



# TIDY Northern Ireland

## Council Newsletter

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## Beaches & Community Groups Win Coastal Awards

Eight beaches have been awarded the Green Coast Award by TIDY Northern Ireland for their natural unspoilt beauty.

The new award programme, which is sponsored by Coca Cola Bottlers (Ulster) Ltd, aims to improve and promote the local environment through water quality, safety, litter and waste, and information and education on the beach. The beaches at **Benone Strand, Portrush West Strand, Portrush Whiterocks, Downhill, Cranfield, Murlough Beach, Tyrella** and **Millisle** have become the first winners of the award.



"In this, the opening year for the award in Northern Ireland, we have seen incredible enthusiasm and commitment from community groups and volunteers in working to clean up their local beaches," said Jennifer Smyth, Coastal Officer with TIDY Northern Ireland. "We have some of the most beautiful coastline in the world, but all too often the potential of our beaches goes unfulfilled. The efforts made by the recipients of today's awards should act as an inspiration, and hopefully their example will be followed by others and we will have many more beaches receiving recognition for their efforts in the coming years."

Gillian McBrien, Public Relation Executive for Coca-Cola Bottlers (Ulster) Ltd., said: "We are proud to support the 'Green Coast Awards' and 'Clean Coasts Programme'. As a local company we have been investing in community projects for some 70 years and are proud to partner with Tidy Northern Ireland, an organisation that is committed to protecting our local environment and championing environmental change for coastlines throughout Northern Ireland."

In addition to the beach operators, the programme has inspired volunteers and community groups to carry out litter picks and clean ups along Northern Ireland's coastline in a bid to restore their natural beauty. Areas all over Northern Ireland have contributed to the programme and worked towards the awards including Ards, Newry and Mourne, Larne, Newtownabbey, Coleraine and North Down.

The programme organisers have acknowledged the special efforts of volunteers and community groups in the Larne area, awarding them the Clean Coast Programme Achievement Award after concerted clean up operations at three of their local beaches, Browns Bay, Ballygally and Carnlough.

Commenting on this special recognition, Deputy Mayor of Larne Borough Council, Councillor Gerardine Mulvenna said, "On behalf of all the citizens of Larne, I'd like to express appreciation to both the staff of the Council and the civic-minded citizens who have contributed to the beautification of our beaches with their efforts. We are fortunate to live in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and this award is a result of their contributions to maintaining our beaches so well."

TIDY N.I. is holding a beach operators meeting in Belfast on Thursday 6th November, at which all beach operators are invited to comment on any aspects of the Blue Flag or Clean Coast Programmes. Anyone wishing to attend this event or needing further details should contact Jennifer Smyth, TIDY NI Coastal Officer, on 0845 86 206 86 or email [Jennifer.smyth@tidynorthernireland.org](mailto:Jennifer.smyth@tidynorthernireland.org)

## Revamped Borough Cleanliness Survey Tailored to Council's Needs

TIDY Northern Ireland's newly restructured Borough Cleanliness Survey provides councils throughout Northern Ireland with an independent monitoring service, giving each borough a comprehensive analysis of factors affecting the cleanliness of their district.

We have broadened the scope of the survey for 2009 to give councils a more relevant and flexible service, and we trust that your council will be able to select a survey that meets your needs. The surveys will not only examine the cleanliness levels across different land use types, but will also analyse the types of litter found, aiding you in formulating actions and campaigns to combat problems relevant to your area.



TIDY Northern Ireland has many years experience in conducting this type of survey, and from previous results we can monitor your council's cleanliness levels and provide you with an indication of how your area compares to the Northern Ireland average. The survey also enables us to monitor the cleanliness of your council year on year, and we can provide you with an indicator of the progress being made in your area.

The surveying process is based the Government approved standards stipulated by NI 195, amended to specifically cater for the unique challenges faced by Northern Ireland councils.

If you wish to apply to be part of the new Borough Cleanliness Survey or you want to discuss the programme in further detail, please contact Nigel Frazer on 0845 86 206 86 or email [nigel.frazer@tidynorthernireland.org](mailto:nigel.frazer@tidynorthernireland.org)

## New Eco-Schools Website Set to be Launched

Later this year Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland will have their own tailor made website. Instead of sharing a website with England, [www.eco-schoolsni.org](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org) will provide a comprehensive service specifically targeted at Northern Ireland participants.

You can already register online to ensure you are notified of the new service as soon as it becomes available.

## COUNCILS URGED TO ISSUE MORE LITTER FINES

TIDY Northern Ireland website visitors have urged councils to be more proactive when handing out fixed penalty notices for littering. In a poll on the website which attracted a substantial number of responses, a massive 96.5% said that councils should issue more fixed penalty notices in a bid to combat the litter problem.

Earlier this year TIDY Northern Ireland conducted a survey of the province's councils which showed that there was a huge variation in the numbers of fines issued. While some council areas were keen to penalise those who dropped litter on the streets, in other areas of Northern Ireland litterers were able to pollute their local environment with no chance of being hit with a £50 fine.

While some areas revealed that their councillors do not believe the issue to be a 'vote winner' among the public, the findings of the TIDY Northern Ireland poll illustrate that for many people in the province the enforcement of the littering laws is a vital tool that needs to be more consistently implemented if we are to keep our streets clean and tidy.



