

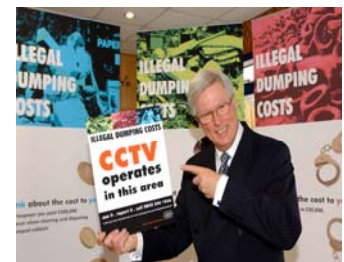


Illegal Dumping Costs

In 2002/03, 7,560 tonnes of fly-tipped waste was collected by district councils in Buckinghamshire, at a cost of £500,000. This followed an upward trend in illegal dumping over an eight-year period. The Waste Partnership for Buckinghamshire took a stance against the problem and launched their 'Illegal Dumping Costs' campaign. This partnership includes Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council, Wycombe District Council, South Bucks District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council.

The communications campaign was launched in December 2003 by John Craven (news reporter and TV personality) and marked the beginning of a coordinated crackdown on fly-tippers. The key aims of the campaign were:

- To reduce the amount of illegal dumping;
- To increase the awareness of the problems;
- To encourage householders to ask where their waste is being taken by traders;
- To increase the use of official waste disposal sites.



Four audiences were targeted: onlookers, householders using unregistered waste carriers, the tippers themselves and local businesses.

A dedicated 24-hour incident hotline was setup for the public to report any sightings, and a number of posters were designed that were placed around hotspot areas. Adverts were placed within the 'man with a van' classified sections of the local papers advising waste carriers and their customers of the need for registration, and providing Environment Agency contact details for checking credentials.

A total of 180,000 campaign leaflets were distributed, in partnership with the Environment Agency, to all households in the county. They gave details of the problem, information on household waste recycling sites (locations and opening times), information on waste carrier registration, and piloted a voluntary 'householder duty of care'. Two thousand of each of the



three branded posters (highlighting the financial, environmental and potential criminal conviction costs of illegal dumping) were placed by county, district and parish councils on public noticeboards. Stickers were placed on bins at recycling sites both to promote the campaign and to seek to deter abuse at the sites. Over 200 roadside warning signs saying 'Illegal Dumping Costs, CCTV operates in this area' were placed at fly-tipping hotspots across the county.

Covert surveillance was undertaken at sites across the county. CCTV cameras were purchased and installed by the Waste Partnership and the Environment Agency. As a result of the CCTV, 20,000+ hours of footage have been recorded and 17 operations have been carried out. The 17 offences include illegal dumping, failure in Duty of Care, carrying waste illegally, Class A drugs and a prohibited firearm. Where possible, media coverage of the operations has been sought.



To mark the one-year anniversary of the campaign in December 2004 a re-launch event was held at the Chartridge Conference Centre in Chesham. This event was attended by adjoining local authorities keen to learn more about the campaign and how they could adopt it in their regions and to discuss wider, cross boundary cooperation and joint working. Joint working is now established with the Bedfordshire Waste Partnership and Northants Waste Partnership.

Illegal Dumping Costs, which is delivered by the Waste Partnership for Buckinghamshire, has achieved some remarkable results:

- A 20% reduction in levels of fly-tipping across the county has been recorded (spending £93,000 less on the projected costs of collecting illegally dumped wastes).
- There have been 11 successful prosecutions for waste offences, leading to individuals and companies being convicted for 15 offences. More cases will be going to court in the next few months.
- Some 50 incidents per month are reported to the 24-hour fly-tipping hotline.

- Over 20,000 hours of surveillance filming over 40 incidents of illegal dumping using covert CCTV cameras has been obtained.
- Independent market research found that 65% of residents were greatly bothered by the problem of illegal dumping and unprompted awareness levels of the 'Illegal Dumping Costs' campaign across the county were 27%.
- Surveillance work has helped Thames Valley Police convict a crack dealer for possession of Class A drugs and a prohibited firearm.

The campaign has received extensive media coverage including BBC1, Countryfile, local TV, radio and newspapers. The Waste Partnership for Buckinghamshire believes the extensive media coverage helps to provide a strong deterrent to potential fly-tippers, as they become aware that Buckinghamshire takes a tough stance against them. News articles have been in the style of Crimewatch UK: ***“Do you know this tipper???”***



Key to the success of the initiative was the joint working with neighbouring counties, and with the police. Margaret Dewar, Chairman of the Joint Waste Committee for Buckinghamshire and Cabinet Member for Community Services for Buckinghamshire County Council, has commented: *"The tremendous success of this campaign to date to reduce illegal dumping has reflected the close partnership working between the local authorities in Buckinghamshire, the police and the Environment Agency. We are now strengthening this partnership working to ensure that the environmental and social menace of illegal dumping is tackled effectively and that those who are responsible for illegal dumping are brought before the courts."*

Due to its success the campaign is ongoing and there are plans to extend its operations. Further footage will be sought from a number of other districts and mobile carrier checks are to be carried out by the Environment Agency and the police.



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