

**DO: GACH BALL DE CEANTAR BARDASACH AN CHOMARAIGH**  
**TO: EACH MEMBER OF THE COMERAGH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**

**TUAIRISC ÓN STIÚRTHÓIREACHT COMHSHAOL**  
**ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE REPORT**

**MEÁN FÓMHAIR 2022**  
**SEPTEMBER 2022**

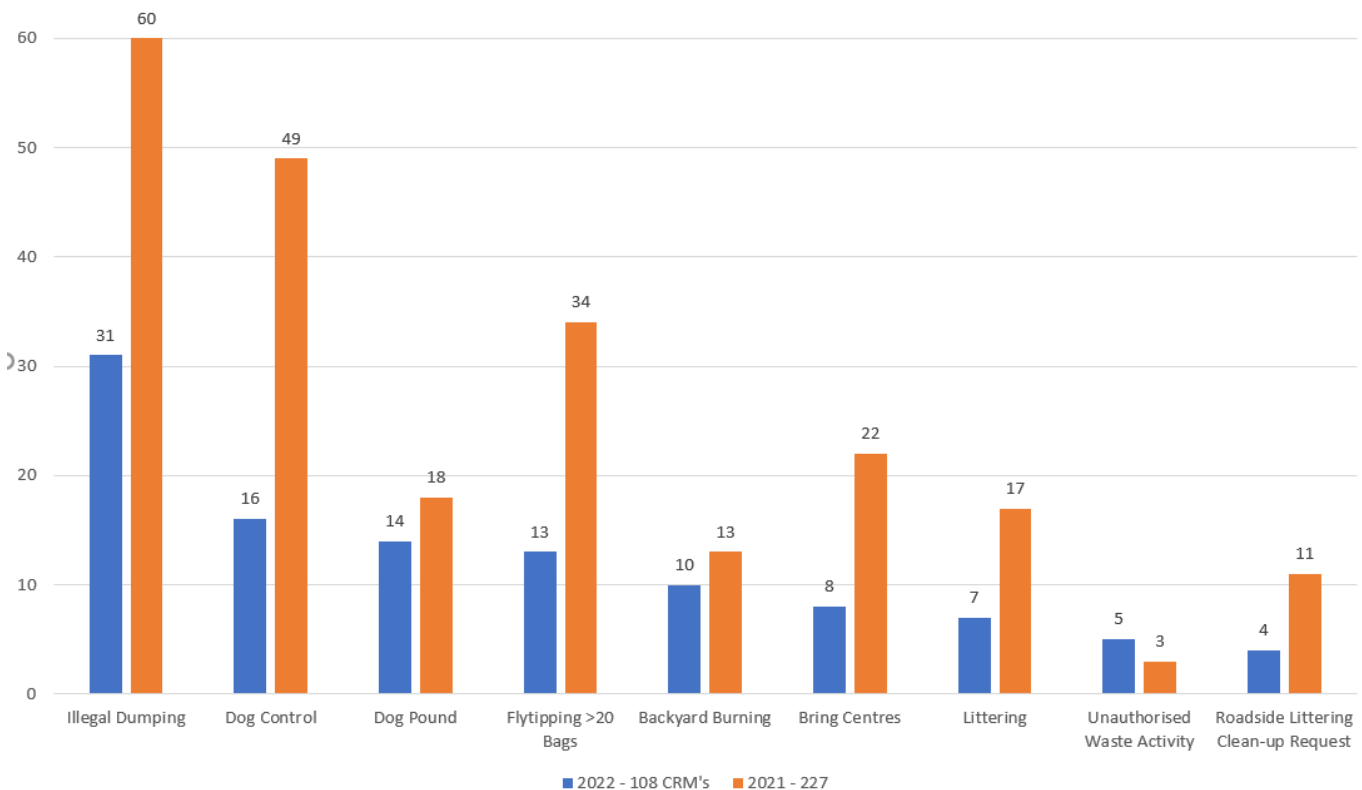
**General Environment Enforcement**

Environmental Inspectors continue to investigate and monitor illegal waste issues, littering, fly-tipping and illegal signage and issued litter fines where evidence of an offence is available.

