

Why is there so much litter?

All the citizens of Woking have access to some excellent open spaces and amenities, and that includes the Basingstoke Canal. These spaces are well maintained by Woking BC and the Basingstoke Canal authority but, increasingly, the spread of litter has started to blight our borough. Most litter is dropped by a small number of Woking's residents and by children, and they are spoiling it for the majority of the law-abiding citizens. The pattern of littering has changed since we have emerged from lockdown. During lockdown the litter tended to be left in open spaces by youths congregating there, often after dark. It was even more annoying where that litter was left close to a rubbish bin. Now we have bottles, drinks cans, packaging, sweet wrappers and plastics being left alongside our roads and pathways. Along the main roads the litter is been thrown from cars, usually following a visit to a fast-food outlet. But there is also an increase of sweet wrappers that suggests children are throwing the wrappers away, maybe without the parent realising.

Whilst we will continue to rely on schools to educate the children about litter, there are many who clearly have not learnt, and will probably never learn. What we need to do is be involved in the solution. We can all pick up the litter and dispose of it properly. You do not need training to pick up litter. You do not need permission. You do not need a licence. You simply pick it up. Woking BC provide lots of bins in key locations, and these are emptied regularly. The council also arrange for the contractors to litter pick along key roads and thoroughfares. But they cannot be expected to cover every road or path. When you go out for a walk, take a plastic bag and pick up litter. Use a "litter picker" to save you having to bend down all the time, and the wearing of gloves is recommended. When you reach a bin, dispose of the rubbish there. If you do a regular walk, then do a regular litter pick along the way as well. Whilst this will not stop kids dropping litter or throwing it from cars, it will improve the situation. There is nothing like un-cleared litter to attract more litter, so keeping our borough free of unnecessary litter will stop the problem getting worse. If you travel to another town or area and you see lots of un-cleared litter your impression of that place will immediately be a negative one. Let's not let that happen to Woking.

So go on, instead of whinging about the litter, pick it up and dispose of it in the bins provided. Make Woking a better place for us all.