

# Radical Waste Group



Our fleet of Mercedes skip lorries



Julian Knights, owner and managing director

Julian Knights, owner and managing director of Radical Waste Group, left a commercial job in London in 2014. He spotted the opportunity in recycling plastics, and found a business for sale in East Anglia – B&B Skip Hire in Beccles. After retraining in transport and waste management, he left his job as a surveyor, bought the existing business and founded Radical Waste in 2014, which now employs 20 people.

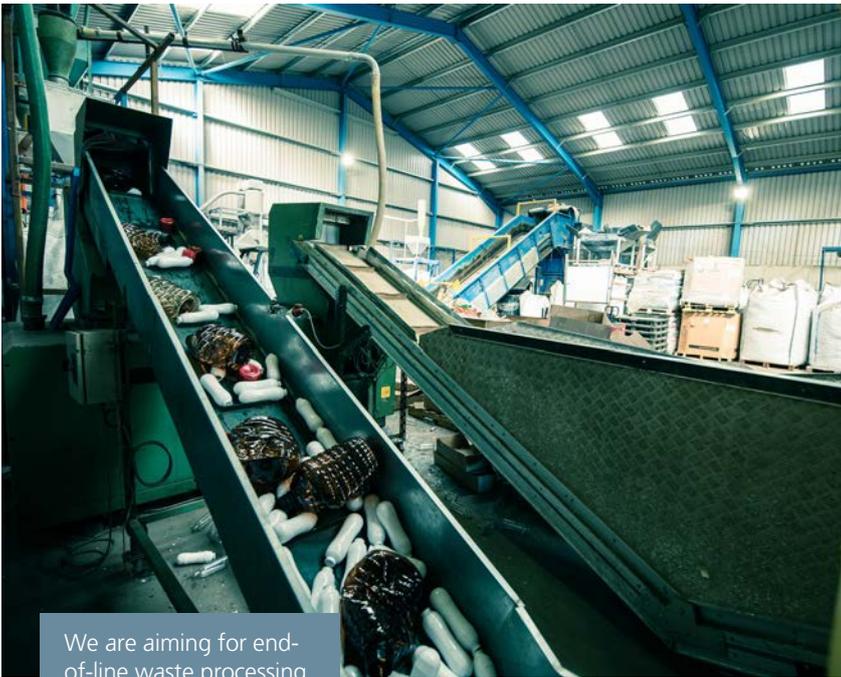
We are, in short, a company that services everyone from individuals through to the Rigid Plastics Company (RPC), who have two factories locally. We provide a complete waste management solution, providing a direct skip service for general waste and using third party providers (or partners) where necessary for hazardous or liquid waste, while covering everything in between ourselves. Today, we have five skip lorries out on the road, all of which are brand-new 2016 Mercedes models.

Our waste then returns here, and we recycle it, attempting to get it to the best place we can with regards to materials. The markets we are specifically interested in are plastics, paper or cardboard and metal:

- » Plastics are recycled and reprocessed, at a rate of between five and a half and six and a half tonnes per day.
- » Paper and card is exported to China as soon as it is in accordance with appropriate quality standards, at a rate of approximately 25 tonnes per week.
- » Metals are trimmed to an appropriate size before they are distributed or further processed. We look to process 20 tonnes of heavy steel per week, and ten tonnes of other metals per month.

## FACTS ABOUT RADICAL WASTE GROUP

- » Owner and managing director: Julian Knights
- » Established in 2014
- » Acquired B&B Skips in May 2015
- » Based in Beccles, Suffolk
- » Services: Skip hire, recycling and waste management
- » No. of employees: 20
- » Aiming to be a market leader in plastic recovery and recycling
- » [www.radicalwaste.co.uk](http://www.radicalwaste.co.uk)



We are aiming for end-of-line waste processing at our facility

“Our processes are sustainable and all-encompassing”

Our processes are sustainable and all-encompassing, and, in keeping with this, we have recently ordered a new machine from China which can reprocess HDPE and PP plastics at a rate of one tonne per hour. Our aim is to remove the mixed-rigid plastics that are entering the waste stream, by sorting and reprocessing the material. By October, we anticipate this machine will be functional and working on-site in Beccles to contribute to our ethos of environmental responsibility.

We have a strong focus on environmental responsibility



## Vision and culture

We've recently been focusing on redefining our company ethos statements, and our values are now simply formed around being the best we possibly can be. I personally want to try to drive change in the market without relying on environmental legislation or parliament, and hope we can become a voice on the ground driving an operational paradigm shift. Really, we want to change things – and though getting everyone on the same page is no easy feat, recognising a gradual process of improvement is helpful.

Alongside that, we do recognise that waste disposal has historically been a difficult and unfriendly affair. I myself have a young family – and I, for instance, want my wife and children to be comfortable when a lorry turns up on the driveway. In driving loyalty from our workforce, we hope to inspire a considerate, appropriate and polite manner in everyone working under the Radical Waste brand. Building a winning team helps us to be the best we can be – I'm an ambitious person, and I want my team to follow suit when it comes to changing the perception and impact of our industry.

## Domestic issues

Locally we have found the main challenges to be employment and recruitment. Currently, we have access to a wide, sensible labour force and agency workers. If this access starts to diminish, the market and industry will suffer locally, and without the broad pool of prospective employees we might normally find, there's a concern that future potential employees could not be productive or motivated enough. Finding the right people to work for us is always hard.

Waste disposal routes are an additional, significant concern. Our nearest landfill

is in Great Blakenham, near Ipswich, Suffolk, which is 50 miles away. That's a 100-mile round trip, and with the inflating costs of fuel, labour and landfill tax, a trip there is by no means cheap. We're just a service provider, and we do try to be as efficient as we can be, so as waste disposal routes are starting to be withdrawn, things are becoming increasingly more difficult. In Norfolk, there's no landfill or incinerator facility for end-of-line waste, and in Suffolk, there's one incinerator which is always full of domestic waste from the local area.

## Concerns with Europe and beyond

With trade tariffs, we'll naturally start to see prices and inflation increase. For now, we just want to get on with Brexit and make the best of it. A weaker pound does work well for export in some respects, and we could see positive effects for any industries that rely on that, our company included.

Looking outside Europe, we are seeing concerns from China. Their constantly-increasing quality requirements mean that we have to spend a lot of time removing imperfections on our end, which is costly, and then we ultimately see products going back to landfill if there's no market. It would be useful to have further support from the government – I know that a lot of my competitors would avoid sustainable processes if they're not profitable.

When it comes to exporting construction film, for example, that's sold on at a negative value after separation and baling. There's a benefit environmentally, of course, but not commercially. A better framework and more support to strike a middle-ground between financial success and improving sustainability would really help.



Sales and senior management team

## Driving further innovation

Ever since I took over, we've identified areas to drive further improvement and innovation. Routes of disposal prove to be challenging, so that's something we're focusing on, and we're also looking at alternatives for localised power generation. We want to become a self-sustainable site, providing power and heat to our processes while also recovering and recycling materials in a better way. If it can't be recycled – I want to be able to look at turning it into power.

Commercially, I naturally want to grow the company. I'd like to look further into plastics and paper, I'd like to see our site become a market-leading, self-sustainable waste disposal and commodity recovery facility, and I want to ensure that anything that's end-of-line, be it an aggregate or a reprocessed, value-added material, comes here if possible. There's a potentially bright future on the horizon – I want it to be realised, and I want to be able to contribute to a sustainable and responsible environment for the decades to come.

“I'd like to see our site become a market-leading, self-sustainable waste disposal and commodity recovery facility”