

## **The Curse of Fly Tipping**

We all, I believe, abhor fly tipping and the cost it represents in damage to our environment and in paying to deal with it. I am not sure where the mentality to do this is generated but it falls at the top end of a sadly common antisocial streak of human behaviour that includes opening the car window to throw anything from bottles and cans to sweet and cigarette wrappers out of the car. All too common on the through routes in our villages.

This article is prompted by two events. Firstly back in July a heap of old mattresses appeared dumped in the lay-by area on Rockway. Well done to whoever reported this and also, I presume, to the Streetscene Team at South Somerset who responded quickly and cleared them. This location is a frequent target for fly tippers in our area but is not the only one. Iberry Lane- both along it and at the bottom is also a target.

Secondly a few weeks ago – late July - I was passing round end of Merryfield. There on a bend is a small pull-in area. In it was a white Ford Transit tipper truck. Its tailgate was off, one man stood at the rear and another was out of the cab near the tipper controls. On the truck was a large heap of tree cuttings and it was obvious what they had in mind. I slowed down and as I passed I gave both men and the vehicle a good look over. Having passed I saw them in the rear view mirror conversing – presumably wondering what to do. I had a passenger with me but did not think it wise to confront these people.

On my return a few hours later the area was empty and no tree cuttings had been tipped. I wonder where else they found?

The vehicle was marked Country Tree Services. I have seen this locally previously so it is no doubt based somewhere in the area. I urge you not to use this company if that is their way of operating. My passenger at the time of this incident said he had used someone to clear some old metal junk and had paid to do so. Had he checked if this person had a waste carrier's licence I asked? No. In reality metal waste is rarely fly tipped as it has a value but most other inert waste is valueless and costs to tip.

So maybe a good time to consider South Somerset Council advice on Fly Tipping from their web site. I highlight a key paragraph and underline that we all share a responsibility for our waste and we must act on that duty of care if we are to minimise these incidents.

### **Report fly-tipping**

Fly-tipping is the illegal deposit of any waste onto land that does not have an environmental permit. It includes: general household waste, white goods, mattresses, garden refuse, and commercial waste, such as builder's rubble, clinical waste and tyres. It is classed as a fly-tip if it is too large to be removed by a normal hand-sweeping barrow.

We are responsible for clearing up and collecting materials dumped without permission (fly-tipped) on to public maintained land - we will not remove fly-tips from other privately owned land. When removing these fly-tips we will investigate for possible legal action, as it is an environmental crime with penalties of up to five years' imprisonment and unlimited fines.

Everyone in South Somerset can fight fly-tipping, from reporting incidents and those responsible to ensuring their own waste is not fly-tipped. Each individual and business has a duty of care over their waste, even after it has left their home or premises. Failure to take reasonable steps to do this risks prosecution and a fine.

If you or your business pay someone to remove your waste - man-with-a-van, builders, gardeners or other tradespeople - ask to see their waste carrier's licence, and ensure you know where your waste will go.

You can check online to see if they are registered with the Environment Agency (select "Waste Carriers & Dealers" on the first pull-down menu). Alternatively, you can call the agency on 03708 506 506 (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm).

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