

East Cowes Town Council - Councillor Reports

18th February 2021

Mayor's Report

Dear Councillors

In my opinion, one of our major concerns in our town of East Cowes is **litter**. I thought you may be interested to read an article covering this very issue...

Taking Issue with Litterbugs *by Jessica Lone Summers*

Compared with the glaringly obvious environment issues we hear about every day, littering often takes a backseat – but it's more pressing than we may think.

If you were to toss, say, a banana skin out of your car while driving along, that would be a completely harmless action, due to the fact that it's part of a fruit – right? Actually, **NO**. A banana skin can take up to **TWO** years to decompose, and with a third of motorists admitting to littering while driving, that's a whole lot of discarded banana skins, or much worse. An orange peel and a cigarette butt has a similar biodegrading term to that of a banana, but tin and aluminium cans last up to **100 YEARS**; and plastic bottles last forever, as do glass bottles, Styrofoam cups and plastic bags.

Despite the fact that longer-lasting materials will serve to damage the environment and its animals for longer, we can't solely measure the severity of a certain type of rubbish by its lifetime. For example, despite having a fairly short biodegrading span, more than **120 tons** of cigarette-related litter is discarded in the UK **every day**. Similarly, our regular littering here and there has caused the UK's **RAT** population to increase by **60 million**. This suddenly isn't so mysterious when you consider that since the 1960s our annual littering has increased by an astounding **500 per cent**.

It's not a cheap habit either: **UK taxpayers shelve out £500 million in order to keep our streets clean, and when you include our green spaces, that goes up to £1 billion**. So, it's not surprising that if caught fly-tipping you could face a £20,000 fine or even jail time and, if you disposed of something hazardous, the court could give you five years to serve. Regardless of how severe these punishments might seem, however, among the reported cases only 2,000 were convicted out of 825,000, so we still have some way to go in making sure people abide by the rules.

To take back our beautiful countryside and cities (**town**), we need to do more than simply not leaving rubbish where it ought not to be. **We need a pride makeover, we need to truly care more about the world around us**

EXPERT Q&A: Allison Ogden-Newton –CEO of Keep Britain Tidy.

How did you become an authority in conservation? It would be hard to live through the past decade without knowing we all have to act to save the environment. I had

been looking for the means and Keep Britain Tidy gave me the opportunity and platform to help everyone protect the environment.

What are the biggest environmental challenges we currently face from littering? We need to reuse what we can and – when we buy – we need to work at recycling. Consumption is on the rise, little thought is given to how new products can and will be recycled and too few households are committed to maximising their recycling.

What does Keep Britain Tidy do to help our planet? Our annual campaign The Great British Spring Clean reaches millions of people and even in 2020 engaged hundreds and thousands of volunteers. We encourage retailers to minimise the littering of their products and we work with consumers, retailers and local authorities to increase recycling. We have established more than 20,000 Eco schools where children are taught to make a difference.

What changes need to happen to tackle ecocide? We need leadership to set higher standards for consumerism and recycling. It should not be possible to produce and package a product without clearly pointing to how it will be recycled in the current system. Recycling needs investment. There are great technologies out there but few local authorities can afford to install them. There should be one system for the UK, DRS – a deposit return scheme where drinks containers can be returned – needs to happen quickly and throughout our retail infrastructure, and we need investment in marketing and education to make sure everyone understands how their behaviour makes a huge difference.

What do you predict for the future if nothing changes? Fear of the environment impact of litter is on the rise as we are learning more about the omnipresent micro plastics that have now entered the food chain. But consumerism is on the increase too and without leadership, laws, education and investment we are heading for a dystopian future where our food is no longer safe and our legacy to our children is a network of landfill sites that rival the Egyptian pyramids in size and longevity.

Visit [keepbritaintidy.org](https://www.KeepBritainTidy.org) for more information.

Kind regards

Jane Rann

Councillor Palin's Report

On Wednesday 10th February I attended a planning session put on by the Isle of Wight Planning department and was promoted by IWALC. This session was very insightful to understand the councils current position and their emphasis on Sustainable housing but also highlighting issues facing us when it comes to future housing development. There is an estimated 1,500 brownfield sites that can be built on which is far from the expectation of

housing levels put on them by central government. I note that Cllr Rann and the Deputy Clerk we've both also in attendance.

I have also had been in contact with the police recently over numerous Covid breaches which I have witnessed and ones also report to me by members of the public. It's clear most people are still obeying the rules but there is a minority which are now breaking these rules more frequently. Over the month I have reported several occurrences of fly tipping across east Cowes and Osborne as well as general litter across our town.

Since the last meeting I have also looked into setting the town council up with the Terracycle scheme and will continue to work with the clerk to get this up and running for when we can reopen the town hall.

Finally I'd like to thank Michael Paler, the East Cowes Medical Centre and all the vaccination team for all they are doing to get our residents vaccinated.