

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

COUNCILLOR JIM SMITH

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN
DATE: 18 JULY 2019**

YOUR CALL

The efforts of the Keep Blackburn Tidy and Keep Darwen Tidy Facebook groups have been recognised with a number of their volunteers receiving nominations for local awards in recent months. Both of these groups continue to help keep the borough looking clean, whilst also helping with the health and wellbeing of the community as part of their volunteering, that has seen the Council achieve over 1,000 volunteers registered with the Council as Keep It Tidy volunteers via the Lancashire Volunteer Portal.

We continue to see the number rise each week, with more volunteers coming forward and being provided with a litter picking kit by the council. The council's street cleansing staff continue to work closely with the volunteers, removing their hundreds of red bags, recycling bags and bulky rubbish each week. Volunteers have also broadened out in to such varied activities as resident education, highway sign cleaning, wall repair, graffiti removal and of course reporting fly tipping.

WASTE ENFORCEMENT

New financial penalties that came into force this year have been used for the first time by the council in May. The new measures mean any householder in England who fails to pass their waste to a licensed carrier, and whose waste is found fly-tipped, could face a fixed penalty notice of up to £400. A householder within the borough has admitted to passing their waste to a rogue operator, who is also facing action by the council. The risk of a penalty can be simply avoided by using certified waste carriers. The council has issued a press release reminding householders of their obligations with regards to the management of their waste.

GARDEN WASTE

The number of subscribers continues to rise with the number of subscribers now at 13,134. The brown bin collection tonnage for the first 2 months in 2018 (March, April), was 380 tonnes, which compares with 500 tonnes for the same 2 months in 2019.

PLEASINGTON CEMETERY

The cemetery recently held the funeral for Lord Adam Patel of Blackburn. The funeral was the largest seen at the cemetery for many years. Thanks to the efforts of the volunteer marshals, aided by council colleagues and the Police, the traffic management and parking arrangements enabled the funeral to proceed with minimal disruption on the day.

PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE

Trading Standards Prosecutions

A shopkeeper who was found to be selling counterfeit tobacco has appeared in court in Blackburn. The owner of the shop in the Bastwell area pleaded guilty to three counts of selling counterfeit tobacco, and tobacco which did not comply with regulations relating to visible warnings. He was fined £300, ordered to pay Council costs of £1000 and a victim surcharge of £30.

In April, the owner of a takeaway was found guilty of selling an illegal firework to an underage volunteer on the run-up to bonfire night last year. The firework was a banger of a type which is banned in the UK. The owner of the shop, on Johnston Street in Blackburn, was fined £440 and ordered to pay costs of £300.

Air Quality Management Area Revocations

The Council's approach in tackling poor air quality has been praised by Government regulators.

Where air quality falls below set limits, Councils are required to declare air quality management areas. They must then work towards improving air quality within these areas by means of an action plan which addresses the causes (usually heavy traffic in confined areas). Blackburn with Darwen's approach has successfully improved air quality to the point where 3 of its remaining 7 Air Quality Management Areas are in the process of being revoked.

DEFRA, the government body which oversees air quality management, described the Council's progress in tackling poor air quality as exceptional.

PARKING SERVICES

Town Centre P&D

Income from the Council's town centre car parks has increased by 17% IN April and May 2019 compared to the previous year with overall usage also up by 3%.

Old Bank Lane Car Park

The Council owned parking facility adjacent to the hospital has seen a huge increase in usage over the last 6 months. From 1st April we have also sold close to 200 permits on the site for people who work close to the site, this will help with a sustained income throughout the year. The new car park has also significantly reduced the level of traffic congestion around the Hospital site.