



TIDY
Northern
Ireland

PO Box 31, ENNISKILLEN. BT94 4WX; Tel: 028 677 23801;
E-mail: nigel.frazer@tidynorthernireland.org; Web: www.tidynorthernireland.org

PRESS RELEASE

SMOKING BAN SPARKS LITTER PROBLEMS

TIDY Northern Ireland has revealed that the amount of smoking related litter on our streets has increased by 17% following the introduction of the public smoking ban at the end of April.

The latest TIDY Northern Ireland Borough Cleanliness Survey, conducted over the first three months of 2007, revealed that cigarette litter was already present on over 50% of areas surveyed. Since the introduction of the new legislation that figure has risen even higher, confirming tobacco related litter as the most common type of litter in Northern Ireland.

The anti litter charity carried out surveys in locations throughout the province, focusing on areas likely to be affected by the new laws, and Ian Cole, Chief Executive of TIDY Northern Ireland, admits the results are disappointing. "With an increase in the number of people smoking on the street there was always a risk of an increase in the numbers of cigarette butts carelessly discarded, but we were hoping people would have made more of an effort to use bins and ashtrays," he said. "We at TIDY Northern Ireland would ask people to be conscious of littering when they have finished their cigarette, and to dispose of butts in the correct manner. If you dropping a cigarette on the ground it not only harms the environment, but you are running the risk of receiving a £50 littering fine."

"We would also appeal to those responsible for public buildings, such as pubs, clubs, restaurants, offices and shops, to make sure there are adequate facilities outside the building for disposal of cigarettes."

Dropping a cigarette butt can also have a direct effect on ratepayers, with some councils in the province already having to provide extra services to tackle the increase in litter. There are also other costs

associated with cigarette litter. Every year young children are admitted to hospital having eaten cigarette butts, there can be huge costs associated with fires started by lit cigarettes, and there is lost revenue from tourism when we get a reputation as a 'dirty' country.

It is estimated that 4.5 trillion cigarette butts enter the environment every year, and although small in size, they are regarded as one of the most harmful forms of litter. They are made of plastic fibres that can take over 2 years to degrade, and contain up to 4,000 chemicals that are harmful to the environment.

Note to Editors:

TIDY Northern Ireland, an anti-litter charity, is the provinces leading authority on litter issues, and provides a unique service to communities, businesses, councils and schools throughout Northern Ireland.

Tidy Northern Ireland runs the Keep Northern Ireland Tidy Campaigns, and manages the Northern Ireland Borough Cleanliness Survey, TIDY Business, TIDY Communities, Eco-Schools, and the Blue Flag scheme for clean beaches and marinas in Northern Ireland.

TIDY Northern Ireland Chief Executive Ian Cole is available for interview. He can be contacted on 028 90 673 863 or email ian.cole@tidynorthernireland.org