Welcome to the Spring edition of the Tonbridge and Malling Street Monitor Newsletter. We now have 126 Street Monitors across the borough. Thanks to your continued support we are able to deal with issues more efficiently to keep Tonbridge and Malling a great place to live, work and visit.

'Tidy South Tonbridge' campaign launched with local schools

On Wednesday 24 February, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's Cleaner Borough Team launched the 'Tidy South Tonbridge' campaign at a workshop held at Tonbridge Castle.

The workshop was attended by pupils from Sussex Road County Primary School, the Hayesbrook School and the Weald of Kent Girls' Grammar School as well as local artist, Guy Portelli who has given his wholehearted support to the project. Nine Tonbridge schools are supporting the campaign as well as local youth group, The Blend, which is based at St. Stephen's Church.

The main idea to come out of the workshop was to work with young people who don't seem to be concerned about litter and to try to encourage them to change their attitudes.

Photo to show young people from Weald of Kent Girls’ Grammar School, Hayesbrook School and Sussex Road County Primary School in Tonbridge with anti-littering posters.

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Tidy South Tonbridge continued

A reward scheme was seen as the most popular option to encourage these young people and it was proposed that there should be a school scheme whereby House Points would be awarded to pupils using bins and picking up litter in the school grounds, and that prize tickets would be awarded to pupils spotted 'doing right' on the streets. This would work in much the same way as the Animal Wardens' ‘Caught Doing Right’ scheme which relates to dog fouling. It was also agreed that, as well as littering, the Tidy South Tonbridge Campaign would focus on graffiti, dog fouling and any other issues that affect the local environment.

The Council will circulate the action plan agreed at the workshop to all the schools involved in the campaign and the anti-littering message will be promoted at forthcoming events in the borough, such as the Youth Perception to be held on 17 July at Tonbridge School.

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Cllr Owen Baldock says: "Tidy South Tonbridge will be a great opportunity for schools and youth centres in the town to take part in a really meaningful campaign and we are incredibly lucky to have local artist Guy Portelli of Dragon's Den fame on board (photo, right of Guy at work). The pool of ideas from the young people and from Guy himself is fantastic and it is inspiring to see them really wanting to tackle the very obvious litter problems."

Guy Portelli says: "Dropping litter reflects a lack of pride and respect for our town. I want to see respect for our neighbourhoods by keeping them clean and not just dropping litter out of the car window, respect for our pavements without chewing gum littering, and respect for the people who spend time cleaning up this mess."

Street Scene Team targets West Malling

Although streets in Tonbridge and Malling are particularly clean and tidy, the Borough Council is looking to improve standards and achieve a cleaner, smarter and better maintained street scene by combating littering.

On Friday 4 December litter offenders in West Malling got more than they bargained for when Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's Waste and Street Scene Services Team along with Police officers carried out litter enforcement patrols between 8pm and 12 midnight. During the four-hour operation six Fixed Penalty Notices were served for litter offences. Residents also took the opportunity to discuss their concerns over litter and anti-social behaviour.

Over 2009/10 we have served 210 notices for littering and 12 for dog fouling.
Many people were very supportive of the Council's zero-tolerance approach to litter. One resident said: "We don't have too much of a problem with litter in the village, but people still seem to think it's alright to drop their cigarette butts on the ground, even though there are plenty of ashtrays and bins." Despite the fact that most restaurants and bars have provided outdoor ashtrays for their customers to use, all of the notices issued during the evening were for littering cigarette ends. The notices incur a fine of £80. Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Cllr Owen Baldock says: "The Council's high profile campaigns to combat littering have already resulted in a marked improvement and by targeting specific areas we are encouraging more and more people to dispose of their litter correctly, making our streets and public places more attractive for our residents".

Wouldham pupils Bash the Trash

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's Cleaner Borough Campaign Team launched dog fouling and littering poster competitions for Key Stages 1 (Yr 1 & 2) and 2 (3, 4, 5 & 6) at a special morning Assembly at Wouldham All Saints Primary School on Monday 1 March 2010.

Following the Assembly, around 30 pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5, accompanied by members of staff, including Head Teacher, Mr Carl Fitter, KCC Community Warden for Burham, Wouldham and Eccles, Mr David Leipnik as well as the Borough Council's Environmental Enforcement Officer and Environmental Projects Coordinator, spent the next two hours bashing the trash around the footpaths surrounding the school, up School Lane and through the woods to Wouldham Common. They collected some 10 sacks of rubbish which was mainly food and drinks wrappers, bottles and cans, most of which must have been thrown from vehicles. The pupils also spotted a two-seater sofa on Pilgrims Way. The sofa has now been removed by the Council.

