



TIDY Northern Ireland

Council Newsletter

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TIDY Northern Ireland Board Members Receive New Year's Honours



TIDY Northern Ireland was acknowledged not once but twice in the Queen's New Year's Honours list, with Chairman Leslie Murray awarded a CBE and Professor Sue Christie, a director on the board of TIDY N.I., awarded an OBE.

Leslie Murray CBE has been chairman of TIDY N.I. for three years, and his award was one of only four CBEs awarded in Northern Ireland. A former chairman of ARENA, Leslie has overseen the successful growth and development of TIDY Northern Ireland in recent years, with the anti-litter charity becoming recognised as one of the province's leading authorities on littering issues.



Prof. Sue Christie OBE is originally from California but moved to Northern Ireland in 1982. She is the Director of Northern Ireland Environment Link, and also holds a position on the board of TIDY Northern Ireland.

TIDY NI & Councils Join Forces in the Fight against Litter

TIDY Northern Ireland has teamed up with several councils throughout the province to tackle the problems presented by cigarette and fast food related litter. Following on from a survey conducted last year which highlighted these two litter issues as a major concern for many councils, TIDY N.I. are now assisting with pilot campaigns in five council areas; Coleraine, Derry, Cookstown, North Down and Newry and Mourne.

As well as providing advice and practical assistance with the running of these campaigns, TIDY Northern Ireland will carry out surveys before and after each initiative to give an indication of their effectiveness. From these findings a report will be produced that will highlight a variety of different campaign approaches, and also give a measurable indication of the value of each method.



Two of these councils have already begun to implement their campaigns. To tie in with the redevelopment of their pedestrianised town centre, Coleraine Borough Council are targeting cigarette litter. They have distributed posters and other information to businesses within the town centre, highlighting the need for workers to dispose of their butts in the proper manner when they are smoking outside their place of work. They have also supplied several local newsagents with 'stubbies' (portable cigarette ashtrays) and these are available free of charge to smokers. Anti-litter banners are also being displayed from lampposts in the town.

Cookstown District Council are mounting a campaign to tackle fast food litter. They have initiated a poster competition within the local schools, with the winning design being printed and distributed to fast food outlets and other businesses within the town. They also plan to carry out a high profile enforcement campaign to try to reduce the amount of fast food packaging littering the town centre streets.



It is hoped that all councils will have completed their pilot campaigns early this year, and the TIDY Northern Ireland report is scheduled to be released in the spring of 2009.

Seaside Awards are Back



After an absence of three years, the Seaside Awards are set to return to Northern Ireland. When the awards were last issued there were 14 Seaside Awards around our coast, and now they are being adopted again and will be up and running in 2009.

The Seaside Award flag is awarded to beaches which meet mandatory water quality standards according to the EC Bathing Water Directive and are also clean, well managed and safe. The Seaside Award is divided into two award categories, Resort and Rural.

A Resort Seaside Award beach attracts a high volume of visitors and provides lots of facilities e.g. toilets, access for disabled people, car parks, restricted access for dogs. These beaches are usually located near towns. There are 29 criteria which are assessed before the beach is given an award.

A Rural Seaside Award beach usually attracts fewer visitors than a resort beach, and is not as developed. This award is given to beaches which are effectively managed and are clean. The beach must meet fifteen criteria to achieve the award.

If you are interested in nominating one of your beaches for an award, contact information can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Eco-Schools Awarded Green Flags



Eco-Schools from across Northern Ireland gathered in Ballymena recently to receive their Green Flags for environmental achievement.

Run internationally by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), Eco-Schools involves over five million pupils across 45 countries. In recognition of the efforts of Northern Ireland's pupils and teachers, FEE President, Jan Eriksen, and Director, Finn Bolding Thomsen, travelled to the province to acknowledge the achievements made by local primary and post primary schools.

A third of the province's schools are currently registered on the programme, with Holy Family Primary School becoming the 100th recipient of the prestigious Eco-School Green Flag Award. Coagh Primary School also recently became the 400th school to register for the scheme, which provides a simple framework to enable schools to analyse its operations and become more sustainable, reducing the environmental impact of the whole school on the community.

The Eco-Schools programme is a pupil led initiative that involves the entire school. It deals with topics including Biodiversity, Litter, Waste, Energy, Water, Transport, Healthy Living and School Grounds.

If you want to register a school for the programme contact information can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Beach Litter — It's Rubbish!

A team of volunteers have recently completed a clean up of Browns Bay beach, Islandmagee as part of the Clean Coast Programme sponsored by Coca Cola.

Local volunteers helped to make a practical difference to their local beach by recording and then removing rubbish. The beach litter survey recorded a total of 172 items, with the five most common litter items being cigarette butts, ceramic and glass pieces, fishing line/net/rope, mesh and plastic bags and crisp/sweet wrappers. Unusual items found included a large section of a manhole cover and sand bags.



