



RECYCLE, UPCYCLE AND CYCLE

PAINT GREEN IS A NEW TAKE ON LONG-STANDING PRINCIPLES

Business name: Stuart Yates Decor

Location: Chesterfield, Derbyshire

Paint Green status: Signed up to Paint Green in 2023

The craft of painting and decorating has some long-standing principles that have evolved over the years and continue to underpin the ways we work today.

There has always been a 'waste-not-want-not' element to operating a painting and decorating business, whether that's reusing dust sheets to looking after the kit, so it makes sense to move with the times and apply that attitude to how we operate in a wider sense.

When I started out 50 years ago, there were a lot of things that were accepted practice that we wouldn't do now, because times, techniques and technology have all changed and we can see that there are better ways of doing things.

When the first water-based paints came out in the 1970s there was some reluctance to move away from the products we knew to something new, but as investment moved into that area, the products improved and now I almost always used water-based.

It's quicker, they're good quality, the white paints don't yellow in the same way gloss used to – and you don't have the smell!





I've adapted the way I work in lots of different ways. I re-use the tape and drape wherever I can, wrap and re-use rollers and brushes, and I'm a bit more careful about estimating paint for a job these days.

It might not offer much of a financial saving to buy a half litre instead of a litre, but I'd rather do that than end up with half a tin of unused paint that will sit in the client's shed until it's unusable.

Any extra paint I do end up with, I recycle fairly quickly. It's much easier to get rid of fresh paint than old paint, and I recycle the tins too.

All of these are small changes, but they do make a big difference. It's just about putting a bit of thought into how you operate and where you can build in a new habit that makes better use of your tools, your materials and your time.

I've found that having the Paint Green logo has been a benefit to my business. It's helped me win more work and I have more and more conversations with clients about what I'm recycling and how I'm trying to reduce waste or protect the environment.

The most dramatic thing I did on the environmental front was to buy an electric van. It was a big investment, but recently, diesel prices have skyrocketed and I'm spending about £10 on electric to power the van for journeys that would have cost me around £100 in fuel, so it definitely feels like a good investment.

As a sole trader, I think it's about giving things a bit of thought and applying those old-fashioned values of waste-not-want-not, thriftiness and common sense to the way you run your business.

I think the traditional approach extends to providing a high-quality service and using your skills to improve your community too.

I like to volunteer my time to restore the old phone kiosks in my local area. Sometimes they can get a bit run down, or become a target for vandals, but when they're painted up and the community can use them for something, it makes a big difference.

In one village they've added planters to the repainted phone boxes and it makes me proud to see the comments on social media from residents and visitors about how nice they look.

They've enhanced the area, retained a heritage feature and provided a food source for pollinators too. It's not a major project, but when it comes right down to it, I do think it's the small changes that, with a bit of thought, can make a big difference.

You can find out more about **Paint Green** on the PDA's website.