

10 October 2019

**Unsafe driving putting refuse & recycling crews at risk**

**Cotswolds’ waste collection crews believe it is only a matter of time before one of them is seriously injured by unsafe driving.**

Motorists in the Cotswolds overtaking or stopping too close to collection vehicles are putting the crews in danger with a number of near misses already reported.

Drivers are also pulling up too close to the rear of refuse vehicles, preventing them from safely using the lifting gear which tips the bins into the back of the refuse lorries. This can cause delays to the rounds.

An increasing trend over recent months has seen staff reporting instances of aggressive and threatening behaviour when they ask motorists to move back or slow down.

Jonathan Kennaugh, Operations and Transport Manager for Ubico Ltd which performs the service on behalf of Cotswold District Council, said: “Our staff are logging an increasing number of incidents every week with motorists behaving in an unsafe manner around our vehicles and crews and putting our staff in danger. Staff have reported incidents of motorists dangerously overtaking, mounting the pavement, and behaving in an aggressive manner when they are asked to move or slow down. It is only a matter of time before someone gets hurt.”

“We have 37 refuse and recycling vehicles operating daily, with each vehicle collecting from between 500 – 800 bins each a day, and covering 10 areas over a two week period. It is an increasing trend for crews having to ask people to reverse so they can empty their bins and this is resulting in these rounds taking much longer. Whilst we appreciate that the delay caused by recycling and refuse vehicles can be frustrating at times, we are appealing to motorists to exercise patience with our crews, and if possible allow more time for their journey on the days that they know collections are taking place”

Councillor Andrew Doherty cabinet member for waste and recycling added:” Unsafe driving and behaviour is putting the safety of our crews at risk and this is simply not acceptable. If drivers continue to speed past our vehicles or try to squeeze through when the crews are working, someone is going to get seriously hurt.

“I understand it is frustrating if you are trying to get somewhere and there is something in your way, but our teams work as quickly as they can and do everything possible to minimise disruption to other road users. Trying to squeeze past a refuse truck, driving along pavements, speeding past one or stopping so close behind them that they can’t operate the lifting gear is dangerous and in some cases against the law.”

“I would ask that motorists acknowledge the essential job our waste collection crews do and exercise more patience.”

Ubico is the contractor for waste collection services in the Cotswolds and West Oxfordshire.