

# Press Releases - Naming & Shaming is on its way - 15/05/01

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## Naming & Shaming is on its way



Councillor Eoin Costello (FG) pushed through a motion at May's meeting of Dun

Photo taken recently of stream near Ballybrack Village

Laoghaire Rathdown County Council requiring that the Council publish the names of those convicted of littering in the County. Councillor Costello said that many residents associations and businesses were at their wits end in the battle against litter and this measure would be an important additional weapon in this struggle.

Littering is seen as one of the major problems facing the County.

The first page of the Council's Litter Management Plan states that the amount of litter, which defaces the County's footpaths, streets, parks and beaches, is one of the major environmental issues facing the county.

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown's Cathaoirleach said at the launch of the council's Anti-Litter campaign in April that the appearance of litter seriously undermines the good image of the County and damages the Environment. The Cathaoirleach stated that there is an urgent need to intensify action against litter. The Department of the Environment recently published Litter Action Plan also calling for the significant intensification of anti-litter action at local level.

Councillor Costello stated that the cost of sweeping litter from the streets of Dun Laoghaire will be £1.6 million in 2001. The Council

has joined with the business community and local communities in a partnership approach to dealing with the litter problem. However there are some who do not feel the need to co-operate, there are those who consistently litter.

In the year July 1999 to June 2000 the Council issued 805 on the spot fines and commenced prosecutions against 36 litter offenders resulting in 16 convictions. The "Name & Shame" strategy will now be presented to the next meeting of the Council's Strategic Policy Committee on the Environment for ratification.

The "Name & Shame" strategy has been successfully used elsewhere. Dublin City Council decided, at its meeting of 3rd April 2000, to issue details of all those successfully prosecuted for offences under the Litter Pollution Act 1997. Fines of up to IR£1,500 were awarded to the Corporation.

According to an official of Dublin Corporation the Corporation are very pleased with the effects of the strategy. The Corporation were continuously being criticised for not taking action on litter despite having a very active campaign against litter. From their point of view the main benefit of the strategy has been to raise awareness of the Corporation's determination to fight against litter. Once the Corporation started publishing the names of those convicted of littering the payment rate on fines, particularly those to companies, rose by 30%.

The procedure Dublin Corporation adopted is as follows;

- A. The standard littering fine is £50 and if the person fined pays up that's the end of it.
- B. If the person littering doesn't pay, Dublin Corporation pursue the matter through the District Court. If the litterer is found guilty they may have an additional fine imposed by the Court. It is only at this stage that the person or company found guilty of littering has their name published in the paper and is included in a press release from the Corporation.

Dublin Corporation encourages members of the public to report persons/companies seen littering. They have provided a free phone number for this purpose.

Dublin Corporation have not had a case of mistaken identity yet due to the procedure that they follow. Once a report is received they take all the details of the person making the report. They then verify the details of the person making the report such as their address and phone number to prevent bogus reports. They then issue a fine to the person/company cited as having littered. That

person has a period of time to dispute or pay the fine. If the Corporation do not receive any correspondence from the person being fined it is then referred to the District Court. Thus the person has plenty of time to come forward and dispute the fine.

According to Councillor Costello litter erodes the hard work of communities. In his own area, Ballybrack village has suffered year after year in the Tidy Towns Competition because of littering by passing pedestrians and motorists, a matter which is largely out of their control.

Councillor Costello stated that in Dublin Corporation the publishing of names has greatly assisted Litter Wardens in carrying out their duties. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County has only four wardens covering the fourth most populous local authority in the Republic of Ireland. The publishing of names of those convicted of littering will help them in carrying out their difficult job.

Councillor Costello stated that the time has come to send out an unequivocal message that littering is no longer acceptable.