



## WHAT LITTER BUGS BRITAIN

### PRESS RELEASE

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Packaging accounts for just 1.3% of the number of littered items dropped in England's streets and countryside according to a new survey released today by INCPEN and carried out by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy. Previous surveys were carried out in 2004 and 1996.

Jane Bickerstaffe, Director of INCPEN commented: "Despite the low proportion of packaging, the reality is that litter remains an important issue for us. We will continue to work with Keep Britain Tidy, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and our members to tackle it and encourage people to dispose of used items more responsibly."

Littering is a behavioural issue and this survey records what people drop. It shows that chewing gum is the single most littered item, with a five-fold increase since 2004. Cigarette ends have doubled but now make up only a fifth of littering actions compared to a third in 2004.

Although the survey does not address why people litter, it notes that the ban on smoking in the workplace has been introduced since the last time it was done and this is likely to have impacted the figures.

Carrier bags, though often cited as a major contributor to litter, appear well down the scale at only 0.03% of the number of items.

### Results: 2008 compared with 2004

		2008 Item Count	2008 %	2004 Item Count	2004 %
<b>Chewing Gum</b>		175,808	78.5%	35,540	61.2%
<b>Cigarette Ends</b>		44,040	19.7%	19,310	33.3%
<b>Packaging</b>		2,852	1.3%	2,494	4.3%
<b>Of which</b>	<b>Drinks containers and tops</b>	877	0.4%	653	1.1%
	<b>Carrier bags</b>	78	0.03%	37	0.06%
<b>Other</b>		1,215	0.5%	697	1.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>		223,915	100%	58,041	100%

Packaging remains a minor constituent, representing 1.3% as a proportion of littering actions, down from 4.3% in 2004, although the number of items littered shows a small increase over the 4 years.

In terms of new items in the top ten list, the most noteworthy, straight in at number 5 is discarded food – at a time when food waste is becoming a more recognised issue.

### Top Ten Most Commonly Found Littered Items

	2008		2004		1996	
	Type of litter	Share of littered items %	Type of litter	Share of littered items %	Type of Litter	Share of littered items %
1	Chewing gum	78	Chewing gum	61	Chewing gum	69
2	Cigarette ends	20	Cigarette ends	33	Cigarette ends	23
3	Sweet wrappers	0.4	Sweet wrappers	1.6	Matches	1.4
4	Cigarette related	0.2	Cigarette related	0.4	Bits of paper	1.2
5	Food	0.1	Soft drink plastic bottles	0.4	Sweet wrappers	0.9
6	Soft drink cans	0.1	Gum wrappers	0.3	Glass fragments	0.7
7	Soft drink plastic bottles	0.1	Soft drinks cans	0.3	Plastic fragments	0.5
8	Fast food packaging	0.1	Snack packaging	0.3	Tin foil	0.3
9	Soft drink bottle tops	0.1	Fast food packaging	0.3	Gum wrappers	0.3
10	Snack packaging	0.1	Post Office elastic bands	0.2	Tickets	0.2

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#### Notes to Editors

##### **INCPEN**

The Industry Council for Packaging & the Environment - is a research organisation set up in 1974 to study the environmental and social impact of packaging. It draws together an influential group of companies that operate throughout the supply chain and share a common interest in packaging, the environment and sustainable development.

INCPEN has campaigned against littering for many years and has been a member and strong supporter of Keep Britain Tidy. It also works in partnership with the Campaign to Protect Rural England. It has commissioned numerous pieces of research to better understand the issue. It encourages its

members and other companies to use the Tidyman logo on products likely to be used outdoors. Anti-littering messages are a key part of INCPEN's highly respected schools' literature.

**Keep Britain Tidy** is an environmental charity which campaigns directly to the public. It was set up in 1954.

#### **Survey Notes**

Keep Britain Tidy undertook this INCPEN Litter Survey as an **additional** component of the 2008 / 09 Local Environmental Quality Survey for England (LEQSE).

The survey was carried out between August and October 2008. Previous surveys were in 2004 and 1996.

During the period, litter composition was recorded on 403 carefully structured sample sites, as an adjunct to the standard LEQSE assessments that are normally made.

The INCPEN survey comprises at least 30 sample sites drawn from the 12 standard land uses around which the LEQSE is structured. These land uses are outlined in Appendix 1.

Chewing gum is counted in two ways by **Keep Britain Tidy** surveyors. If gum is freshly dropped it is counted as '3 dimensional' as this is still possible to remove relatively easily. When gum becomes trodden **down** it is classified as a **stain** as it requires different and comparatively expensive techniques to remove it.

The survey produced a representative overall assessment of the composition of littered items in England, and indicative information about the variations in composition that may exist between land uses.

The raw data and the report are available on the INCPEN website.

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