



# TIDY Northern Ireland

## Council Newsletter

Issue 4 April 2008

### New Beach Programme Launched



A new TIDY Northern Ireland programme is set to land on our shores for the first time this year. The Clean Coast Programme will boost efforts to clean up our coastline and will offer recognition for good management practice on our more rural beaches.

This month saw the launch of the Clean Coast Programme partnership in Carlingford with An Taisce (the Irish National Trust) and Coca-Cola Ulster Bottlers Ltd. who are acting as the associate sponsor of the new Northern Ireland programme

The new programme has been running in Wales and the Republic of Ireland for some years and has proved very popular with communities and coastal authorities. The Green Coast Award will recognise rural beaches which are well managed and have active guardianship and 'The Programme' will directly involve local communities in clean ups and many other environmental activities.

TIDY Northern Ireland Chief Executive Ian Cole, commented on the increasing litter problem on our beaches, "Local beaches and coastlines play an important part in the lives of our coastal communities but litter is causing a huge problem. It is polluting our island's waters and shorelines and even interrupting the aquatic ecosystem. Through this campaign we will be appealing to local communities to be more aware of their behaviour and the affect it is having on their beaches."

The new programme is a chance to clean up our coastline but most importantly it is an opportunity to get local people involved in actively caring for their coastal environment and to have fun!

If you would like to find out more about the Clean Coast Programme please contact: [jennifer.smyth@tidynorthernireland.org](mailto:jennifer.smyth@tidynorthernireland.org) or phone 0846 86 206 86.

### Sweet Wrappers & Cigarette Butts a Threat To Cleaner Streets

The cleanliness of our streets has improved for the third year in succession, but a rising tide of sweet wrappers and cigarette butts is threatening to reverse the trend.

Those are part of the findings of an extensive **TIDY Northern Ireland** survey that has shown that 92% of streets met government cleanliness guidelines during 2007. While this is an improvement on the 13% failure rate of the previous year, both cigarette litter and confectionery related litter has been on the increase during the same period.



"It is pleasing to see confirmation that Northern Ireland is getting cleaner, but it is a constant battle to keep litter off our streets and we are now seeing some worrying trends that need to be addressed immediately," said TIDY Northern Ireland spokesman Nigel Frazer. "Sadly it is no surprise to see an increase in cigarette litter following the introduction of the public smoking ban, but the dramatic rise in confectionery litter is an unexpected and worrying development. This form of litter is now outnumbering old chewing gum deposits for the first time, and if we are to continue reporting improvements in cleanliness levels then people need to change their attitudes immediately."

Over the past year surveyors have scrutinised almost 1,000 public sites in the province's largest annual litter survey. The **Borough Cleanliness Survey** revealed that cigarette litter is present on almost half of our streets, with confectionery litter found on 38% of areas surveyed. While dog fouling is regarded as one of the worst forms of litter it was found to be one of the least frequent offenders, being found on only one in twenty areas.

For the second year in a row Peripheral Retail Developments outside town and city centres returned the poorest results, while there also proved to be a significant difference between the cleanliness levels in low density and high density residential areas. Areas of low density housing received an impressive 98% pass rate, while in contrast more than one in ten areas of higher density housing failed to meet the required standards.

## COOKSTOWN TIDY BUSINESS AWARDS



There was one Gold award winner among the 10 businesses in Cookstown to receive Tidy Business awards at the recent awards ceremony held at Cookstown District Council.

"We are pleased at the number of businesses who took up the challenge in this years Tidy Business Scheme," said Mark Kelso, Director of Environmental Health with Cookstown District Council. "These businesses have shown commitment to improving the visual appearance of their local environment, thereby making Cookstown Town Centre more aesthetically pleasing to residents, visitors and businesses."

The award winners received their certificates from Cllr. Ian McCrea, Chairman of Cookstown Council.

