

KEEP ABERGAVENNY TIDY LITTER SURVEY*
TYPES AND BRANDS OF LITTER FOUND IN AND AROUND ABERGAVENNY

CANS-LAGER/BEER BRANDS In order Heineken/Foster/Stella etc. 22%

CANS/PLASTIC BOTTLES-SOFT DRINK BRANDS Coke/Fanta/Pepsi/Friij Shake etc. 21%

WRAPPERS-CRISPS/CHOC BRANDS Walkers/Cadbury's/Mars etc. 17%

PAPER/FOIL POUCHES/CUPS BRANDS Costa/Greggs/Subway/McD etc. 15%

CANS-CIDER BRANDS Thatchers/Strongbow etc. 11%

GLASS BOTTLES-ALCOHOL Beers/Vodka/Cider etc. 7%

CANS-ENERGY BRANDS Red Bull/Supermarket Brands 7%

***LITTER COLLECTED OVER 21 PICKS BY 8 KAT VOLUNTEERS 29/11/2021 TO 28/02/2022 IN AND AROUND ABERGAVENNY. FACE MASKS, SMOKING ASSOCIATED WASTE AND DOG FOULING DID NOT FORM PART OF SURVEY.**

Keep Abergavenny Tidy was re-launched in March 2019. Since then (to March 2022) the group has collected around 1500 bags of litter. Its 70 plus strong membership has built up a sound, evidence based knowledge from its experience over this period of the types and brands of litter collected in the local area. Our small sample, quantitative survey is, therefore, an accurate representation of what is typically found by our volunteers on our local streets, parks, roadsides and laybys.

KAT litter pickers have regularly collected large numbers of face masks since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 e.g. 108 in one community morning session alone in February 2022, but this situation will, hopefully, not be a long term issue. It was for this reason that it was not surveyed by the group on this occasion.

We also chose not to determine levels of dog fouling for this survey because it is currently the focus of efforts by Abergavenny Town Council and Monmouthshire County Council e.g. 'Give Dog Fouling The Red Card' and other 'Action Days' to be announced. Dog fouling was found on 8.8% of Wales' streets in 2019 according to Keep Wales Tidy/Caru Cymru, and this figure did not include fouling in parks, meadows etc.

Also not included were the levels of smoking associated waste because this is also regularly monitored by Keep Wales Tidy/Caru Cymru, with an average 79.6% of Wales' streets containing such detritus. Monmouthshire's smoking related litter rate was higher at 83.8% as revealed by 'An Analysis of the Local Environmental Quality of Monmouthshire County Council 2021-22.' Streets in Abergavenny and Chepstow were particularly blighted by smoking litter. As a result of the findings MCC will be tackling smoking related litter in Monmouthshire by purchasing hand held vacuums for use by manual street cleaning teams, and also trialling special novel bins in places where this litter is prevalent e.g. outside some licensed premises during 2022-23.

A copy of KAT's 2021 recommendations on these problems, as presented as a submission to the Welsh Government consultation on litter, fly-tipping and dog fouling can be requested at:

keepabergavennytidy@gmail.com

SO WHY DID KEEP ABERGAVENNY TIDY FOCUS ON THE DROPPING OF LITTER BY BRAND NAME?

Keep Wales Tidy and Caru Cymru regularly survey litter waste by type, but they do not refer to the actual brands which most commonly appear as dropped litter. In their 2006 academic paper 'How (and Where) The Mighty Have Fallen' retail experts Cathy Parker and Stuart Roper observed that product package recognition has increasingly become a primary medium for communicating brand messages, but their research into public views also suggested that when brands such as Coke, Walker's Crisps and Stella Artois became associated with litter a more negative perception of them was revealed. An updated study for the Journal Of Marketing Management in 2015, 'Back To Basics In The Marketing Of Place: The Impact Of Litter Upon Place Attitudes', Parker, Roper and Medway further concluded that exposure to discarded branded packaging can not only negatively impact on people's attitudes to the products but also to their perceptions of the littered places themselves.

In 2017 a study carried out by vaping retailer (vapour.com) asked 1,203 consumers in England which brands they most often saw as litter. 89% said McDonald's, while 87% named Coca-Cola. This was followed by Walkers (72%), Cadbury (65%) and KFC (64%), with coffee chains Costa and Starbucks scoring 43% and 40% respectively. Those surveyed did not regard litter as a minor issue, with 57% considering it to be a problem, and 76% saying that they viewed a brand negatively when they saw its packaging among waste on the street.

When Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful conducted an on street litter survey in 2019 they found that over half of the non alcoholic branded products dumped as litter was by just 7 firms, in order Coca Cola, Boost, Lucozade/Ribena/, Mondelez (Cadbury's), Red Bull, Mars and McDonald's.

In May 2021 Surfers Against Sewage launched its flagship week of the Million Mile Clean where volunteers took part in a national brand audit, an important citizen science programme to drive corporate behaviour change. As the UK's biggest coordinated beach clean event, over 50,000 volunteers took part in 600 cleans, covering 350,000 miles in total. Altogether 377 brand audit data sets were produced and a total of 26,983 items of packaging pollution were monitored. The top 12 most polluting brands were responsible for 48% of all packaging pollution monitored during the audit. Again, in order, Coca-Cola, Walkers, McDonalds, Cadbury, Tesco, Lucozade, Costa, Mars, Wrigley and Haribo were the most commonly discarded brands.

The research from Abergavenny and elsewhere clearly demonstrates that discarded brand waste has both a negative impact on the reputation of the products/retailers, and also on the perceptions of the public towards highly littered spaces.

WHAT CAN WE ALL DO TO REDUCE LITTERING?

A number of important national measures will assist recycling:

From April 2022 a UK Government tax is introduced on all packaging that is not made up of at least 30% recycled content. Additionally, by 2024 companies will face clean up costs if their packaging is littered. They will also be fined if their rubbish is difficult to recycle and if they miss recycling targets. From 2024 the Welsh Government will be introducing a Deposit Return Scheme whereby consumers are charged a deposit e.g. on a plastic bottle at the point of purchase which they can then redeem when they return it for recycling.

More locally, how can we as individuals, businesses and retailers help reduce the litter created when popular branded packaging (in particular) get discarded and in so doing create more positive retailer/brand image associations; and at the same time improve the perceptions of both locals and visitors alike in the cleanliness and beauty of our town and surrounding areas?

To national/multiple retailers/businesses:

1. In what ways do you believe you could increase the recycled content of what you sell?
2. In what ways do you believe you can improve your business locally e.g. by reducing the amount of litter your store and its customers generate?
3. Are there sufficient litter receptacles in the environs of your business, and are they regularly emptied?

To locally based retailers/businesses:

1. Are there ways you can reduce wrappers and packaging?
2. In what ways can you and neighbouring businesses keep your immediate streetscape litter free?

To Abergavenny Town Council and Monmouthshire County Council:

1. In what ways are you monitoring litter hot spots e.g. by installing CCTV?
2. When and where litterers are identified are there any follow up actions e.g. via court enforcement of Fixed Penalty Notices etc.?
3. In what ways are you engaging with local businesses to mutually assist with the reduction of litter?
4. On your premises e.g. leisure centres are you removing product brands which have little or no recyclable packaging?

Many thanks.

Please send your responses to:

keepabergavennytidy@gmail.com