

COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE BRIEFING NOTE FLY-TIPPING

House of Lords Oral Question: Reducing the amount of illegal fly-tipping, particularly in rural areas (Lord Trefgarne)

Tuesday 23 June, 11.00am

SUMMARY

- The UK has always had a fly-tipping problem. Latest available statistics reveal that incidences have increased by 8% to over 1 million (1,072,000) reported cases in England alone.
- Fly-tipping affects 67% of farmers and is estimated to cost them £47 million every year, with the average cost to clean up an incident estimated at £800.
- Only 1 in 600 incidents of fly-tipping lead to a prosecution
- The true costs of fly-tipping lie between £100 million and £150 million each year, well above the Government reported figure to local authorities at only £12.9 million.
- Incidences of fly-tipping have increased considerably during COVID-19, figures from waste dumping reporting app ClearWaste show that overall fly-tipping is up 76 per cent, with some London boroughs facing a 100 per cent rise in the crime.
- The Alliance have launched a campaign 'don't be a twit and fly-tip' outlining helpful advice to ensure that those using waste collection services are registered and legal.
- The Alliance have called on local authorities to assess the feasibility of re-opening recycling and refuse centres as matter of urgency.

BACKGROUND

- The Countryside Alliance has long campaigned on the problem of fly-tipping in the countryside. Fly-tipping is not a victimless crime and government figures on fly-tipping only tell part of the story as official figures on the number of incidents on private land and the associated clear up costs are patchy. Evidence suggests that private landowners spend upwards of £47 million a year clearing up fly-tipped waste. However, this figure is widely accepted to be on the low side.
- Private landowners are liable for any waste dumped on their land and are responsible for clearing it away and paying for the cost of disposal. If they do not act or inform the local authorities about the fly-tipped waste, they risk prosecution for illegal storage of waste in a "double jeopardy" situation which is simply not fair. It is often more expensive for the victim to remove the fly-tipped waste from private land than the cost of the fixed penalty notice.
- Crime is a key issue for rural communities; yet those communities feel that policing is often focussed on their urban neighbours. Residents and business in the countryside pay as much, and often more, per head of population for policing and deserve equal treatment to their urban counterparts. Rural crime, including fly-tipping, must be taken seriously by the police and local authority.

Countryside Alliance Position:

- Local authorities to assess the feasibility of re-opening recycling and refuse centres as matter of urgency.
- Scrap fines for landowners who are the victims of fly-tipping and place the full cost on the perpetrator.
- Provide overall greater support for landowners, such as anti-fly-tipping measures; utilisation of compensation orders; and closer working relationships with local authorities in recognition to particular problems caused by waste fly-tipped on private land.
- Introduce tougher penalties on perpetrators, such as imposing and enforcing penalties which better reflect the seriousness of the crime, seizing vehicles used to fly-tip is one example.
- Increase investment in education to raise awareness of responsibility amongst individuals and businesses.

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