The Tidy Business Scheme is promoted by Tidy Northern Ireland and facilitated by Cookstown District Council through the local Community Safety Partnership. Tidy Northern Ireland Chief Executive Officer, Ian Cole was delighted to see the response from the local traders. "Tidy Northern Ireland has been very impressed with the standards show in today's awards. To have such a high proportion of Silver awards and even a Gold award winner is remarkable, considering it is the first year of the programme. The 2008 award winners now face the challenge of maintaining and improving on their standards and I hope that in the coming months we will see other businesses in Cookstown join the programme and reap the benefits of becoming a 'Tidy' Business.

The Tidy Business Programme aims to encourage businesses to improve their standard of refuse management and improve the image and cleanliness of their premises. There are three levels of awards attainable; Bronze, Silver and Gold.

**Award Winners:** *Kee Clothing (Gold); The Streat (Silver); Falls Pharmacy (Silver); Sheehy's (Silver); McGovern Opticians (Silver); Penny Farthing (Silver); Thompson Footwear (Silver); Portfolio (Bronze); Boots Chemist (Bronze); Alliance & Leicester plc (Bronze)*

## Translink & TIDY Northern Ireland seek to Involve Communities

TIDY Northern Ireland is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a working partnership with Translink, helping them to address Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) issues that face Northern Ireland's Public transport providers.



TIDY Northern Ireland has conducted LEQ surveys at Translink facilities and this has resulted in the identification of a number of issues that the company wish to address as an environmentally responsible business.

The aim of the partnership between TIDY NI and Translink is to "Improve the local environmental quality of Translink facilities and infrastructure" and through this they wish to promote awareness of the environmental quality issues and change behaviour to benefit the environment, enhance Translink facilities and Involve Local Communities in Environmental projects in and around Translink facilities.

Translink is committed to improving the local environment and visual appearance of its facilities and are keen to work with local schools and communities to develop educational awareness and projects that benefit the local community and help to address issues like anti-social behaviour as well as helping to improve the appearance of facilities for the benefit of the community in which Translink facilities reside.

The types of projects that TIDY NI and Translink are developing include; litter picks, legal graffiti, biodiversity planting and habitats and adopt-a-station. We are also keen to run programmes relating to the environmental campaigns developed by TIDY NI for Translink to raise awareness amongst young people about environmental quality issues to work towards changing behaviour through education about anti-social behaviour effecting Translink facilities like graffiti and illegal dumping.

Please contact Melanie Gibson, TIDY NI Environment Officer on 0845 86 206 86, via email at [melanie.gibson@tidynorthernireland.org](mailto:melanie.gibson@tidynorthernireland.org) if you would like to be involved in a project.

More information on the TIDY NI partnership with Translink can be found on the TIDY NI website at [www.tidynorthernireland.org](http://www.tidynorthernireland.org)



## Legislation Aims to Improve Our Beaches

The condition of the province's beaches is set for a boost following the release of a new marine bill which will encourage better use of our marine resources, improve marine biodiversity and reduce the amount of litter on our coastline.



The UK's coastal and marine environments are some of the most beautiful in the world, especially here in Northern Ireland. The Draft of the Marine Bill is an encouraging step towards securing improved preservation of these areas. The bill includes plans to improve marine spatial planning ensuring more sustainable, efficient use and protection of our marine resources along with changes in marine licensing, fisheries management and marine enforcement. Additionally, proposals have been put forward for better coastal and estuarine management including schemes to reduce marine litter which ultimately ends up on our beaches. One of the most important proposals brought forward by the draft will be the introduction of new tools for marine nature conservation which will attempt to halt the deterioration of the UK's marine biodiversity.

The Marine Bill is a step towards coordinating UK marine law enabling new planning and conservation powers to better protect this incredibly important resource which is often forgotten. These changes which will affect the food we eat, the energy we use and the way we see our coastline in the future and is an urgently needed piece of legislation which many will be relieved to see implemented.

### breathing places schools

Eco-Schools in NI has signed up to be a Northern Ireland Delivery Partner in the BBC Breathing Places Schools initiative.

The BBC is famous for its wildlife broadcasting and over the next two years, they want to get 10,000 schools closer to nature by providing help with making school grounds into special places for wildlife with the BBC Breathing Places Schools campaign. Schools wanting to get involved can go to the BBC Breathing Places website and register as a Breathing Places



## Plastic the Scourge of our Times

The media recently has focused on the problem of plastic in the mid Pacific Ocean on Midway Island where it is causing major problems to the local wildlife inhabitants and many people here in Northern Ireland may be saying "what is that to do with us" well the answer is 'everything'.



