

I know how to solve Britain's Litter Crisis.



### ***Our Culture***

Travel 25 minutes through the Channel Tunnel and our European cousins enjoy spotless, well-maintained roads and surroundings, Britain however is the complete opposite and is now the most littered nation in the Western World.



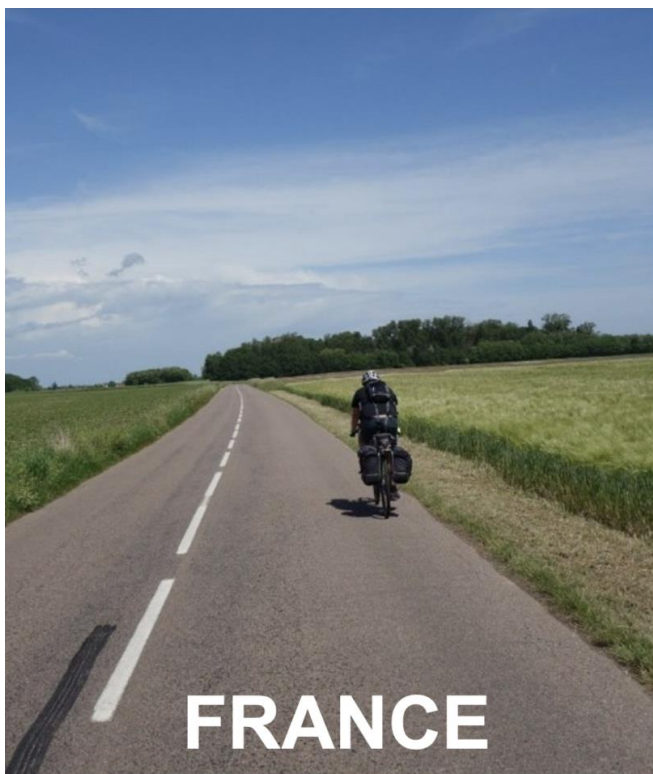
How many times have you heard it said in our country "It's not my problem mate, it's someone else's job" or "Throwing litter is keeping someone employed".

This is compounded by the century's old mindset of "My Home is my Castle" which has made us a bit selfish when it comes to caring for the world outside our own front door.

So unlike countries like France, Holland & Germany where the mindset is more like "My Country is my Castle" and they sweep their doorsteps, polish their shopfronts and decorate their roundabouts, we generally don't give a second thought to our surroundings and carelessly toss litter.

Litter blindness has become our way of dealing with it and in fact its only when coming back to Britain from a holiday aboard that people tend to notice the difference.

"It was so clean out there, you could eat your dinner off the floor" is often part of the conversation but then it is soon forgotten, and we put up with what we've got here as the norm.



### ***A Broken System***

Over a period of many years, things have deteriorated to conditions likened to Third World countries and this is fuelled by structural defects in our current system: -

- Authorities fail to maintain litter free standards in line with their statutory duty.
- There is no national anti-litter campaign & education programme in place.
- Litter laws are not enforced.

This whole system is broken and it's a free for all.

The result – fly-tipping is rife, our roads and motorways are knee deep in years of filth and grime and 48% of the UK population now drop litter.



### ***The Facts***

Here's some headline statistics taken from recent Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests:-

- National Highways removed litter-free standards as a KPI for their road network.
- They opted out of accepting authority to enforce litter fines on motorways and A roads.
- The Environment Agency responsible for enforcement against industrial fly tipping issued only 1 fine in a whole year.
- 70% of UK councils issue only 1 litter fine a week.



FLY TIPPING – ONLY 1 FINE ISSUED IN A WHOLE YEAR BY ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

COUNCIL CONTRACTORS – PAID HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS TO NOT PERFORM

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND HAVE DECIDED THAT LITTER PICKING IS NO LONGER NEEDED

FINES – 70% OF UK COUNCILS ISSUE ONLY 1 x £80 FINE A WEEK

**The Sad Conclusion**

The broken windows theory has proved “if you don’t care, I don’t care” and this is the problem.

In the Sunday Times article on litter on March 5th 2023, it was quoted that an insider at National Highways said “We cannot just go out any time there is a bit of litter and clear our roads, it causes huge disruption” “if people didn’t drop litter, we wouldn’t have to clear it up”.

How does this justify a government department, legally obliged to enforce litters laws and maintain a litter-free infrastructure abandoning their duty?

Our motorways don’t just have a “bit of litter” they look like a skip has been fly tipped along every stretch and slip road thus attracting more poor behaviour.

More information can be found at – <https://youtu.be/CX1EoPF4xuI>

As the vast amount of FOI data proves, Duty Bodies (Councils/Highways etc) fail to deliver their statutory duties and are unaccountable for their failings.

This is fuelling more litter and making Britain a giant bin.

It’s a fact that a littered environment attracts crime and makes areas unsafe – this was one of the underlying reasons for the introduction of the Environmental Protection Act. The exacting and very specific legislation introduced in 1990 that imposed Statutory Duty on the authorities to enforce litter fines and maintain Grade A (litter-free) standards everywhere.