## £3,000 Grant for Eco-Schools

Thanks to the continuing support of Currys as part of the 'Switched on Communities' scheme, Eco-Schools in NI have the opportunity to apply for funding to help them progress towards the prestigious Green Flag award.

Applications for grants up to a maximum of £3,000 are considered for new or existing projects that create positive change and development within a school on the themes of energy and water. Priority will be given to projects that clearly demonstrate an energy efficiency element or identify technology solutions to environmental improvements.



The 'Switched on Communities' scheme also provides a selection of free energy saving white goods (those displaying the highest Energy Saving Logo rating) such as fridges, freezers, washing machines, dishwashers and energy efficient light bulbs. Schools may also apply for energy saving equipment such as energy efficient lamps, new heating controls, thermostatic radiator valves, insulation and draught stripping, "switch it off" stickers and posters.

To take advantage of this exciting opportunity your school needs to have:

- Achieved a Bronze or Silver award with the Eco-Schools programme
- Completed an Environmental Review
- Identified a project
- Completed an Action Plan which includes the project for which funds have been requested
- Chosen any required energy saving white goods from the Currys website [www.currys.co.uk](http://www.currys.co.uk)
- Completed a grant application (available on [www.tidynorthernireland.org](http://www.tidynorthernireland.org))

Applications will be reviewed three times during the 08/09 school year, and we would encourage all prospective applicants to discuss their proposal with us before making an application. The Eco-Schools office can be contacted on 0845 86 206 86 or e-mail [info@eco-schoolsni.org](mailto:info@eco-schoolsni.org)

### Ballymena Top of the Eco-Schools Class

There are more registered Eco-Schools in the Ballymena Council area than anywhere else in Northern Ireland. 78% of all schools in the borough promote the environmental education programme, which is well above the Northern Ireland average of 34%. Antrim and Banbridge are the other council areas to have more than half their schools registered. An Eco-Schools officer is currently available to talk with councils about the programme, and several of the regions in the lower echelons of the table have shown considerable interest in boosting their numbers. If you would like to discuss the possibility of increasing your number of registered schools you can contact TIDY NI to discuss the benefits of this internationally recognised programme.

Council Area	No of Eco-Schools	Eco-Schools as % of total schools
Ballymena	32	78
Antrim	23	63.9
Banbridge	19	52.8
Magherafelt	20	45.5
Coleraine	17	42.5
Craigavon	22	42.3
Moyle	8	42.1
Carrickfergus	7	36.8
Ballymoney	10	35.7
Armagh City & District	20	35.1
Newry & Mourne	26	34.7
Derry City	23	34.3
Castlereagh	9	32.1
Fermanagh	19	29.7

Council Area	No of Eco-Schools	Eco-Schools as % of total schools
Dungannon	19	26.6
Limavady	7	25.9
Belfast City	47	25.3
Down	16	25
Ards	10	24.3
Cookstown	7	24.1
Strabane	10	23.8
Lisburn	14	22.6
Omagh	13	22
North Down	8	21.1
Larne	5	20
Newtownabbey	9	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>34.0</b>

## International Recognition for Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland



To celebrate the continuing success of the Eco-Schools programme within Northern Ireland, TIDY NI is to host a delegation of international guests from the Foundation of Environmental Education in November.

FEE President Jan Eriksen and Director Finn Bolding Thomsen jet into the province to join with Eco-School partners, local councils, Eco-Schools assessors and representatives of the education and library boards as well as distinguished visitors from around Northern Ireland to acclaim the environmental programme, which currently boasts in excess of 420 registered schools and over 100 Green Flag Award winners.

In addition to drama and music presentations from schools, the 2007/08 Green Flag winners will be presented with their awards, while special awards will be given to the schools who helped the programme reach the landmark figures of 400 registered schools and 100 Green Flags.

FEE is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation aiming to promote sustainable development through environmental education. It is an international umbrella organisation with one national member organisation per country representing FEE on the national level and in charge of implementing FEE programmes nationally. FEE has member organisations in 55 countries worldwide, with Northern Ireland gaining associate member status last year.

Anyone wishing to attend the event should contact TIDY N.I. for an invitation.

### TIDY Business Gaining Popularity



TIDY Business continues to go from strength to strength, with several councils progressing towards their first assessments.

The programme rewards town centre businesses for adopting an environmentally friendly approach to their business practices, helping councils to ensure that businesses in their borough comply with litter and waste legislation, as well as playing a part in improving the image of the town.

"We are entering year two of the programme and have been delighted with the response to our first year," said Anne Caldwell, Principal Environmental Health Officer with Cookstown District Council. "We are now hoping to build on that success and encourage even more of the town's businesses to play their part in making our town centre a vibrant environment that will continue to attract shoppers."

Businesses are rewarded for the performance in ten categories: General Cleanliness, Litter Awareness, Environmental Awareness and Enhancement of Premises, Exterior Maintenance, Waste Management, Compliance with Legislation, Staff Training, Community Involvement, Energy Management, and Sustainable Development. For further information please contact Nigel Frazer on 0845 86 206 86 or email [nigel.frazer@tidynorthernireland.org](mailto: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. If there is an area that your council would like to see government address please let us know.

### Submit Your Stories

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



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