In Northern Ireland an estimated 1 billion bags a year are in use at any one time. It costs supermarkets around half a penny to produce one typical plastic bag, with retailers spending up to £80 million per year on providing plastic bags to their customers. Did you also know that plastic bags account for up to 1% of visible litter, 2% of total litter on beaches, 0.3% of the domestic waste stream and up to 5.3% of total plastic packaging used.

Some people are making an effort with 80% of consumers currently re-using their plastic bags at least once for a variety of purposes, such as bin-liners, nappy sacks or lunch bags, but we need to do more. It is also estimated that if a bag is 'thrown away' it takes up to 1000 years for it to degrade, and this causes many problems not just to wildlife but to us humans, as the plastic is digested into shell fish and mollusks and they get into the food chain bringing diseases to humans.

A number of major retailers are no longer giving out free plastic bags to their customers, notably M&S and IKEA, but we all need to make the effort if the problem is not going to increase.

The plea from TIDY Northern Ireland is 'if you need to use a bag then use it carefully and many times, or ideally use a Bag for Life'.



### Radical Action Called For on Chewing Gum

TIDY Northern Ireland have backed calls for a chewing gum tax to clean up our streets, after the proposal was recently debated in the House of Commons.

Labour MP Graham Allen urged radical new solutions to be implemented in a bid to eradicate a problem that has become commonplace on the pavements and streets of the province. Along with cigarette butts and confectionery litter, chewing gum has topped the litter charts in Northern Ireland for many years. Recent TIDY Northern Ireland surveys show there is no indication of a reduction in the figures, with the gum continuing to stick to shoes, wheelchairs and prams in huge numbers. "We need radical new solutions - like biodegradable gum - to tackle the problem," said Mr Allen, the Nottingham based Member of Parliament. "If the industry does not face up to the consequences of its product then it - as the polluter - should pay."

TIDY Northern Ireland Chief Executive Ian Cole agrees with the sentiments of the MP. "We in Northern Ireland suffer exactly the same problems as the rest of the UK, and there needs to be some dramatic changes," he said. "Chewing gum is unlike most other forms of litter in that it is very costly and time consuming to remove. Many councils are currently spending huge amounts of rate payer's money on the removal of gum, but it is time for the manufacturers to take responsibility for the problems their product causes. The public must also be more aware of the problems associated with careless disposal of chewing gum, and we would ask them to do their bit to combat the problem by finding a bin rather than dropping it on the street."

### Prize Winners in Illegal Dumping Campaign



St Malachy's Primary School student Katie O'Hare has won first prize in the Illegal Dumping Campaign Schools Poster Competition, run by Translink in partnership with TIDY Northern Ireland

and Belfast City Council. Two runners up posters were also chosen which were created by Aimee Stewart of Donegall Road P.S., and Emma McGuigan of St Malachys P.S.

The campaign was developed in response to the on-going issue of illegal dumping on Translink's property, and in particular along the rail infrastructure. This amongst other issues, are being tackled through a partnership approach between Translink and TIDY Northern Ireland. The partnership addresses the nature, scale and source of problems affecting Translink, such as litter, fly posting, graffiti, fly tipping and vandalism. The winning entry has been reproduced as a station poster for use in Translink's on-going illegal dumping campaign.

### Kids Give Grown Ups Environmental Lessons

Kids are more concerned about the environment than their elders, and are telling their parents to change their attitudes when it comes to halting environmental decline.



New research shows 95% of children aged between 4 and 15 were 'concerned' by global warming, and three quarters of the respondents believed they were more fluent on the subject than their parents. TIDY Northern Ireland runs the Eco-Schools programme in the province, and with almost 400 schools signed up for the scheme, its growing popularity is evidence of the emphasis school children are placing on the world in which we live. To find out more about Eco-Schools, visit [www.eco-schools.org](http://www.eco-schools.org)



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