Members of the public are encouraged to contact the local authority to report all incidents of illegal dumping or littering by using the following telephone number: 0818 10 20 20.

**CRM Activity**

The following graph shows a comparison of the top categories of CRM cases recorded by the Environment Dept. in the Comeragh area in the period to mid-August in the years 2021 & 2022. Environmental Inspectors continue to investigate complaints received and monitor illegal waste issues, littering, fly-tipping and illegal signage and issued litter fines where offences are detected. The Waterford City & County Councils Dog Warden continues to investigate all control of dog issues throughout the City & County.



## **Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022**

The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 has been signed into law by the President.

What the Act does - The Act:

- defines the Circular Economy for the first time in Irish domestic law;
- incentivises the use of reusable and recyclable alternatives to a range of wasteful single-use disposable packaging and other items;
- re-designates the existing Environment Fund as a Circular Economy Fund, which will remain ring-fenced to provide support for environmental and circular economy projects;
- introduces a mandatory segregation and incentivised charging regime for commercial waste, similar to what exists for the household market. This will increase waste separation and support increased re-cycling rates;
- provides for the GDPR-compliant use of a range of technologies, such as CCTV for waste enforcement purposes. This will support efforts to tackle illegal dumping and littering, while protecting the privacy rights of citizens;
- places the Circular Economy Strategy and National Food Loss Prevention Roadmap on a statutory footing, establishing a legal requirement for governments to develop and periodically update these 2 policies;
- streamlines the national processes for End-of-Waste and By-Products decisions, tackling the delays which can be encountered by industry, and supporting the availability of recycled secondary raw materials in the Irish market; and
- consolidates the government's policy of keeping fossil fuels in the ground – by introducing prohibitions on exploration for and extraction of coal, lignite and oil shale

### **The next steps:**

Draft Regulations on the Single Use Disposable Cup Levy will go out for consultation this autumn, with a view to these taking effect before the end of the year. A public consultation on new regulations in respect of the End-of-Waste and By-Products decisions making processes will also go out for consultation later this year.

The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) will begin preparing the Statutory Codes of Practice in relation to the use of CCTV and other Recording Devices that Local Authorities will have to abide by as when using these technologies tackle illegal dumping. The Codes of Practice will then be submitted to the Minister for final approval.

## **Solid Fuel Regulations**

New Solid Fuel Regulations have recently been approved by the Government and will come into force on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

### **What are the main changes in the regulations?**

1. The new technical requirements for fuels have been set and are outlined below
  - Coal products and manufactured solid fuels must have a smoke emission rate of less than 10 grams per hour. Manufactured part biomass products must have a smoke emission rate of less than 5 grams per hour. – This is effectively the same as is currently in operation in low smoke zones. Traditional smoky coals cannot meet these requirements and as such a prohibited from sale.
  - Coal products and manufactured solid fuels, including manufactured part biomass products, must have (a) sulphur content less than 2% by weight on a dry ash-free basis, and with effect from 1 September 2025, subject to a market assessment, have sulphur content less than 1% by weight on a dry ash-free basis. – Again, this is similar to the current provision for these fuels but the limits are expected to be reduced over time.
  - A new requirement is that fuel products which are 100% biomass products including, wood products and wood logs, supplied in units of two cubic metres or less, must have a moisture content of less than 25% from 2022 and less than 20% from 2023.

- Wood logs supplied in units of two cubic metres or more shall be accompanied by a notice containing the statement specified in the Schedule 1 of the regulations.
- 2. It will be prohibited to sell turf via the internet or other media, or from a premises or place used for the retail of food, fuel or other goods (including from shops, garages and petrol filling stations, fuel yards and public houses and other public places.
- 3. FPN's no longer apply – due to legal issues it will no longer possible to issue FPN's
- 4. Online sales are now included
- 5. No ban on the burning of fuel is included to allow householders to use up any existing product they may have from before the regulations are introduced.
- 6. There have also been changes to the producer and retailer responsibilities.

