

What TIDY Northern Ireland can do for you

TIDY Northern Ireland is the anti-litter charity focusing on litter and cleanliness issues throughout the province.

We seek to highlight the problems caused by all forms of littering, and provide advice, expertise and information to enable your council to mount effective policies to combat the problem.

We provide a wide range of services and campaigns aimed at improving the local environmental quality of Northern Ireland.

Cigarette Litter Reaches Record Levels



TIDY N.I. has called on businesses to provide more butt bins and ashtrays outside public premises, following revelations from a recent survey that smoking related litter on our streets has continued to rise dramatically in the months following the introduction of the public smoking ban.

A survey conducted in the month following the April 30th ban showed smoking related litter outside pubs, restaurants and public buildings had risen by 17%, but six months later that figure has almost doubled to 33%.

Almost one in three people lay the blame for the increase not on the smokers responsible for dropping the cigarette litter, but on the businesses who fail to provide adequate facilities for their disposal.

"Cigarette butts are one of the most harmful forms of litter, and if we don't take steps to reduce the amounts on our town and city streets then it will continue to rise," said TIDY Northern Ireland CEO Ian Cole. "There are too many premises with insufficient butt bins or ashtrays outside, leaving smokers with little option but to discard their butts on the street. While the smoker obviously has a responsibility not to litter, he has to get some help in the form of bins or ashtrays if we are to witness an improvement in the cigarette related litter levels. At the moment the problem is getting worse, not better."

Northern Ireland's town and city centres are the worst affected areas with 79% tarnished by littered cigarette butts, but worryingly two thirds of children's play parks and recreational areas are also affected.

Globally, cigarettes are the most littered item in the world, with 4.5 trillion butts discarded worldwide every year.

TIDY NI SET TO JOIN FEE

TIDY NI is celebrating receiving Associated Member status with the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). It means that from September 2008 (subject to approval from the General Assembly in June), TIDY NI will be an independent body as far as both Blue Flag and Eco-Schools are concerned. This is in recognition of the work TIDY NI has done with FEE programmes over the years.

This year Northern Ireland could gain 9 Blue Flags for our beaches following on from 7 beaches and 2 marinas achieving the award last year. Unfortunately Blue Flag for marinas will not be running this year but it is TIDY's intention to run Blue Flag for marinas in Northern Ireland in the future, and will be accepting applications for the 2009 season from autumn 2008.



PROJECT OMEGA CONTRACTOR WINS TIDY BUSINESS AWARD



The company responsible for the construction element of Project Omega, Laing O'Rourke, has been rewarded for its environmental practices with a TIDY Business award.

Delivered by joint venture company Glen Water, which is made up of Laing O'Rourke and Thames Water, the £122m Private Partnership (PPP) project includes the construction of a new Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW) in Donaghadee and new pumping stations at Briggs Rock, Groomsport and Donaghadee.

The Bronze TIDY Business Award is presented to companies that take action towards bettering their waste management practices and improving their local environment. The award assesses areas such as general cleanliness, environmental awareness, waste management, community involvement and sustainable development, and seeks to ensure that the TIDY Business principals permeate throughout all levels of the organisation.

"I would like to congratulate Laing O'Rourke on achieving a bronze award," said TIDY Northern Ireland Chief Executive Ian Cole. "The site is still in the early stages of development but it is already obvious that there is a conscious effort to ensure they conduct their operation in a way that is sensitive to their environment. Their waste management and staff awareness programmes are particularly impressive."

Keep up to date on the Website

The TIDY Northern Ireland website celebrated a record breaking year in 2007, with more visitors and more site downloads than ever before.

Despite a break of several months for a website upgrade, www.tidynorthernireland.org received over 31,000 visits during the last 12 months, with in excess of 10,000 documents downloaded.

As well as keeping you up to date with the latest breaking stories about the environment, the TIDY N.I. website has almost 200 downloadable items to keep you informed about all aspects of litter, the environment, Eco-Schools, Blue Flag Awards, and much, much more.

Sticky Streets Consigned to History?

by Nigel Frazer

One of Northern Ireland's most prevalent forms of litter could soon be a thing of the past, following the development of a non-stick paving treatment. Discarded chewing gum comes out as one of the most common forms of litter in every TIDY Northern Ireland survey, and local councils spend tens of thousands of pounds of rate payers money every year trying to combat the problem, but technology could finally provide a solution.

