

Specialist teams to get tough on littering

People who drop litter in Tonbridge and Malling will face fines of up to £150 as part of a borough-wide drive to reduce rubbish on the streets of towns and villages.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council is launching a 12-month pilot scheme with leading enforcement company, NES, to clamp down on the dropping of food wrappers, cigarette butts, bottles, cans and other waste.

Specialist officers from NES will be out and about across the borough targeting litter and fly tipping hot spots using body-worn cameras to capture evidence. They will also undertake a range of initiatives, including handing out portable ashtrays and dog poop bags. Support for school education projects and sponsored litter picks will also be provided.

The enforcement teams will be able to issue on-the-spot fixed penalties to anyone seen dropping litter, failing to clear up after their dogs, dumping rubbish or committing other offences, such as transporting waste without a licence. Penalties are as follows:

- Littering: £150 reducing to £100 if paid within 10 days
- Dog fouling: £80 reducing to £50 if paid within 10 days
- Fly tipping: £400
- Other waste offences: £300

The council currently has approximately 1,150 public litter bins across the borough and more than 600 dog waste bins. The 2022/23 budget for street cleaning, emptying litter bins and clearing fly tips is £823,000.

The pilot scheme is being delivered at zero additional cost to the borough. NES will receive income from any fixed penalty notices that are issued. It will also free up council resources to focus on day-to-day waste collection services and to support wider enforcement and investigation. The project will start in October 2022 and be reviewed after 12 months to assess its effectiveness in reducing littering.

Cllr Piers Montague, lead cabinet member for waste and technical services, said: 'We are lucky to live in a beautiful borough but all too often the actions of a few selfish people blight our towns, villages and roadside verges. The message to those who think it's ok to discard cigarette butts, food wrappers or other rubbish on the streets is simple: please use the bins provided or take your rubbish home. If you litter our streets, expect to face a penalty.'

'While NES has a strong track record in targeting those who drop litter, this is not just about enforcement. The teams will also deliver a range of activities which help educate and inform people about the impact of litter and dumped rubbish which can contribute to anti-social behaviour and harm wildlife.'

Eoin Henney, Director of NES, said: 'National Enforcement Solutions is excited to be selected by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to tackle these types of environmental crimes. With educational campaigns and our positive enforcement strategy we can support the local authority to achieve its goals and objectives across the borough.'

'We will be working closely with the council's own internal team to gather intelligence around the crimes that blight the streets. We will not only be focusing on observational offences but using information reported to investigate larger environmental crimes.'

'Our officers are trained in-house and our training is externally endorsed. The public and the council can rest assured that our teams can make a difference.'