

## 50 years at the forefront of recycling excellence

2020 has certainly been a memorable year for us all - and not always for the best reasons. However, for Casepak, 2020 marks a special year as it celebrated its 50th year of 'recycling excellence'.

Established by its founder George Smith, Casepak is now one of the UK's most innovative and forward-thinking recycling and waste management firms.



George Smith and members of Casepak with Lord Taylor at the opening of the new MRF in 2012

From modest beginnings as a second-hand carton business, employing just seven people, George's foresight ensured the business went from strength-to-strength.

Opened in 1997, its purpose-built collections

and processing facility in Enderby processes 150,000 tonnes of recycled material every year.

Keeping ahead of developments as always, George saw that the increasing demand for total waste management, coupled with Government legislation to reduce the amount of material going to landfill, would require greater sorting and recycling of waste. Casepak embarked on a new, £21 million venture to design, develop and construct a 165,000 tonnes per annum MRF which opened in 2012. After passing away in 2013, George left Casepak to his eight children, all of whom still play an active part in the business.

Casepak now employs 136 people, serves 320 private sector organisations and 17 local authorities, delivering high quality recycling services. Casepak as a business was officially incorporated in 1970, and it now sits under its holding company G.A.E Smith (Holdings) Ltd.

Mark Smith, joint Managing Director of Casepak said, "We've seen a real change in attitudes towards recycling over the years - it's now something that people do inherently, and we're here to help them and organisations get the very best out of the material they place into their recycling bins.

"Our aim is always to strive for 'recycling excellence' and over the last few years we've spent a lot of time teaching people how to recycle correctly and be more environmentally responsible; an important issue, not only for the sector, but for society as a whole.



"Moreover, how we've adapted and developed over the last few challenging months is true testament to the dedication and hard-working nature of the entire Casepak team. We've seen volumes of waste like never before and have had to act speedily to ensure that the material coming into Casepak was processed smoothly, efficiently and safely.

"George, my father, is still always at the heart of everything we do. He had a real recycling vision. He was one of the first to recognise the opportunities that lay ahead. His drive, determination and inspiration shaped the company into one of the best independent recyclers in the country.

"We are continuing his legacy as a family business. Although our celebrations are going to be put on hold for the time being because of current events, I want to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all hard-working staff members who've helped make Casepak what it is today, along with our clients and associates.

"It really has been a memorable 50 years and we are very much looking forward to the future."

## IN THIS ISSUE...

Covid-19 and its impact on the sector

Page 2

Casepak scoops new contracts

Page 3

Mayor of Walsall visits Casepak MRF

Page 3

Case study: Recycling for River Island

Page 4

# COVID-19: Its impact on the sector and how Casepak has coped

The events of 2020 have been unprecedented; business, industry and commerce across the entire world has been affected by the fallout of the pandemic.

Whilst the nation came under tough lockdown measures, waste, recycling collection and processing services were more vital than ever. These services were required to help 'keep the country going', and employees were granted 'Key Worker' status in order to carry on going to work.

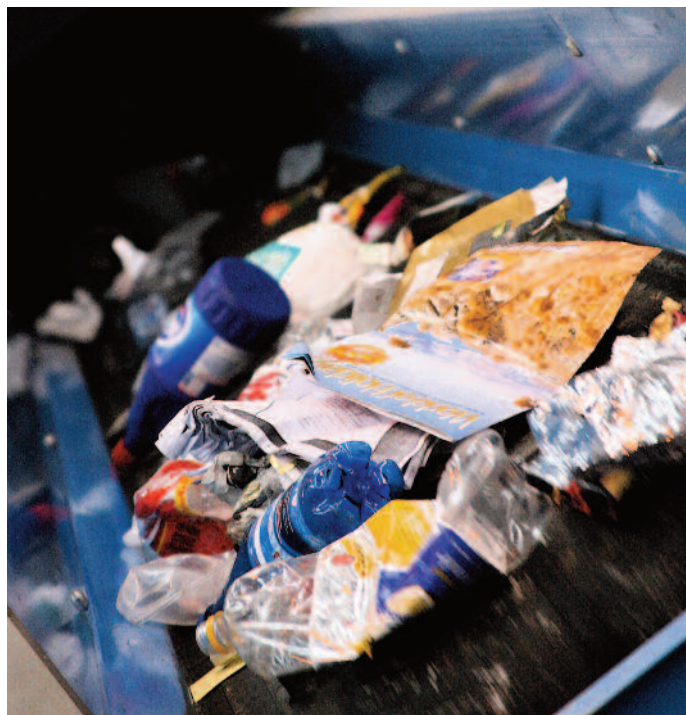
Indeed, as a result of the lockdown, Casepak experienced an increase in material entering its MRF as the population was confined to their homes. The team reported a 20% rise in recyclables entering the facility – levels on par with what is encountered during typical Christmas periods. The team needed to react quickly to ensure that the facility was able to accommodate the additional material, as well as ensure that all correct health, safety and social distancing measures were in place for staff.

A rise in material also meant an increase in contamination; black bag waste mixed in with recyclables, along with prohibited items (such as textiles and garden waste) are just a couple of examples of contamination encountered at the MRF on a daily basis during lockdown and the period following it.

