



TIDY Northern Ireland

Council Newsletter

Issue 5 July 2008

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SEVEN BEACHES AWARDED BLUE FLAGS

Seven beaches in Northern Ireland have been bestowed the prestigious Blue Flag awards today for having litter-free sands and clean bathing waters – the same number as last year.

Downhill Beach beside Castlerock returns to the list of winners having missed out in 2007, and receives the internationally acclaimed recognition along with **Tyrella** and **Cranfield Bay** in Co Down, **Portrush West Strand**, **Portrush Whiterocks**, **Benone Strand** and **Portstewart**.

Ian Humphreys, Chief Executive of TIDY Northern Ireland who runs the Blue Flag programme in the province, said: "It is great that we can offer beach goers the opportunity to avail of a coastline maintained to such a high standard and these awards are testament to the efforts of everyone who looks after these areas. The beach operators have put in a lot of hard work to provide top class facilities, and I would now appeal to the public to do their bit. We should all take pride in our beaches and everyone can help by disposing of their rubbish in the proper manner, so we can all continue to enjoy the summer sunshine amid clean and pleasant surroundings."



Northern Ireland's seven beaches are among 85 throughout Ireland to receive the prestigious accolade. The award winning beaches were presented their Blue Flags at a cross border presentation ceremony sponsored by Northern Ireland Tourist Board and supported by Coca Cola. The event was jointly attended by John Gormley TD, Minister of the Environment and Heritage and Local Government, and Roy Ramsay, Director of Environmental Protection with the Environment and Heritage Service.

"I am delighted to have the opportunity to present the 2008 Blue Flag Awards to the Northern Ireland beach operators," said Dr Ramsay. "I would like to encourage other local authorities and beach operators to apply for these internationally recognised awards which celebrate both our beautiful coastline and its management for all to enjoy."

A Blue Flag beach must satisfy 29 different criteria including litter-free sands, bathing water that meets guideline standard, safe access to the beach, good, well maintained facilities and life saving equipment.

Northern Ireland's 2008 Blue Flag Beach Winners:

Name of Beach	County	Beach Manager
Magilligan, Benone Strand	L'derry	Limavady Borough Council
Cranfield Bay	Down	Newry & Mourne District Council
Downhill	L'derry	Coleraine Borough Council
Portstewart	L'derry	National Trust
Portrush West Strand	Antrim	Coleraine Borough Council
Portrush Whiterocks	Antrim	Coleraine Borough Council
Tyrella	Down	Down District Council

Green Flags for Fermanagh & Strabane Schools

Fermanagh and Strabane are celebrating their first Eco-Schools Green Flags following presentations to both Kesh and St Columba's Primary Schools.

For their Bronze award the Kesh pupils decided to focus on energy saving; for their Silver award they looked at litter issues, while for the Green Flag the school looked at all different kinds of recycling.



Naomi Morrison, Eco-Schools Coordinator at Kesh PS, says that the children have been very proactive making posters, using the recycling bins as well as recycling everything from ink cartridges to cardboard to milk cartons to mobile phones. The pupils have even recycled some old clothes and sheets and old jewellery. "It's great to get the award," said Naomi. "It's an excellent scheme and something the kids take a real interest in,"

Eco-Schools Assessors who visited St Columba's praised the school for making the best use of the grounds, stating that pupil participation across the whole schools was excellent.

Mrs Maguire, Principal said, 'We are thrilled to receive this award, which recognises all the hard work that everybody connected with the school has put in, especially the pupils who were the driving force behind the Eco-Schools Programme. The ultimate objective is much more important than winning the award however. It is to make good citizens of our pupils so that they will go through life with an awareness of the environment and a strong desire to take care of it.'

Eco-Schools is an international programme promoting environmental awareness in schools. It works by involving the whole school together with members of the local community - parents, the local council, the media and local businesses. The prestigious Green Flag is awarded to schools who meet the top level criteria for each of the seven elements of the Eco-Schools process.

For more information about the Eco-Schools programme visit www.eco-schools.org.uk

New Eco-Schools Website Set to be Launched

Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland will soon have their own tailor made website. Instead of sharing a website with England, www.eco-schoolsni.org will provide a comprehensive service specifically targeted at Northern Ireland participants.

The website is set to come online early in the new term, but you can already register online to ensure you are notified of the new service as soon as it becomes available.

TIDY Business Award Scheme

TIDY Northern Ireland's programme encouraging businesses within the province to become cleaner and more responsible for their local environment has had a very successful few months, with both councils and private businesses signing up to the scheme for the next twelve months. Councils including North Down, Cookstown and Down District Council are all implementing the award scheme, while construction firm Laing O'Rourke is among the private businesses involved.



The programme can be used to encourage town and city centre businesses to take responsibility for their premises, and as a result improve the image and appearance of shopping areas in the targeted regions. The flexible nature of the scheme allows awards to be made to all types of high street stores, from fast food outlets to banks to newsagents.

