

Press release: Drivers urged to clean up their act as part of national litter campaign

Litter presents a serious safety risk besides being unsightly and a risk to wildlife and the environment.

Around 200,000 bags of litter are collected from the motorway network every year and that is why Highways England is taking part in Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean again this year to help encourage people to keep the country clean.

Highways England's head of customer and operational requirements Freda Rashdi said:

Litter is an important national issue and we're pleased to be able to support the Great British Spring Clean.

Litter is not only unsightly as well as a risk to wildlife and the environment, but it also puts our workers at risk collecting it and it diverts time and money that could be better spent on improving the network.

If people don't drop litter in the first place it wouldn't need to be picked up – so we're urging people to take their litter home instead of tossing it out of their car windows.

The Great British Spring Clean campaign takes place between Friday 22 March and Tuesday 23 April. Highways England picks litter throughout the year and is having a particular purge which started on Friday 1 March.

Allison Ogden Newton, Chief Executive at Keep Britain Tidy, said:

I'm delighted that Highways England has joined forces with us again this year to support the campaign and give our network a spring clean.

Our roadside verges are a haven for wildlife and we know that millions of small mammals are killed every year by litter that has been thrown from vehicles by thoughtless drivers.

Our army of up to 500,000 volunteers will be delighted to see that Highways England is supporting their efforts by cleaning up the places that they can't get to – our high-speed road network and slip roads, where so much litter is tossed out of car windows.

Last year 8,000 bags of litter were collected on the network during the Great British Spring Clean.

During a similar purge last year, while also contending with 'Beast from the East', more than 8,000 bags of litter were collected, and Highways England expects to exceed that target this year.

But besides the usual takeaway wrappers or bottles that have been picked up, in previous years some of the more unusual items have included push bikes, fridges, settees and wallets which will also be removed if needed.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.