Success Story
Huntingdonshire

From Missed Bins to Full Control:
How Huntingdonshire Solved Its Biggest
Operational Headaches

Across the UK, councils face similar operational headaches: paper-based processes, inaccurate schedules, and outdated software that hinders rather than helps. At Huntingdonshire District Council, these challenges were all too familiar. In some areas, bins were emptied too often, while in others they were missed entirely. Worker interchangeability was difficult, and teams were reluctant to use the old management system. Three years ago, Huntingdonshire made the switch to Jewel, with great results. Justin Clarke (Street Cleansing Manager) shares his experiences.

Huntingdonshire

Covering 350 square miles of busy towns and rural villages, Huntingdonshire's operations teams manage thousands of assets spread apart. Within the council's operations division, which also oversees grounds maintenance, waste collection, and recycling, Justin leads a 25-person team responsible for street cleansing. The teams work side by side in the same office, which creates a close working relationship. "We often help each other out, it's quite collaborative" Justin says.

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Why Change Was Needed

"We had GPS, but those were just snapshots, nothing was truly recorded", Justin recalls. Without live, detailed information, managers lacked a clear view of what had been completed, what was still outstanding, and where bottlenecks were forming. For field teams, instructions were unclear, and there was no consistent record of completed tasks. This lack of visibility created some of Huntingdonshire's biggest operational headaches, including:

- Poor route efficiency
- Inaccurate schedules
- Missing records
- No knowledge documented

- No real-time info
- No data for citizen complaints
- Forgotten tasks
- Low interchangeability

Like many local authorities, Huntingdonshire had tried other systems before, but they were overcomplicated, lacked follow-up support, and alienated staff with less digital experience. "The team hated the old software. When we told them about a new one, they just rolled their eyes," he says. From his experience with other systems, Justin knew Jewel would be different, and he was right.

> It just looked different, like it was designed by people who had actually done the job

Getting the Team On Board

When Justin stepped into his role two years ago, the decision to change systems had already been made and the first steps taken. "I came in just as Jewel was being rolled out," he explains. His priority was to win over the people using it every day.

The approach was simple: show, don't tell. "We showed them the app, clicked the route, pressed the bin," Justin says. "They looked at me and said, 'Is that it?' I told them, 'Yeah, that's it.' That changed everything."

Even colleagues less comfortable with technology gave it a try. "They can see the value," he adds, "and now they're helping each other out. It spread on its own."

Work Smarter, Get Real Results

With the new system in place, Huntingdonshire has far more control over daily operations. Justin saw the results instantly: "We've got 1,400 bins across 350 square miles. With Jewel, we now know how often they really need emptying". The data from Jewel helps the team optimise routes, save time, and avoid unnecessary trips. Justin states: "We're not wasting resources driving across the district unnecessarily."

In addition, the data helps deal with resident complaints. Justin elaborates: "We can now respond to questions like 'When did you last sweep my street?' with 'Three weeks ago, 9:20 AM'." It makes the whole process far more transparent.

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The benefits extend to the grounds maintenance division too. Justin explains that ownership of green areas is now instantly clear. "Sometimes it's hard to tell if a shrub belongs to us, the county, or is private," he says. "Now we just check the map." He adds that GPS tracking has also made mowing progress easier to follow. "They put the tablet on the mower and it records everything, no need to stop and mark things." If mowing takes place over several days, the team can easily see where they left off the day before and what still needs to be done.

Teamwork Made Easier

A smaller team means people often cover each other's work, and Jewel makes that simple. "When someone is off sick, we don't need to explain every route," Justin explains. "Everything they need is already mapped out." He adds that live location tracking in the field makes coordination effortless:

"If someone needs help, they know a teammate is just around the corner, it makes collaboration so much easier."

Support Without Borders

Although Jewel Software is based in the Netherlands, Justin has never felt any barrier to working together "It never feels like we're dealing with a company from another country", he says with a smile. Language has never been an issue, and the support is always quick, clear, and personal. "The support we get from Jewel is second to none, quick replies, no delays, even when people are on holiday."

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When Justin has a question, help is never far away. "I've had regular onboarding sessions with Jewel, and even outside those, they would arrange a call to walk through a solution, often solving it in minutes. Even when they need to check something with the technical team, they're back to me within half an hour, not the next day."

For Justin, that consistency is rare. "With most systems, once you've bought it, you're on your own," he explains. "But with Jewel, even after years, you still get the same fast, personal support. It's the best customer support I've ever worked with." When asked what really sets Jewel apart, Justin doesn't hesitate:

"You can tell they genuinely want the best for their customers"

Looking Ahead

Three years on, Huntingdonshire is aiming for full digitalisation. Justin says the goal is to automate as much as possible with Jewel's software, even though some jobs are still handed out on paper. Bringing more processes into the system, he explains, will make it easier to respond quickly, plan smarter, and keep improving. "The more we build into Jewel, the better we can respond, plan, and grow."

With each step toward full digitalisation, Huntingdonshire is showing how the right technology can put a council firmly in control of its operations. Backed by hands-on expertise and an intuitive, well-supported platform, the team's way of working has been completely transformed.

Having worked with many systems before, Justin is certain about the difference Jewel makes. He's never found anything close to it: easy to set up, simple to use, and backed by outstanding support. "I'd recommend it to anyone," he says. For Justin, the conclusion is simple:

"It is the ideal operational management tool."

Discover what Jewel can do for you.

We'd love to show you, let's talk!

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