

## KEEPING TRALEE AHEAD IN THE WASTE RACE

**Higgins Waste & Recycling Services** is celebrating 25 years in business. The waste industry has changed drastically over the course of the last quarter of a century, but this Tralee-based company has kept abreast of these developments and - with its own transfer station up and running - is today better positioned than ever to provide a thorough, dependable and affordable waste management solution. Headquartered at The Kerries, Tralee, County Kerry, Higgins Waste & Recycling Services Ltd. offers a weekly wheelie bin door-to-door service in the Tralee area. The company also covers the entire Kingdom providing commercial and domestic skips (from 4 to 40 cubic yards). Alternatively, customers can bring their waste and recyclable materials to the dedicated transfer station at The Kerries, which is open to the public Monday - Saturday.

John Higgins established Higgins Waste & Recycling Services Ltd. as a sole trader in Tralee in 1982. The business was incorporated as a company in 1998, with John and his wife Jacqueline as directors.

Higgins Waste & Recycling Services has four core areas of specialist activity: domestic waste disposal; C&D waste; recycling and a dedicated transfer station. While the domestic and Construction & Demolition waste disposal activities are obviously at the heart of the operation, recycling and environmental consciousness have become increasingly important aspects of the waste management industry. To this end, Higgins Waste & Recycling offers recycling of timber, steel and the door-to-door collection of dry recyclables. Containing a full array of different bins, the licensed yard - which doubles as a transfer station - is open to the public Monday - Saturday and both standard black bags and separated, recyclable bags can be disposed of by customers who prefer to manage their own waste rather than availing of the kerbside collection service. For both economic and practicality reasons (the transfer station's central location is a major factor), more and more customers are availing of this option.



The yard also gives Higgins Waste an edge on the competition, as there aren't many other waste management companies in the locality operating such facilities: "We opened the transfer station in 1993 and it's certainly a part of the business that we'd like to promote", John notes. "Activity has increased dramatically during the past five years in particular. People have become more conscious of handling their own waste and the fact that we're located just one mile from the centre of Tralee town is a major advantage". At the transfer station, the ongoing aim is to ensure that as little 'waste' as possible ends up in landfill. All steel and timber is separated and fully recycled, for example. The woodchip goes back into farmyards for use as bedding, while Cork Metals takes the steel.

What geographical catchment area does Higgins Waste & Recycling Services cover and how many households/businesses fall within this remit? "Domestic-wise, we cover Tralee only, but we offer a commercial service to all of Kerry", John explains, "We cover about 1,000 households in Tralee at present, which is fairly good coverage considering we really only moved into the domestic waste in 2003. "However, we've been active in commercial waste management since 1982 and also have in excess of 1,000 commercial customers in the county, between builders and businesses - shops, pubs, hotels etc". What geographical catchment area does Higgins Waste & Recycling Services cover and how many households/businesses fall within this remit? "Domestic-wise, we cover Tralee only, but we offer a commercial service to all of Kerry", John explains, "We cover about 1,000 households in Tralee at present, which is fairly good coverage considering we really only moved into the domestic waste in 2003. "However, we've been active in commercial waste management since 1982 and also have in excess of 1,000 commercial customers in the county, between builders and businesses - shops, pubs, hotels etc".

Recycling has become a huge part of the waste management industry and John takes this aspect of the business extremely seriously. "In so far as is possible, we always ask people to try and separate at source. We'd encourage hotels, shops, pubs etc. to keep glass and cardboard and other materials in different containers". Separation is very important, as the waste will not be accepted at North Kerry Landfill Site in Muingnaminnane if any recyclables are found to be contained within. Ultimately, the main objective is to try to divert as much waste from landfill as possible - and everybody has a part to play. Higgins Waste & Recycling Services Ltd. has reduced the amount of waste going to landfill by 20% over the past five years and there will be no let-up in the ongoing drive for environmental preservation. Regarding fleet, Higgins Waste currently has seven trucks on the road, as well as two teleporters in the yard and two compactors (one for waste; one for cardboard). All vehicles are Volvo, purchased from McCarthy Commercials in Cork. Where is the fleet kept/maintained and how often are the vehicles replaced? "We keep them at the transfer station. The site, which was formerly part of the family farm, is up to two-and-a-half acres, so there's plenty of space. I also have adjacent land and I'm hoping to expand the station in the future. Ideally, I'd like to build a bigger plant with more

indoor facilities, which are essential given the climate here in Ireland. "We try to renew the vehicles every four or five

years, and we purchase new. I acquired my first

brand new Volvo in '98 and I've been buying

all new ever since. We also look after all

the maintenance here on site. Kerry

Truck Services call in on a weekly

basis to service the units and they

also handle breakdowns. We

also ask the drivers to list any

problems they spot and we

get all those jobs seen to as

well". A team of ten is

employed at Higgins

Waste & Recycling

Services Ltd. Their

health and safety - as

well as that of the

general public - is

paramount to the

directors. "The drivers

take all the relevant

health and safety

courses and we also run

them through the health

and safety features of the

vehicles. It's an ongoing

process and we make sure

that absolutely nothing is left

to chance".

Carrying both the coveted Waste

Licence Permit for the yard at The

Kerries and a Waste Collection Permit,

Higgins Waste & Recycling Services is fully

authorised to operate within its chosen field of

expertise. Through a meticulous dedication to

quality service, the company had developed impressively

since its inception 25 years ago.

***Its future looks as secure as its past.***



Keeping Tralee ahead in the waste race