



Media Release

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photo opportunity – see below

ANCIENT CITY OF RIPON TO BE FIRST WITH ON THE SPOT LITTER FINES

RIPON, once voted the cleanest city in the country, is to be the first area in the district to receive on the spot fines as Harrogate Borough Council steps up the war on littering. The council's street cleansing team has now been given powers under the Environmental Protection Act to fine people they see dropping litter.

The team will be out in force on market day - Thursday, 21 October - with high visibility help from the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

New legislation has given local authorities the power to impose on the spot fines and Harrogate Borough Council now believes that the new increase in the fixed penalty fee from £25 to £50 will act as a real deterrent.

Councillor Julian Sturdy, Cabinet Member for Public Works, is pleased that some commercial premises are working with the council to help keep our town centres free of litter but believes it is now time to focus on the general public.

He said: “We want to work with our colleagues at Ripon City Council and in partnership with the police to raise awareness amongst the community of the value of keeping our towns free of litter.

“The Act says we can create zones of up to 100 metres around premises such as food takeaways, nightclubs, cinemas and banks and we have had some success with a positive response from those premises whose operators are taking responsibility for clearing up after their customers.

“But we want to make sure that everyone takes responsibility for their own litter. Generally, the standard of our street cleanliness is high, but there is no doubt we have seen an increase in recent months.

“Many local community groups help us in clearing our streets and we are grateful for their support, but we really want to keep our streets clean by making sure the litter isn't dropped in the first place. There really is no excuse. We have 900 litterbins around the district placed in sensible hotspot areas such as beside public seats, bus shelters and outside takeaway outlets. People don't have to travel far to find a bin.”

Harrogate Borough Council's highways amenity section takes a three-pronged approach to reach a high standard of cleanliness:

- Sweeping and litter removal is undertaken by pedestrian staff and driven machinery. This work is pre-planned and reactive and accounts for the majority of effort.

- Action is taken to increase the awareness of the value of a clean local environment and to encourage individuals to consider their part in maintaining it.
- Enforcement action against individuals or businesses that degrade the local environment by breaking the country's litter laws.

Councillor Sturdy, added: "The council spends over £650,000 a year keeping our streets clean. This is a huge amount from local council tax and I can assure people that the council is prepared to take enforcement action against the minority who spoil the environment for everyone else."

FURTHER INFORMATION: Councillor Julian Sturdy is available for comment on 07836 692010. For more technical information, contact Kevin Marriott, Highways Amenity Manager on 01423 556656.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: Councillor Julian Sturdy and Kevin Marriott will be meeting the litter enforcers at 1.30 pm on Thursday, 21 October 2004 at the Obelisk, Ripon Market Place.