"It would be a huge step forward for councils if they could remove chewing gum from the streets in the same manner as other litter," said TIDY Northern Ireland CEO Ian Cole. "Every single town or city street in Northern Ireland is afflicted by the problem, and this new treatment process could be a real breakthrough. The main problem with gum is that once it lands on the pavement it sticks and doesn't budge, but this product removes that element making it easier and cheaper to clean."

The treatment works by forming a semi-permeable membrane as it sinks into the paving stones, preventing any gum, grease or stains from sticking to the surface. Instead of discolouring the pavements, staining and airborne carbon is washed away during rainfall, effectively providing a self-cleaning surface.

The system has already been trialled in England by Westminster Council, and TIDY Northern Ireland would encourage councils in Northern Ireland to be aware of the product and adopt similar initiatives.



£4,000 available for Environmentally Aware Local Schools

by Joan Peden



Many of the province's schools are set to be rewarded for their environmental efforts following the news that Eco-Schools and Currys have joined forces to award grants of up to £4,000 for schools who embrace projects on ecological issues.

The windfall, which will be presented in the form of a cash donation towards the costs of the proposed project or energy efficient goods from the electrical retailer, will reward both primary and secondary schools for projects which educate on the importance of dealing efficiently with energy or water.

Eligible schools must have already achieved a Bronze or Silver Eco-Schools award, making 162 schools throughout Northern Ireland eligible for the grants.

In Northern Ireland Eco-Schools is run by TIDY Northern Ireland, and their Chief Executive Ian Cole urged schools to take advantage of this opportunity.

"Eco-Schools has become a hugely popular programme across the province, and this grant has provided another opportunity for schools and their pupils to do something positive for the environment," he said. "The fact that we have 370 schools registered on the programme shows that the environment is an issue which is of huge interest and importance to our future generations, and hopefully the lessons they learn through the Eco-Schools programme will stay with them throughout their lives."

Schools wishing to apply for the grant can do so through the TIDY Northern Ireland website, www.tidynorthernireland.org. The deadline for applications for the final round is 1st February 2008. The final round of applications must be submitted by 1st April 2008.



Coastal Areas Receive Environmental Boost

The coastline of Northern Ireland could be set for an environmental boost after TIDY NI revealed they are in negotiations to introduce a new programme to our shores, the *Clean Coast Programme*. If successful the programme will include an award and a community involvement scheme which could aid beach/coastal management and potentially arrest rising litter trends on beaches.

Northern Ireland's Supermarkets Must Address Packaging Issues

TIDY Northern Ireland has urged supermarkets to make a bigger effort to reduce the amount of packaging, following reports that the Government is in danger of missing recycling targets because as much as 40% of packaging cannot be recycled.

A recent survey showed markets and local retailers were the best of the retail outlets with a recyclable packaging rate of 79%. The best supermarket was Asda with a rate of 70%, while Marks & Spencers and Lidl came bottom of the list with only 60% of packaging suitable for recycling.



The Chief Executive of TIDY Northern Ireland has called for the supermarkets to take the lead in combating the problem. "The large supermarkets have to focus their energy on reducing the amount of packaging on their shelves," said Ian Cole. "Far too much packaging is going straight to our already over-used landfill sites because it cannot be recycled, while a considerable amount is also finding its way onto the streets and adding to the litter problem. If the big chain stores were more responsible about the vast quantities they are producing, it would have great benefits for both the recycling and litter problems."

Cleanliness Survey Results Imminent

We are set to learn whether 2007 has been a tidy year for Northern Ireland, with the results of the Borough Cleanliness Survey due to be released within weeks.

The definitive indicator as to the cleanliness of streets across Northern Ireland, the TIDY N.I. survey will reveal whether the litter problem in the province has improved over the last 12 months. It is also set to identify the most common types of litter, and which areas of our environment head the 'untidy' tables.

In 2006 Chewing Gum and Cigarette Litter were the two major culprits, while low density housing estates were found to be the cleanest areas of the country.

Councils from across the province have been taking part in the survey during 2007. If your council is not yet involved, contact TIDY NI for details of how to register for the programme.

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