

Litter – The scourge of the countryside

For those that care about our landscape, a litter free environment is one of the hallmarks of a civilised society. Sadly, a discarded fast food carton thrown out of the window of a motorcar or an empty drinks can marks the perpetrators as little more than vandals with a total disregard for community values. This time of year - with bare hedgerows - litter is all too evident and the situation is getting worse.

To give them a title let us call them 'tossers'. They are undisciplined with a mildly rebellious nature whereby throwing away rubbish is the equivalent to sticking two fingers up to society emphasising an unquestionable, underlining ignorance.

According to Environmental Researchers 2.25 million pieces of litter are dropped on the streets of the U.K. every day; in excess of 180,000 sacks of litter are cleared from motorways and major A roads each year by Highways England, and – according to the CPRE the estimated annual cost of picking up litter now exceeds £1 billion. The biggest culprits are amongst users of fast food outlets and drive through takeaways, commuters and smokers. Keep Britain Tidy state that 226 million cigarette butts are discarded every year and 25% of smokers do **not** consider discarding a cigarette butt as littering!

As exposed in previous articles, fly-tipping is now on the increase especially in remote country lanes and bridleways and whilst government legislation is being toughened up to heavily penalise the culprits the obvious problems faced are continual monitoring and enforcement.

Litter is unsightly –it ruins views, walks and countryside living. It contaminates the environment, increases negative conduct and sits alongside vandalism as the primary act of anti-social behaviour.

Some years ago, your Parish Council took the unanimous decision to try and keep down the amount of litter on our major thoroughfares by having structured weekly litter picks. The result – of which we are very proud -has been that people tend to know when you are entering our Parish and when you have left it. This is something we are keen to continue and, hopefully, we can all appreciate the benefit that our efforts produce albeit in a never ending struggle.

Steve Saunders

Chairman, Kelvedon Hatch Parish Council