Litter and fly tipping are the equivalent of a cancer to our nation and it has spread everywhere impacting our safety, security, happiness, fitness, mental health, economy and tourism.

Britain is now tatty, miserable and depressing and our national pride has completely disappeared.

### ***The Added Problem***

Littering in Britain has increased by over 500% since the 1960s and the main driver of this is fast-food.

The fast-food culture in Britain has turned us into a “grab and eat on the go” society.

Combine this with our culture and values system and the structural defects of our current approach, and you can clearly see why we have a litter crisis.

The result – roadside verges are now densely packed with discarded fast-food packaging - McDonalds, KFC, Greggs, Dominoes, Coca-Cola, Red Bull, Lucozade etc. which can be seen everywhere.

### ***Here's How We Fix It***



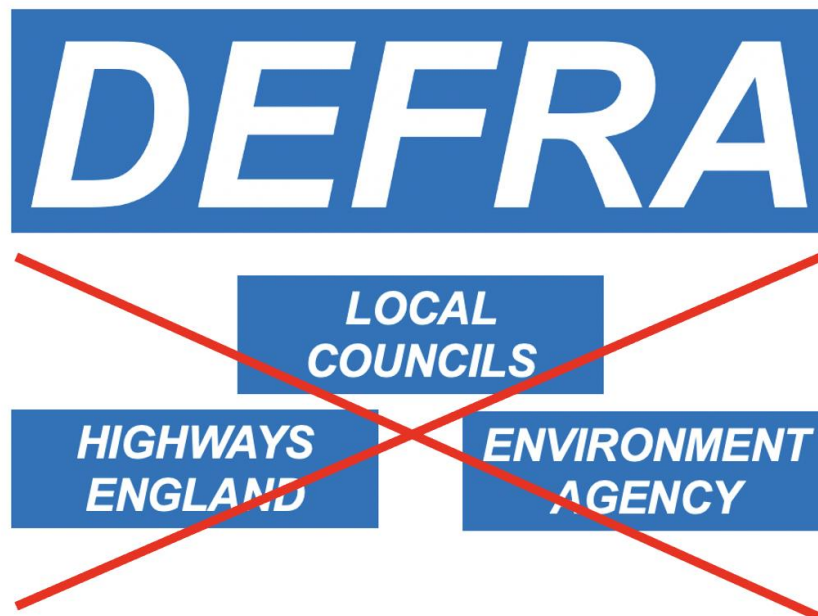
The solution to this problem is obvious but will require a strong leader in our government who takes full ownership of the task, has a clear vision of what needs to be done and just delivers it with conviction, no messing and no choices given: -

- New National Anti-Litter Campaign & Education Programme.

- New Litter Tax introduced on fast-food.
- More enforcement with higher fines.
- A dedicated CLEAN BRITAIN workforce.

**This is the detailed template for a 10 point plan that will ensure for a cleaner, safer and better Britain umbrellaed by a national anti-litter awareness campaign and education programme delivered at all schools: -**

1. Introduce a new LITTER TAX that all major fast-food and major convenience stores must pay.
2. Remove responsibility and funding from the existing authorities and fragmented set up that currently doesn't work.

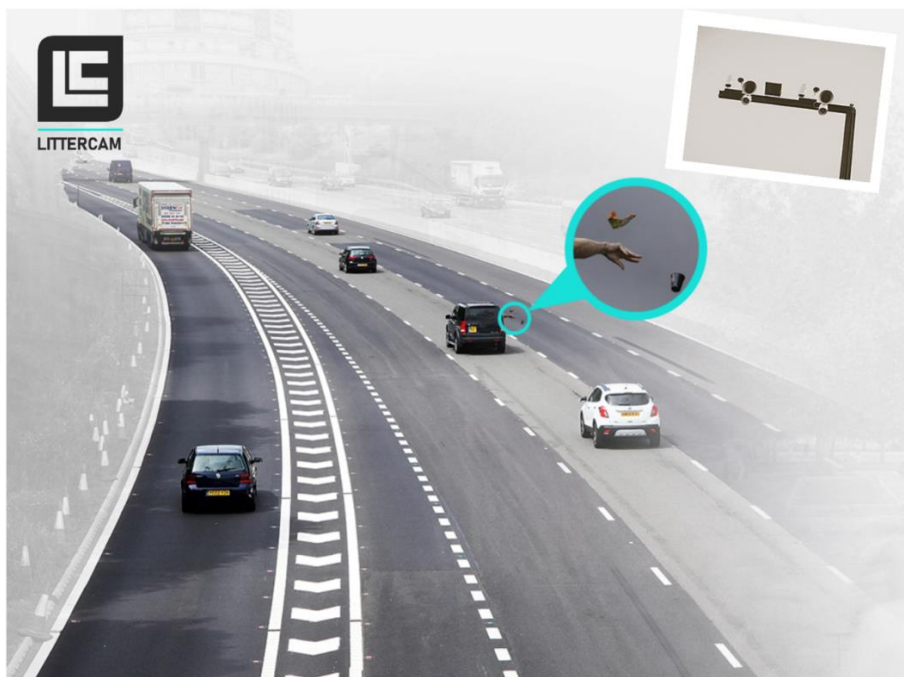


3. Transfer those funds (plus the new LITTER TAX) and responsibility to a new single team ie: CLEAN BRITAIN TEAM or NATIONAL PRIDE TEAM responsible for all tasks including enforcement / fining, clearing litter & fly tipping, safety sign and island maintenance, drain cleaning, verge sweeping, pothole repairs and white lining.



