



VISIT TO FORD MATERIALS RECYCLING FACILITY

On Tuesday 20th. Sept. a group of about 15 of us from the Greening Campaign in Steyning, Bramber and Beeding visited the Materials Recycling Centre at Ford, near Arundel.

Run by Viridor (one of the Penning Group of companies) Ford is in partnership with West Sussex County Council and the 7 district councils in a 25 year Private Finance Initiative Contract to fulfil Government recycling targets and to radically reduce landfill waste. The facility also serves commercial and industrial customers. The recyclables from the District Household Recycling facilities within the County such as Worthing and Shoreham and Council kerbside collections, are taken to Ford MRC, which is one of a network of similar facilities throughout the UK. Ford is very much a state of the art facility.

Our visit began with a welcome and an informative introductory talk by Jen Hake, their education officer, covering the purpose and remit of the Facility giving a detailed explanation of the processing of the recyclables with the aid of a power point presentation.

We were then kitted up with hard hats and ear protectors (in view of the high decibel levels) and lead on to an observation platform giving a clear view of the whole plant below. We were struck by the relative cleanliness of the whole process as well as its smooth operation, as we listened to our guide explain the various stages by means of microphone into our ear protectors.

The mixed recyclables are first pre-sorted manually to extract non-recyclable waste and passed from the feed conveyor belt into a 'trommel' (a large drum – see photo) which begins the separation into plastic, glass, paper, cardboard, steel and aluminium items which are bailed up in the final stages. A number of fairly advanced technologies are employed in the separation process including magnets, 'eddy' currents and optical sorters. The bailed or bulked recyclables are then sold on for re-use or manufacture to commercial outlets in the UK, EU and globally.



We left having enjoyed a thoroughly instructive, almost entertaining, visit.

Further information can be found on the Ford MRC website : www.recycleforwestsussex.org