The litter pick was also part of the Marine Conservation Society's (MCS) Beachwatch 2008. A survey carried out by the volunteers showed that the major source of beach litter was beach visitors, who forget to use public bins when taking food or drink or having a smoke

TIDY N.I., Larne Borough Council and Coca Cola all worked together with local organiser Elena Aceves-Cully to clean up the beach, and she was delighted with the success of their efforts. "I think it is a great way to make children in particular more aware of litter and of the need of keeping beaches clean," she said. "Often people who visit the beach do not use bins provided, spoiling the beach for other visitors. It is important that individuals take responsibility for their own actions, and remember never to leave litter on the beach."

If you would like to find out more about the Clean Coast Programme contact information can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Borough Cleanliness Survey Results Set to be Unveiled

The Annual report of TIDY Northern Ireland's Borough Cleanliness Survey, which provides an indication of the cleanliness of the province's streets, is set to be released in March.

The report, which always generates interest among the media, details the number of streets within the participating council areas failing to meet the required standards for both litter and detritus. It also identifies the most common forms of litter, with cigarette related litter usually topping the charts as the most frequent type.

2009 sees a new format for the Cleanliness survey, with independent TIDY NI staff set to carry out all the surveying during the year. The new format also sees an expansion to include graffiti and fly-posting, photographs of failing transects, and a range of options relating to the frequency of surveying.

If you would like your council to be part of the new Borough Cleanliness Survey contact information can be found at the end of this newsletter.

TIDY N.I. Website Cleans Up

The TIDY Northern Ireland website welcomed over 115,000 visitors in 2008. The past twelve months have been a record breaking year for the site with more visitors and more downloads than ever before.

Items downloaded from the site have topped 4,000 documents every month. The most popular downloads during the year have been the TIDY N.I. Borough Cleanliness Survey Reports, Cigarette Litter, and the Eco-Schools Handbook.

The website provides a wide range of information, from all the latest news about Eco-Schools to advice for running a litter campaign. A download in high demand recently is TIDY Northern Ireland's new Borough Cleanliness Survey Proposals, with the amended survey giving councils more choice and value for money than ever before. Other areas that have attracted significant interest are the beach programmes (Blue Flag and Clean Coast) and the TIDY Business scheme which encourages companies to work towards creating a cleaner and greener environment for towns throughout the province.

The front page of the website is updated regularly so remember to log on and keep up to date with all the latest developments.

Councils Gearing Up for TIDY Business Assessments



The next two months will see the 2009 TIDY Business scheme launched in three council areas.

North Down Borough Council are in the fourth year of the award scheme. Their programme has grown dramatically since its inception, and last year the council had over 60 businesses vying for either a Gold, Silver or Bronze award.

Translink have put each of their stations through the programme for the past two years. The inaugural year of the scheme served to highlight areas in need of attention, and management acted on this information. As a result of these improvements Translink went from three Gold award winning stations in 2007 to twelve Gold award winners a year later.

Cookstown District Council are entering their second year of the scheme, and are hoping to build on their pilot year when they awarded 10 certificates. They are also linking the programme to a fast food litter campaign, with local businesses encouraged to register for the programme as part of the campaign.

Down District Council are on the verge of launching the scheme for the first time. They are implementing the award scheme in a bid to encourage businesses to take an active role in improving the image of the area. The wide ranging programme has been tailored to cut down on litter and anti-social behaviour within Downpatrick town centre.

The TIDY Business scheme is one of TIDY Northern Ireland's fastest growing programmes, covering areas such as General Cleanliness, Litter Awareness, Exterior Maintenance, Waste Management and Community Involvement. There is some flexibility built into the programme which allows individual councils to tailor the programme to their specific needs, making it an attractive and economical proposition for councils who want to improve the image of their major town centres.

Councils wishing to enrol in the TIDY Business Scheme should contact nigel.frazer@tidynorthernireland.org

Policy Recommendations

TIDY Northern Ireland is keen to explore all possible avenues in our attempt to improve the cleanliness of the province, and as part of this process we will be proposing a policy recommendation to the Stormont Executive. In our discussions with councils it has become evident that the introduction of the Clean Neighbourhoods Act is seen by local authorities as an important step in combating the litter problem, and TIDY Northern Ireland will continue to press for the introduction of this legislation as soon as possible.



Cigarette Costume Highlights Litter Issue

TIDY N.I. has recently acquired a cigarette costume which is available for hire to any councils wishing to promote cigarette litter campaigns.

Following the introduction of the public smoking ban cigarette litter in town centres has increased significantly, and this attention grabbing costume is a unique way of generating publicity for any initiatives designed to address the problem.

Submit Your Stories

If you have carried out any litter campaigns or wish to share any litter experiences, submit your stories and we will consider publishing them in a future edition.

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