:

- remind people that it was the Conservatives who closed the tip through a targeted leaflet drop
- make contact with and talk to local residents directly when they phoned to ask for their tree to be collected, giving us the opportunity to reinforce the message and develop a dialogue with voters
- harvest phone numbers and email addresses
- add the data into CONNECT for use in the future
- develop a mailing list so that we can follow up with a letter thanking each householder for recycling their tree and explain what has been done with them (planted to protect the sand dunes or turned into a mulch for the local parks)
- raise our profile through two articles carried in the local press
- have a second opportunity to contact specific residents when we gave out the chopped logs.
- bring the need for such a service to the attention of the local council and they have agreed to look into the cost and resource implications of them running such a scheme

The five of us involved each gave up a couple of hours on a Saturday and a Sunday morning to collect the trees from those people who had contacted us. On this occasion we were able to use two vehicles each with a trailer on which to carry the trees.

The campaign was very well received and we received many complimentary comments in connection with what we were doing.

Inevitably we have looked at ways we can extend the scheme and gain more political capital learned next year, and, as we face county elections then, it will provide yet another reminder about the negative impact of yet another Conservative decision on local people.

Cllr. Tony Ford
Fylde LibDems
Representing Ashton Ward on Fylde Borough and St. Anne's Town Council
Former Mayor of St. Anne's