Tackling this was essential in order to get the best out of material and Casepak deployed a series of tactics to help mitigate contamination including:

- Slowing down machinery operating times. This allowed the team to discard any rogue material caught up in otherwise good quality recyclables. The new operating system meant that staff needed to quickly adapt to a new way of working, but it has allowed Casepak to maintain the level of quality required for material to go on for reprocessing.

- Daily and weekly contact with local authority partners to update on the quality of recyclables received at the MRF. This enabled councils to target problem areas within their communities, and highlight types of undesirable material found in recycling bins. Councils used social media and



websites to share information about how to recycle responsibly and have proved proactive in promoting the correct messaging.

- Asking collection crews to be more vigilant on rounds whilst being mindful that they do not put their own health or safety at risk.

Casepak also saw an increase in glass and cardboard at the MRF, presumably as a result of more increased consumption in the home and shopping online, and continues to work hard to recover these important materials despite the increased presence of contaminants.

Furthermore, the health and well-being of all Casepak staff and that of the surrounding community has never been more critical, and Casepak took extra precautions when dealing with material that entered its two facilities.

All employees were reminded to follow strict hygiene procedures; drivers visiting customer sites wear masks and disposable gloves and all visitors and contractors to Casepak sites are required to complete a comprehensive questionnaire and undergo temperature testing prior to signing in. The entire Casepak team also practices sensible distancing measures.

Despite these challenges, Casepak continues to go above and beyond to ensure the highest volume of materials can be recovered for reprocessing and recycling.



## Casepak scoops local authority contracts

Casepak has renewed its eight-year partnership with **Warwickshire County Council**.

The council has awarded a 400 tonnes per year contract to process paper, mixed papers and cardboard, which will be collected from eight HWRCs across the county. The contract started in November 2020 and runs for an initial term of 18 months, with the option to extend by further periods up to a maximum of 30 months.

In addition, Casepak has been working with **Rugby Borough Council** to boost recycling rates across the county through its contract to process around 13,000 tonnes of the borough's



dry, mixed recyclables each year. Materials are being collected from homes and businesses before being sent to Casepak's MRF. The Casepak team has been supporting Rugby to improve the volume of recycling, and reduce contamination by increasing awareness about how to 'recycle right', through a series of initiatives including site tours, resident engagement and continuous communications support with the council.

## Mayor's visit Casepak MRF

To celebrate Casepak's partnership with Walsall Council, the Mayor of Walsall, Cllr Paul Bott and representatives from the local authority visited the Casepak MRF in early 2020 before the lockdown and implementation of social distancing.

During the visit the group enjoyed a full tour of the facility and got to see the inner workings of how the MRF operates. The group also saw first-hand how the sampling process ensures a consistent and high-quality of output materials.

Deputy Lieutenant for the West Midlands and Freeman of the Borough, Prof. Rashid Gatrad, OBE also attended.

Prof. Gatrad, said: "Thank you for your excellent hospitality. We all enjoyed the visit which was very informative.



L-R: John Hurley; Lee Bradbury (Operations Manager MRF); Professor Rashid Gatrad, OBE DL; Councillor Paul Bott, Mayor of Walsall.

"Our tour was fascinating and Lee who took us round was brilliant in answering all our questions and was very knowledgeable. We came away feeling well informed and educated."

## MRF team stars in council recycling campaign



Team members at Casepak's MRF starred in a campaign by Leicestershire County Council aimed at encouraging residents to put the right things in their recycling bins.

The 'Don't let your recycling go to waste' campaign offers householders clear, concise advice on how to avoid putting incorrect items into their recycling bins. It aims to boost the recycling of high-quality materials and reduce the number of contaminated items currently present in Leicestershire's stream, before it is sent to the MRF.

As part of the campaign, the council also released a short film showing the damaging effects of putting the wrong item into the wrong bin.

For more information on what can and can't be recycled in your recycling bin and to view the video, please visit [www.lesswaste.org.uk](http://www.lesswaste.org.uk)

# A recycling revolution for River Island



Casepak's sister organisation, Oceala has been working with one of the UK's leading fashion retailers, River Island to improve the chain's resource efficiency.

A lot of the plastic waste River Island produces is low-density polyethylene, also known as LDPE. Its robustness and flexibility make it an ideal material for packaging, wrapping and carrier bags. It is an essential material for River Island's operations with items such as mail return bags being made from the material.

Being an environmentally conscious retailer, River Island was keen to ensure that the packaging material created by the company was managed responsibly and sustainably.

LDPE is a common material that can be recycled simply and cost effectively and this material is managed by Oceala on behalf of River Island.

- Oceala's recycling programme has been tailored to improve the overall efficiency of operations at River Island's distribution centre in Milton Keynes, to make it easy as possible for staff to recycle this material.

- The programme will save tonnes of LDPE from landfill each year, where it would have taken decades to decompose and presented environmental challenges for future generations.

- Once River Island's LDPE waste is collected by Oceala, it is sent to reprocessors who transform it back into plastic bags and packaging, as well as other amazing items like compost bins and squeeze bottles – a new lease of life and use for River Island's LDPE!



## See for yourself Visit the MRF

Call us on 0116 286 7772 to arrange  
a visit or email [info@casepak.co.uk](mailto:info@casepak.co.uk)