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Cllr Owen Baldock says: "The pupils have shown how committed they are to improving their local environment and are a shining example to their community. Wouldham has good reason to be proud of these young residents."

Head Teacher, Mr Carl Fitter said: "This was a great outing and a great way of doing something for the community at the same time as being able to learn an important lesson in life - don't drop litter! The children all really enjoyed a healthy walk in the fresh air of the beautiful spring morning and couldn't get enough litter! Everyone was so competitive at trying to fill their sack the first and they soon became highly proficient with their picking sticks. Unfortunately, there was lots of litter to go at! The children worked very hard and with constant smiles and the school is very proud of their efforts. It is a shame that an area of such beauty should be tainted this way."
Create your own litter picking group

If you want to take action against litter problems in your area, this is the website for you. Our website supports the growing number of individuals and community groups taking action against litter. You can create or join local action groups, report litter problems directly to your council, share tips and success through a discussion forum and get all the help and advice that you need. Please join us in the campaign against litter.

www.litteraction.org.uk  Litteraction is run jointly by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and CleanupUK. It’s designed to be a place that promotes and supports local community action.

CPRE’s Stop the Drop campaign tackles the litter and fly-tipping problem that is despoiling our beautiful countryside. It’s headed by CPRE president and author Bill Bryson, a passionate anti-litter campaigner and champion of the countryside.

At a local level, supporters of the campaign can get involved by organising their own litter pick or joining a local litter volunteer group through litteraction.org.uk. Supporters can pledge to Stop the Drop, joining CPRE in lobbying local authorities, government and other bodies legally responsible for keeping land litter-free. Through these various campaigning actions CPRE aim to demonstrate to Government and other authorities the strength of support behind Stop the Drop.

We have a number of groups already in existence in Tonbridge and Malling from Snodland to Tonbridge and Walderslade to Blue Bell Hill. Do have a look to see where and when they are planning a litter picking event – or you could create your own group!

Bash the Trash: Join in!

Forthcoming Events:

Saturday and Sunday, 27 – 28 March
Medway Valley Countryside Partnership
River Rubbish Roundup
River Medway, Tonbridge
Contact: Andrea Griffiths 01622 683695.
Andrea.Griffiths@kent.gov.uk

Saturday, 10 April 2010
Martin Square and Recreation Ground, Larkfield
Contact: PCSO Susan Leng 07772 226033
susan.leng@kent.pnn.police.uk

Saturday, 3 July 2010
St Philips Church, Salisbury Road, Tonbridge
Contact: PCSO Linda Baker 07772 226021
linda.baker@kent.pnn.police.uk

Why not visit the Big Tidy Up website to order free resources for your local clean up?
Dog Fouling ‘Bag and Flag’ results

The Cleaner Borough Team has been out again bagging and flagging dog waste in hotspots around the borough. As you will see from the table below Tonbridge Farm is disgusting again, but Manor Park in West Malling is comparatively clean. We will respond to your nominations for events depending on severity of problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aylesford – Ferry Field Recreation Ground</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hildenborough – Brookmead Estate</td>
<td></td>
<td>145</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manor Park Country Park, West Malling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonbridge Farm Sportsground</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunbury Recreation Ground and Taddington Valley, Walderslade</td>
<td>168</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wouldham Recreation Ground</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Forthcoming events:

- Aylesford – Ferry Field Recreation Ground
- Borough Green / Wrotham – Potters Mead
- Burham – Footpaths
- East Peckham – Footpaths and recreation ground
- Hadlow – Footpaths, Marshall Gardens and Williams Field
- Tonbridge – Swanmead Sportsground and Tonbridge Farm Sportsground
- Snodland – Recreation Ground, Nevill Park and Willowside
- Walderslade - Tunbury Recreation Ground

Stop Press: East Malling Clean Up Week

In the run up to the East Malling Sports Relief Mile on Sunday 21 March, the Cleaner Borough Team in partnership with the Police, Russet Homes, Kent Community Wardens, local schools, the East Malling Children’s Centre and The Beat Project held a ‘Bag and Flag’ event on the grounds of Clare Park on Tuesday 16 March. This was followed by a litter pick and planting session on Wednesday morning within a new garden on Winterfield Estate owned by Russet Homes. Mandy Harris, Community Warden led a Bash the Trash event on Saturday morning with young residents from the Winterfield Estate.
The findings and thoughts of a voluntary rubbish picker-upper…

Perhaps I’ll turn into the mad bag lady of Tonbridge but I’ve got the bit between my teeth. It all started about a month ago when I picked up a broken vodka bottle on my daily dog walk (something I have always done in a haphazard way) but this time, as I looked around the small copse I was in, I noticed ever more bottles and cans. Over the next days I picked up more than 300 glass vodka and beer bottles, cans, plastic bottles and other detritus left thrown in this tiny area. This got me on a mission. I started collecting anything I saw at any venue I walked. If I was in a park and sports ground area I could pick up five carrier bags full a walk - and was able to dispose of them in the bins around the area. If I was in a wooded area, towpath or over farmland I had to limit myself to what I could carry back to the car and bring home.

