

PR 4555

For Immediate Release

19 October 2005

Fly tippers under the Microscope

Nearly 90% of local landowners have experienced fly-tipping on their land, according to a report presented to the county council's Rural Affairs Panel last week.

The report came out of a survey which was part funded by the East of England Development Agency and carried out by the Hertfordshire Rural Forum. The survey sought the views of 10,000 members of the National Farmers Union or the Country Landowners Association. It was designed to establish the scale of fly-tipping in the east of England region, its frequency, and what kinds of material are involved.

One theme that emerged from the report was that most fly-tipping was happening in the countryside, particularly the entrances to country lanes and farm tracks. The most common types of waste recorded included domestic rubbish, building waste, white goods and vehicles.

As well as the generally high incidence of the problem, the survey also found that:

- Over half of those who responded said they had fly-tipping on their land at least once a month
- About a quarter had fly-tipping on their land every week
- Nearly a third (32%) of respondents had dustbin-size loads left on their land, while just over a quarter (28%) said that truck-size loads were being dumped.
- Less than a quarter (24%) of respondents chose to report incidences of fly-tipping on their land, with many believing that nothing will be done about it.

Among the general conclusions in the report was that the main offenders are believed to be householders and small business operators.

"Fly-tipping is a growing and very costly environmental nuisance often committed by ordinary householders," said County Councillor Bryan Hammond, Chairman of the Rural Affairs Panel. "We were astonished at the sheer scale of the problem in our region, and the fact that some locations were targeted so regularly, almost as if they were unofficial waste sites. What we now want to do is raise people's awareness of this crime and engage members of the public in our campaign to stamp it out."

The survey coincides with the launch, last year, of the Environment Agency's Flycapture scheme, which involves a range of organisations working together to gather information about fly-tipping incidents in order to carry out more efficient and effective enforcement – and ultimately to prevent it happening.

Fly-tipping costs the country up to £150 million to clear up every year. Convicted offenders can face fines up to £50,000 and up to five years imprisonment.

Part of the campaign will be to raise awareness among members of the public, ensuring that they know exactly where and how to dispose of particular kinds of goods, including bulky items, and which agencies are responsible. It will also be creating a contacts network to make it easier for people to report incidences of fly-tipping, via text, email or phone.

In the meantime, anybody who goes out in the countryside regularly – dog walkers, ramblers, runners and horse-riders for example – are asked to keep a look-out and report any incidents of illegal tipping that they come across to their local district council. For further information about how to dispose of unwanted items appropriately visit the WasteAware website, www.wasteaware.org.uk/ or you can report fly-tipping or any other cases of environmental crime to the freephone emergency hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

For the full results of the survey visit www.hertsdirect/ruralforum and click on rural projects and then rural crime or call Trevor Mose, the Herts Rural Forum Secretary, on 01992 555291

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Editors Notes

A number of individuals who responded to the survey have indicated a willingness to contribute to local press coverage. Please let us know if you would like us to contact them on your behalf.

The research was part funded by the East of England Development Agency's rural renaissance grant programme, which is administered by the Herts rural forum as part of a programme of events and activities.

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