4. Upgrade the antiquated methods currently adopted ie: 1 huge lorry following a man with a litter picking stick and replace with efficient plant and equipment as used in Europe now – they have multipurpose vehicles capable of litter vacuuming, pot-hole repairs, grass cutting, verge sweeping, gulley cleaning, sign washing, blowing leaves and grass cuttings etc.

5. Raise fines and introduce ANPR cameras at all drive thrus that print number plate QR codes on all packaging and receipts allowing for automatic fines to be seamlessly issued as tossed litter is picked from verges and issued to the vehicle's Registered Keeper.



6. Install fixed and mobile “LitterCam” AI Enforcement Cameras across the road network which can automatically issue fines to the Registered Keeper of a vehicle that tosses any litter.
7. Introduce a new “Binrastructure” that is fit for purpose, consistent and unified across the whole country with clear signage and includes large bins in laybys and known hotspots.
8. Put in a network of recycling points and allow white vans back to the tips.
9. Put in place a network of reverse vending machines to allow bottle deposit refunds.



10. Introduce a penalty system for all Highways Maintenance contractors that leave untidy mess on our roads after their work and discard expensive roadworks eqpt. into the verges like cones, signs, sandbags, lights, barriers.

### **Conclusion**

In the last 10 years I have spent extensive amounts of time and effort dealing with many UK councils, highways departments and attending policy meetings with DEFRA.

In my naivety I thought there was a desire by them all to force change by driving innovation, efficiency and technology, change behaviours and eradicate the litter crisis to create a better Britain.





## DATA PROVIDERS TO DEFRA

Within in a few years I began to see another side. With the exception of very few contributors around the table including John Read, the founder of Clean Up Britain, I realised that I was on my own with this thought.

At every level there was no desire to deviate from the current broken system and the general consensus was to carry on as we were.

I saw first hand, from behind closed doors, a behaviour and attitude that I never knew existed. From the Milbank offices of DEFRA to the waste team's offices of Maidstone Borough Council it was everywhere in the system. Let's carry on as we are and just use smoke and mirrors to portray improvement.

It was about coming up with feeble litter strategies for "optics" that cost millions but had no effect and fudging the stats on how well Britain is doing on the litter front.

Ticking the box in the news and media by using government funded "Keep Britain Tidy" to act as spokesman for the UK and big up a lightweight, low-impact, annual media stunt called The Great British Spring Clean that gets heavily covered by the press as a "Wow, look how good we are doing" feel-good factor.

This is the tool used to make local councils look good and hoodwink the man in the street that UK is doing all it can to "Keep Britain Tidy".

All the time masking the real problem so the authorities can carry on "business as usual", allocating funds to a system that fails to deliver.

The path of least resistance is the preferred route as it protects jobs, and ensures budgets keep flowing whilst sadly not delivering what British Citizens are legally entitled to.

As our eyes can tell us everywhere we look and as supported by data from factual FOI requests, Britain is broken and filthy and there is no plan to solve it.

I accept that the above 10-point plan cannot happen overnight, but it provides a template for success based on real experience and knowledge of what is needed.

Making a start will make a huge differences very quickly and can be rolled out over time to become the new way.

I have proved that a company like Lucas who do not do this for a day job and have none of the resources and funding afforded to the authorities, are able, for only 3 days a month, to absolutely smash the work of three major authorities in Kent - Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Kent Highways & National Highways who, for over a decade have done nothing.

Video Case Study - <https://youtu.be/cU2X-vbIPi8>

Years of campaigning and appealing to my local authority, writing to the council leader, contacting the local MP, putting in FOI requests and sharing petitions signed by thousands of people clearly showing that they were not delivering any service have all been ignored. We have never seen any of the authorities do any work in the area at all for almost two years since we took matters into our own hands.

The recent Sunday Times article has shone a light on what we are doing and is a snapshot of the problem faced by the entire country.

We cannot change the world and we have proved that we cannot get our authorities to deliver the services we are entitled to receive but what we can do is continue to bring positivity to our immediate area to the benefit our business, staff, clients and the local community and hope it will inspire others to do the same.

If enough people make a noise and raise awareness, it will force much needed change and some day, someone with common sense in government will wake up and say "We've got a problem, enough is enough, this needs sorting out now".

**Author: Danny Lucas**