Doing this led me into deciding to pick up and bring home all one weeks worth of rubbish along the less frequented places to see what it added up to. In just this period I collected a wheelie bins worth! Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council has been very helpful and without a quibble said they will take away this collection once I’d finished my research even though this rubbish is not strictly on their turf.

What is fascinating about the litterers is they do have a certain etiquette. One of which is to invariably put the cap back on any screw bottle, be it empty or half full before throwing it. For others it seems the code is to bag their rubbish up and then it’s okay to leave it squashed in bushes and against trees - no matter how far into fields or woods they are. The one thing you never find is so much as a dropped ten pence piece. So even litterers draw the line somewhere!

Another group are the semi trained folk who have learnt to bag up their dog poo but seem oblivious to the fact that the whole idea is to then take it either to a poo bin or home to dispose of. Instead they kindly tie the offending bag to a tree or throw into the undergrowth. On average I am picking up eight such revolting bags a day.

Then there are the football players who discard white, black and blue plastic sticky tape - is this used to hold up socks I wonder? One Monday I picked a whole carrier bag full. Where do they think it will disappear to, along with water and juice bottles, they and the spectators leave on the pitch?

The other bugbears: The ubiquitous sweet corn tin and line left by fishermen, the plastic bag, the torn helium party balloon along with, of course, the sweet, chocolate and crisp packets. Last but not least are the condoms. While I am delighted that safe sex is being heeded why leave this evidence behind for others to deal with? If only people: be they ramblers, revellers, dog walkers, sport people and fishermen who have the energy to take to our gorgeous countryside saw the merit of disposing their debris in a civilized and socially responsible manner. I can’t help thinking we’d all be better off.

If what I found in a week is anything to go by there must be many other silent collectors too, otherwise we’d be, literally, up to our knees in all the stuff the litterers throw in our paths. To those who would demand that it should all be sorted by the council can I say there is no way any one council could ever employ enough people to walk all our highways and byways to clean up what some individuals wish to chuck. So we shall, no doubt, carry on, we anti litter buggers with our quest for a litter free environment.

Sarah Starkey, Street Monitor for Tonbridge
Meet the Cleaner Borough Team!

Beverley Horn
Environmental Enforcement Officer

David Campbell-Lenaghan
Waste and Street Scene Management Officer

Peter Fox
Senior Environmental Enforcement Officer

Lorraine Baseden
Dog Warden
Contracted from Animal Wardens

Tamsin Ritchie
Environmental Projects Coordinator
The Snodland Goes Cleaner Campaign is sorry to say goodbye to the Chair, Mr Alan Totham after almost three successful years with the group. He has decided to focus on his business and work with the Chamber of Commerce. We are however pleased to announce our two new co-chairs Mr Luke Chapman from Holmesdale Technology College and Miss Nicky Delacey from The Beat Project in Snodland.

The focus for 2010 will be on dog fouling in the town. The group have produced special dog bag dispensers for all Snodland residents who have one or more dogs. See photo below of the dog bag dispenser. You can collect your dog bone bag dispenser from Russet Homes, Snodland Town Council Offices or the Borough Council Friday drop-in at Snodland library.

You can also follow the action on Facebook.

Useful contact details

| Community Safety Partnership | csp@tmbc.gov.uk | 01732 876132 |
| Kent Highways (West)         | westkent.highways@kent.gov.uk | 08458 247800 |
| Kent Police (Tonbridge)     | To report a non 999 emergency call | 01732 771055 |
| Kent Crimestoppers          | Calls are free and anonymous | 0800 555 111 |
| Neighbourhood Watch         | West Kent | 01892 502159 |
| Streetline (TMBC)           | To report a street related problem | 01732 876060 |

Contact details for all local neighbourhood policing teams, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Community Wardens can be found on www.tmcommunitysafety.org.uk

Newsletter produced by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council’s Waste Services (Environmental Health & Housing Services)
Enquires to Tamsin Ritchie, Environmental Projects Coordinator, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling Kent ME19 4LZ.
Tel: 01732 876147 Email: waste.services@tmbc.gov.uk

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