### **How will the regulations be enforced?**

The regulations are made under the Air Pollution Act and as with the current regulations, the Local Authorities are primarily responsible for the enforcement of the new regulations within their functional areas. A contravention of a provision of these regulations is an offence under the Act and will be prosecuted under the Act.

## **Environmental Education & Awareness**

### **Waste prevention**

Waste prevention workshops will be held in Kilmacthomas Library for both Heritage Week (August) and Reuse Month (October). The focus of these workshops is making a reusable food wrap that provides a natural alternative to plastic wrap. These wraps are a great way to start out on your waste reduction journey and offer an easy switch from plastic. Each participant can make their own wrap to take home with them and are encouraged to bring along any other waste prevention or recycling questions they might have. The workshop provides a forum to discuss reuse, composting and recycling as the wraps are being made.

Waterford City & County Council have been working with 2GoCup to encourage the use of reusable cups at cafes. 10 cafes are taking part in a three month pilot initiative with deposit return reusable cups that cost €1 each (5 cafes along the Greenway and 5 in Waterford). It is hoped that these 10 cafes will then encourage other cafes to accept and move towards reusable cups.

### **Schools**

The Green Schools Seminar will be online this autumn as most teachers found this to be a convenient way to take part. Ms. Ella Ryan, Environmental Education & Awareness Officer will be available to visit schools or answer any questions that they might have, as will An Taisce's Green Schools team.

Waterford City & County Council are working with a further four schools and the Waterford Teachers Centre to continue the Climate Literacy programme with secondary schools this autumn. This is a 10- week Climate Literacy programme, focused on improving climate literacy and fostering behavior change in schools. The course is developed to include teacher training, resources, and lesson plans. The teacher training is designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills required to effectively and confidently deliver not only this course, but also across their curriculum subject as the course can complement any subject framework that has an environmental strand. After the training the teachers will then be able to deliver the course with as many groups of students as they wish. An in-person teacher training day will be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, with further online sessions taking place during September.

### **Litter Awareness**

The Love This Place national public awareness campaign from Leave No Trace Ireland took place from the beginning of June to the end of August. It urged the public to play their part by acting responsibly when using outdoor spaces through raising awareness of our impacts and what we can all do to make a difference. The campaign began by prompting people to take a pledge to follow the Leave No Trace principles. This year, it focused on the impacts of littering, responsible dog ownership and fires. Waterford City & County Council has been using some of these messages across its social media to highlight local issues, adding local images and text where necessary.

The Mayor of the City & County of Waterford officially launched the Gum Litter Taskforce's gum litter education campaign on the 9<sup>th</sup> August. The Gum Litter Taskforce (GLT) is an environmental initiative that was set up to develop and implement an

awareness campaign to reduce gum litter. Supported and funded by the chewing gum industry, the GLT initiative has made improvements in relation to gum litter awareness and disposal behaviour over the last 14 years. The latest results of the National Litter Pollution Monitoring report showed the percentage of gum as a proportion of litter at 9.4%, down from 10.6% the previous year (2019). As part of the Gum Litter Taskforce the 'Bin It!' education programme will travel across the country and deliver 60 performances a year to primary schools nationwide. The 'Bin It!' school roadshow encourages students to responsibly dispose of litter, and particularly gum litter, through actor-led workshops.

### **Community Clean-Ups**

Waterford City & County Council facilitates community clean ups throughout the year to clean up litter and illegally dumped waste from approach roads, local beauty spots, beaches and general public areas. We continue to supply bags, gloves and litter pickers to many of the groups taking part, as well as collecting the bags of litter afterwards.

### **Website**

Environmental Information continues to be added to the Environment section of the Waterford City & County Council website which can be found at [www.waterfordcouncil.ie](http://www.waterfordcouncil.ie)