



## Butts Out Campaign

**A campaign by Coventry City Council and city centre management company (CV One) to reduce cigarette butt littering in the city centre.**

There is a significant problem with cigarette butt litter in the Coventry city centre, particularly near businesses premises where a no smoking policy operates. This leads to employees congregating near their place of employment for smoking breaks and results cigarette butts being discarded onto the streets.

By targeting employees, public awareness generally would also be raised.

A two-week 'Butts Out' campaign devised, emphasising that cigarette butts were litter and as such those who discarded them could face a fixed penalty fine.

Working in partnership with 'CV One' eight problem sites were highlighted. Cigarette butts were collected over a 2-week period prior to the campaign from these sites to establish a base line position. A further collection was made at the end of the campaign to assess improvements.

**Councillor Kevin Foster, Cabinet Member, City Services said " ... In Coventry over 60% of all litter dropped on city centre streets is cigarette ends and we are keen to tackle those who pop out for a fag break and stub out their cigarettes on our pavements ..."**



A number of methods were used to raise both public and employee awareness.

- Media, local paper and radio
- High visibility posters – these were put up in a number of places including bus shelters and car park pay & display units.
- Articles in Council newsletters/magazine
- Letters to all 746 businesses within the City Centre
- Street survey targeting people smoking
- Survey via email directed at all Council employees who smoked

The survey questions were to gauge public awareness of the law regarding litter and fixed penalty, their awareness of butt bins and the facilities/policies provided by their employers. Opinion was also gauged as to whether those surveyed would use a "Stubbi" (portable wallet for disposing of butts).



The campaign was one of education. Over **200** businesses were visited. Employers were questioned about their smoking policy and facilities in place for smokers. They were asked to cascade down to their employees the law regarding litter as well as requested to display 'no littering' posters in their kitchen areas and notice boards. Over **330** posters were distributed and over **400** "Stubbi"s were given away.

During the campaign Street Wardens, employed by CV One, and Community Police officers undertook to approach smokers to advise on cigarette disposal, litter and the law.

## Outcomes

The survey found that 80% of smokers knew they could get fined for dropping butts. Despite this **67%** admitted using the ground as an ashtray. (6% always, 61% occasionally)

- **33%** of people questioned did not notice the butt bins
- **59%** of people questioned stated they would consider using a "Stubbi"
- **93%** of businesses had a no smoking policy

The campaign has raised public awareness with regard to litter and fixed penalties. A **37%** reduction in butt litter was recorded at the eight base line sites The survey also noted that the butt bins needed to be more visible, more butt bins were needed and the general litterbins needed to have a larger specific area for butts.

A number of businesses have stated they will consider sponsoring a butt bin.

## Benefits

The campaign has raised public awareness about cigarette litter and fixed penalties, provided information about cigarette disposal and achieved a short term reduction in cigarette littering.

### For further information please contact:

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