Managed and accredited by TIDY Northern Ireland, the programme rewards prize winning businesses with bronze, silver and gold awards, with the resulting positive publicity beneficial to both the individual businesses and the council areas involved.

To learn more about what TIDY Business can do for your council, please contact Nigel Frazer on nigel.frazer@tidynorthernireland.org

Borough Cleanliness Survey Generates Most Interest

TIDY Northern Ireland's Borough Cleanliness Survey is the most requested download from www.tidynorthernireland.org over the past three months. The 2006 and 2007 surveys, which measure litter and detritus levels throughout participating council areas, hold the top two places in the download rankings in what has been a record breaking spell for the site.

From April to June the website received visits from almost 40,000 interested viewers, with the results of the Borough Cleanliness Surveys being downloaded onto 700 computers. The report on TIDY Northern Ireland's comprehensive attitudinal survey took third place, with the popularity of the Eco-Schools programme borne out by a fourth place for the June newsletter, despite the issue only being available for the final month of the figures. TIDY Business also featured in the top half dozen, with the report on council's litter fines falling just outside the top ten.

To discuss the prospect of your council participating in the Borough Cleanliness Survey, or any other TIDY Northern Ireland programme, contact Nigel Frazer at TIDY Northern Ireland.

Most Downloaded Articles From www.tidynorthernireland.org (April—June 2008)

- 1 2006 Borough Cleanliness Survey - Annual Report
- 2 2007 Borough Cleanliness Survey - Annual Report
- 3 Attitudinal Survey Report - Spring 07
- 4 Eco-Schools Newsletter June 2008
- 5 2008 Borough Cleanliness Survey Press Release
- 6 Project Omega receives TIDY Business Award
- 7 Eco-Schools June TIDYUP Newsletter 2006
- 8 Eco-Schools Roadmap
- 9 Litter Fine Questionnaire Report (April 2008)
- 10 2007 Borough Cleanliness Survey Press Release
- 11 Different Councils Different Litter Laws
- 12 TIDY N.I. Fear 'Year of the Rat' (February 08)

Translink Stations Celebrate TIDY Gold Awards



Staff from Carrickfergus NIR and Ulsterbus, Jordanstown NIR and Downpatrick Ulsterbus facilities are celebrating "Gold Level" awards in the TIDY Translink programme.

The TIDY Translink awards have been developed through the partnership between Translink and TIDY Northern Ireland and are designed to encourage staff to take pride in their facilities and their immediate environment.



Greg McKernan, Inspector, Downpatrick Ulsterbus is delighted to be the only Ulsterbus facility to achieve a Gold award saying, "The thanks are to the staff, especially Paul Savage for all his hard work in keeping Downpatrick Depot in top shape. These awards show the staff, customers and local community, Translink's commitment to a cleaner environment".

31 Translink facilities received Bronze and Silver level awards, with 3 additional facilities excelling to achieve Gold!



"The Gold awards are a great achievement and give recognition to the staff at the facilities for all their hard work and commitment to enhancing their workplace, the environment around them and the community in which they serve", said Melanie Gibson, Environment Officer, TIDY Northern Ireland.

The 2008 assessments are due to get under way shortly with staff and managers working to maintain and improve on their performances in 2007.

Poll Blames Residents for Cleanliness Problems

Most people believe the residents of Northern Ireland are the main contributors to the poor state of the environment in which we live, according a poll on the TIDY Northern Ireland website.

The recent poll showed that 49% of respondents believed residents were primarily responsible for the litter strewn across our roads and parks. Councils were also perceived to be part of the problem with 20% of voters believing their local authority was not doing enough to counteract the litter problem, while 15% pointed towards young people when asked to identify the group most to blame.

The poll asked the question: **“A recent TIDY Northern Ireland survey revealed people do not think we live in a clean country. Who do you think is most to blame for the poor quality of Northern Ireland’s environment?”**

Almost 500 votes were received. The results are detailed below:

Who is to Blame?	Percentage
Local Council	20%
Government Agencies	4%
Northern Ireland Assembly	7%
Residents	49%
Visitors/Tourists	2%
Businesses	3%
Young People	15%

Clean Coast Programme



The Clean Coast Programme is new to Northern Ireland this year and has already generated much interest among coastal communities and councils. The programme gives rural beaches a chance to be recognised by the Green Coast Award, and gives local people a chance to take an active interest in helping to manage these beaches alongside the local beach operator.

There have already been a number of successful clean ups carried out by beach enthusiasts all over Northern Ireland and we

have had a number of applications for the award for 2008. The programme, which is sponsored by Coca-Cola Bottlers (Ulster) Ltd., is a fantastic opportunity to involve all areas of the community in important environmental work and to help highlight and promote beautiful rural beaches.

If you would like to find out more about the Clean Coast Programme, phone 0845 86 206 86 or email: jennifer.smyth@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, or you have any views on what are currently the most pressing government policy issues, please let us know.

Submit Your Stories

If you have carried out any recent notable litter campaigns or wish to share any litter experiences, please submit your stories to TIDY Northern Ireland and we will consider publishing them in a future edition of the Council Newsletter.



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